

A Case Study of How Belief Systems, Race and Gender Influence the Development of  
Critical Thinking in Japanese Students of English: A Mixed Methods Approach

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## Abstract

### **A Case Study of How Belief Systems, Race and Gender Influence the Development of Critical Thinking in Japanese Students of English**

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Developing students' critical thinking skills is not a new phenomenon but constantly evolving. The idea to embark on a study that entails improving Japanese English Language (JEL) learners' critical thinking skills is based on the desire to improve their quality of education. However, though thinking is not new to humans, it can be surface or non-surfaced (Elder & Paul, 1999). In a 1999 handbook entitled "Critical Thinking Concepts & Tools," Elder and Paul noted that quality thinking must be gradually encouraged. To nurture quality thinking, effective problem-solving and critical thinking skills should be based on one's desire to improve self (Elder & Paul, 1999).

The idea to investigate this area is also from the desire to improve teaching, learning and syllabus designs of English language education within a higher education institution and other universities across Japan. In ascertaining how vital critical thinking is in knowledge creation and development (Hughes, 2014) for JEL learners, this research investigated how such learners are influenced to think critically based on belief systems, race and gender issues.

In addition, in the face of globalisation and the need to cultivate JEL learners from the standpoint of global citizens without losing their own national identity and falling into nationalism is examined. Thus, as a language university, this ultimately leads to looking deeply at oneself and correcting biased preconceptions through critical thinking.

The study took a Mixed Methods Research route from the researcher's insider perspective as an institution teacher to gain invaluable insights into complex relationships (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014) through race and gender roles. Both teachers and students participated in the study from across two English language departments at the university. The qualitative and quantitative methods ran simultaneously in support of each other. The qualitative data were collected in semi-structured interviews with teachers, while quantitative data was collected in an online student survey.

The research findings indicated that more needs to be done to improve critical thinking skills in Japan. This indication suggests that several participants either did not understand them or were not doing enough to nurture them. The research also outlined the importance of learning a foreign language from a practical point of view but shows that differences do not mean that learners and language teachers cannot cultivate an attitude of open-mindedness. Moreover, as it is vital for teachers to empower students, students must also self-direct their studies.

*Keywords:* belief systems, race, gender, critical thinking, critical thinking skills, foreign/second language learners/learning

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**Glossary of terms**

<b>EFL</b>	<b>English as a Foreign Language</b>
<b>ESL</b>	<b>English as a Second Language</b>
<b>L2</b>	<b>Second Language</b>
<b>CLT</b>	<b>Communicative Language Teaching</b>
<b>HE</b>	<b>Higher Education</b>
<b>HEI</b>	<b>Higher Education Institution</b>
<b>MMR</b>	<b>Mixed Method Research</b>
<b>R&amp;D</b>	<b>Research and Development</b>
<b>POGIL</b>	<b>Process-oriented Guided Inquiry Learning</b>
<b>CEO</b>	<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>
<b>BERA</b>	<b>British Educational Research Association</b>

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.0 Overview

Globalisation delineates challenges for higher education institutions (HEIs). These include a competitive market and a knowledge economy that consistently changes to provide societies with information at their fingertips (McCaffery, 2010). Thus, HEIs find it necessary to match the needs of these societies in a highly competitive higher education (HE) market, but the question is how? Mitchell and Nielsen (2012) note that HEIs have an international four-dimensional (4-D) awareness as a single place that gives everyone a standard frame of reference. This awareness gives a 4-D view that drives the need to improve themselves, and Japanese HEIs are no different. The Japanese government has promoted internationalisation as an essential policy for higher education reform with various competitive-funded programmes (Ota, 2018).

To dissect the competitiveness and offer quality education, HEIs need to exchange ideas, scholars and students and communication technologies. To stimulate these areas, the flow of students, scholars and scientific investments from all over the world (Ota, 2018) must be interconnected to improve the quality, quantity and accessibility of information in an ever-changing knowledge economy. According to Ota (2018), improvements should be in the form of patented activities and research and development (R&D), and universities in Japan have made efforts to internationalise themselves through R&D.

As such, this research is aimed at being part of the R&D processes with this case study on how belief systems, race, and gender influence the development of critical thinking in Japanese students of English. The idea of this study came from the researcher's desire to improve teaching practices, approaches, techniques and syllabus designs in English language education in her institution as well as in other universities nationwide in Japan.

## 1.1 Background to the Problem

The researcher works for a language university as a teacher of English language courses. The researcher teaches these language courses to students in their second to final years of study. In addition, classes are mainly held in a workshop style, which is designed to allow students to make presentations and participate in discussions with the aim of improving listening, speaking and problem-solving skills. Nonetheless, while the importance of developing critical thinking skills has been widely discussed in the second language (L2) education literature (Natthanan, 2009), there is the need to explore these skills.

The need to examine how critical thinking skills are developed or influenced chiefly stemmed from the researcher's insider perspective with students during the Spring semester of 2017 teaching Japanese students of English. Though the researcher has been teaching at this institution for about five years, the researcher has experienced a high level to which students have found it quite challenging to embrace deeper thinking in English language (L2) and Japanese (L1). In other words, many of the researcher's students have found it quite difficult to be engaged in a more thought-provoking process without relying on templates or scripts provided by the teacher. This challenge that students face has led the researcher to embark on this study. With the complexities of the researcher's belief systems, race and gender as a non-Asian black woman living and working in an Asian culture, these complexities are paramount to this study.

The complexities of teaching in such an environment lie in the differences between teachers and students. Japan a high-context cultural environment has many of its English teachers from low-context cultures (Torikai, 2000), for instance Jamaica, the researcher's home country, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. This juxtaposition of cultures has placed tremendous pressure on language teachers (Torikai, 2000) to find that balance between teaching and learning as they wrestle

with their own culture and the host culture, Japan. Students would rather teachers tell them how and when to think, and what to say or write (Brooks, Kyoko, Fujimoto & Cruz, 2000). Furthermore, students always show evidence of lower-order thinking skills like comprehension and knowledge (Bloom, 1956) when doing most class activities, while higher-order skills of evaluation and analysis are very low or non-existent.

## **1.2 Research Aims and Primary Research Questions**

Based on this need to help students, a litany of work done in pedagogical practices, psychology and sociology were examined. For instance, Bloom's taxonomy on critical thinking skills development and Vygotsky's work on social constructivism (1978) provided information on teaching, learning and the environment that was never known before. The researcher's quest for knowledge on this area of development has led to more questions. For example: How can the gaps between teaching and learning in teacher communication be bridged? What is going on with my students? What else can be done to help them? Is this a pattern in all English courses? How are critical thinking skills influenced? The answers were not a simple yes or no. Therefore, it was behind this quest for knowledge that the primary or main research question was created. Additionally, bearing those questions in mind, the research aims to dissect and explore any connections between belief systems, race and gender issues and the development of Japanese students' critical thinking skills. Therefore, the primary research question and sub-questions are as follows:

*How do Belief Systems, Race and Gender Influence the Development of Critical Thinking in Japanese Students of English?*

### ***Sub-questions***

1. What are critical thinking skills according to the perceptions of Japanese students of English?
2. What are the perceptions of critical thinking skills according to the perception of teachers of English?

3. What teaching approaches are used to develop critical thinking in Japanese students of English?
4. How are belief systems, race and gender influencing the teaching of critical thinking skills in Japanese students of English?

### **1.3 Research Context**

The research assessed two main contexts, which are the micro context- the institution and others and the macro context, the national environment and the Japanese government in the conversation of language acquisition and development. To start with the with the researcher's understanding of the micro context, the first step was to examine this institution's structure to gain more insights into the complex relationships in the 'swampy lowlands' (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). Furthermore, doing research in this organization can be very political especially if it is your own (Punch, 1994) since the context is quite personal. Hence, a practitioner must be politically astute (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014).

To dissect the macro-national context and how it affects my organization and my topic, the Ministry of Education (MEXT) was looked at. In examining MEXT, Kavanagh (2012) suggests that the ability of Japanese students to communicate in English should undertake more of communicative approach that should be emphasized at the university level English language education. Kavanagh further notes that over that last decade or so critical thinking is one of the abilities encouraged at a national level in Japan. Likewise, Long (2004) delineates the goals of MEXT's educational reform of 2003. Long notes that MEXT outlined its goals include teachers to produce independent thinkers who can learn and think independently and develop skills of problem-solving through critical thinking. With the standards set by MEXT and its continued scope in Japan, universities and schools in general want to foster lifelong learners. As in line with MEXT's goals, this institution has set goals of their own to achieve this purpose, hence my topic falls within the domain of MEXT and the aims of the institution.

## 1.4 Research Rationale

Dörnyei (2009) suggests that if students become more interested in learning a language, the activities must “appeal to their values, bring about some form of pleasure or useful to their future goals.” Thus, to acquire and enhance language and cognitive skills, a learner's motivation is fundamental as it can be stimulated by external factors (Zimmerman & Schunk, 1989). Another motivational framework states that “integrative orientation plays an important role in motivating language learners” (Collins & Hunt, 2011). Therefore, a learner's desire to learn a language, be accepted into a community, and the openness to different cultures and languages is paramount to student involvement in their organisations.

Japan's political economy and techno meritocracy emphasise interlinkages between official guidance, moral education, and socialisation (McVeigh, 1998). Within schools, LeTendre (1994) notes that historically “There was no debate over whether students should be guided to a set of beliefs, only which beliefs to inculcate and how much autonomy the teacher should have in determining these beliefs.” LeTendre (1994) discusses in detail the meaning of guidance within an educational setting as being four factors:

1. Teachers and learners study the same thing. There is a correct form or order to acquire and interpret knowledge: one path, one set of discoveries.
2. The learner, not knowing the path, is dependent on the teacher.
3. The teacher will model the correct interpretation or skills, and the learner will imitate these.
4. To sustain the learner's emotional balance, the teacher encourages an appreciation of effort and sacrifice in the learner.

Declining academic abilities have also hurt admissions in Japan. Several higher education institutions are already having trouble recruiting undergraduates. 28 % of private universities and 59 % of private junior colleges could not even make their quota for

undergraduate admissions in 2010 (Nikkei Shinbun, 2010). This phenomenon has stimulated some drastic recruitment techniques: travel allowances to visiting high school teachers; gifts to prospective applicants who attend open houses; a simple recommendation system specially designed for vocational school graduates; disclosure of essay test titles before the test date; and pre-entrance exam interviews and promises of acceptance even before the entrance exam season today as well as twenty years ago.

The culture of the typical classroom at secondary and tertiary levels in Japan needs to readily facilitate the acquisition of communicative competence in the target language (Brooks, 2000). The large intercultural gap between the students and the new classroom culture led by a non-Japanese English language teacher can be addressed through intercultural understanding and cross-cultural training for the learners (Nozaki, 1993). Cultures differ in defining the appropriate communication styles for each situation and purpose (Yamada, 1997). Teaching English to Japanese students also facilitates teaching different communication styles and underlying value systems. Unfortunately, we often overlook this fundamental fact and rush into teaching the English language. Then we are frustrated when teacher-student or student-student interactions in the classroom do not proceed as we wish (Samovar & Porter, 2001).

### **1.5 The Organisation of the Research Study**

Chapter Two reviews existing literature on how belief systems, race, and gender influence the development of critical thinking in Japanese students of English. The chapter will also investigate policy implementation and practices aimed at improving teaching approaches.

Chapter Three presents the study design of this research project. An explanation is given for the choice of study design and the purpose of employing a mixed method design,

explicitly referring to a contemporary approach to data collection and analysis. It also provides an insight into the sample group and how data was collected and analysed.

Chapter Four shares the findings from both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Given the experimental method used in this study, qualitative data is first shown and summarised before quantitative data analysis results are presented. Finally, interpretations from the different analysed data are summarised individually before an integrated summary is presented at the end of the chapter.

The discussion and conclusion of the study are designated in Chapter Five. Recommendations are also suggested based on the information gained from the data findings. Limitations are identified, and suggestions for future research are included in the last section.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.0 Introduction

Building a structure that supports teaching and learning through comprehending various factors such as belief systems, race and gender can influence students. However, how do we (teachers and students) build those structures? Thus, the literature review will explore various lectures to examine those structures. The need for Japanese teachers of English to improve teaching practices, approaches, techniques and syllabus designs is explained from belief systems, race and gender perspectives. These perspectives have led the literature review chapter to explore the conceptual frameworks that underpin them in the context of developing critical thinking skills. Within the philosophical tradition of qualities or standards of thought, Bailin (2002) defines critical thinking as thinking of a certain quality, basically translated to good thinking that meets specified criteria or standards of adequacy and accuracy.

Within the broad interdisciplinary of sociology and psychology, these disciplines cite and draw from each other's theory and research (Thoits, 1992). Sociologists generally devote their efforts to identifying which social phenomena affect individuals. At the same time, psychologists specialize in identifying the mechanisms or processes by which social phenomena impact individuals. Consequently, sociologists often use, explicitly or implicitly, the work of psychologists to fill in the missing links that tie society to the individual (Thoits, 1992), which will be evident in this literature review as it seeks to explain the research main research topic. This literature review, therefore, includes the sociological and psychological interplay where psychology is implicit, and sociology explicit. In addition, those scholars working within the philosophical tradition of critical thinking will be examined.

To outline the frameworks that support this study, sociology theories of self and identity, patriarchy, habitus and oriental, and psychological theory of social cognitive are

explained. The explanations of the theories are examined in the narrowed context of the leading research question and sub-questions. This narrowed view first assesses the intersectionality of belief systems, race and gender, a central component of the research, and how they impact critical thinking skills in English language learning. The main research question and sub-questions are as follows:

*How do Belief Systems, Race and Gender Influence the Development of Critical Thinking in Japanese Students of English?*

### ***Sub-questions***

1. What are critical thinking skills according to the perceptions of Japanese students of English?
2. What are the perceptions of critical thinking skills according to the perception of teachers of English?
3. What teaching approaches are used to develop critical thinking in Japanese students of English?
4. How are belief systems, race and gender influencing the teaching of critical thinking skills in Japanese students of English?

## **2.1 Literature Research Strategy: Layout of Literature Review**

The literature review embraces a research literature strategy of examining the theories of critical thinking, belief systems, race and gender and where these areas intersect, that is, their intersectionality. In addition, this research strategy dissects the topic based on social and cultural theories aligned with the research.

### ***2.1.1 Critical Thinking***

What is critical thinking? Based on writings such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and more recently, Benjamin Bloom, Matthew Lipman and Richard Paul, which exemplify the theoretical or philosophical perspective, focus on the qualities and characteristics of what people can do under the best circumstances. Critical thinking has been primarily defined as a

combination of skills and dispositions. The Critical Thinking Community defined critical thinking as “the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualising, applying, analysing, synthesising, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action” (Scriven & Paul, 2007). As a skill, critical thinking is “self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking (Scriven & Paul, 2008). Therefore, the idea of developing critical thinking is about developing rational decision-making, with actions of the critical thinker (Davies, 2015), which encompasses thinking and reflecting.

With the philosophical tradition, qualities or standards of thought are emphasised. For example, Bailin (2002) also defines critical thinking. Bailin defines it as thinking of a particular quality, noted as specified criteria or standards of adequacy and accuracy. In addition, the philosophical approach has traditionally focused on applying formal rules of logic (Lewis & Smith, 1993; Sternberg, 1986). One limitation of this approach to defining critical thinking is that it does not always correspond to reality (Sternberg, 1986). By emphasising the ideal critical thinker and what people have the capacity to do, this approach may have less to contribute to discussions about how people think.

Another set of perspectives resides in the field of education. Benjamin Bloom and his associates are included in this category. Their taxonomy for information processing skills (1956) is one of the most widely cited sources for educational practitioners when it comes to teaching and assessing higher-order thinking skills. Bloom’s taxonomy is hierarchical, with “comprehension” at the bottom and “evaluation” at the top. The three highest levels (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) are frequently said to represent critical thinking (Kennedy, Fisher & Ennis 1991).

The benefit of the educational approach is that it is based on years of classroom experience and observations of student learning, unlike both the philosophical and the

psychological traditions (Sternberg, 1986). However, some have noted that the educational approach could be more varied in its vagueness. Concepts within the taxonomy lack the clarity necessary to guide instruction and assessment in a helpful way (Ennis, 1985; Sternberg, 1986). Furthermore, educational frameworks have not been tested as vigorously as those developed within either philosophy or psychology (Sternberg, 1986).

**2.1.1.1 Critical Thinking Skills According to the Perceptions of Japanese Students of English.** Japan has seen its government and private sector leaders propel changes toward empowering educators to inspire learners to think for themselves and sometimes challenge how the world thinks (Okada 2017). Okada also notes that this direction is based on the government's view that knowledge alone might not help students succeed in a globalised world. However, the ability to think did not receive much attention in Japan until 1998, when the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) released the new Course of Study (guidelines for all elementary and secondary schools), which emphasised the importance of activities with “thinking.” Unfortunately, according to a survey conducted in 2014 (Okada, 2015), sixteen years after the 1998 Course of Study was issued, the introduction of thinking activities into classrooms had little to change the nature of teaching in high schools in Japan. This approach is sadly persistent at the tertiary level too.

Considering the drive toward nurturing students to be successful in the twenty-first century, it is crucial and urgent for university teachers to teach students to think deeply and independently (The Nikkei, 2015). However, most teachers tend to pay more attention and spend more time on research than teaching (The Nikkei, 2015). The Central Council for Education (2012) supports that view and emphasises the necessity of nurturing academic skills such as thinking critically and expressing opinions in higher education.

Okada (2017) undertook a study at a Japanese university where first-year university students stated they were not given enough opportunities to ask questions for better

understanding or to express opinions to deepen their thinking. Okada (2017) also notes that this university introduced a small seminar-type class called “Introduction to Academic Study” for all first-year students to help express their opinions, but it was ineffective. This class was ineffective in realising the goals of enhancing students’ skills in asking questions and expressing opinions. In addition, a 2014 report by the National Institute for Education Policy Research in Japan (National Institute for Education, 2014) found that 63.4% of 1,649 Japanese university students from 200 different academic departments never or seldom expressed opinions in class. Also, 71.9% responded that the current situation in their ranks was appropriate, which indicated that many students in universities in Japan do not understand the importance of expressing themselves in class to deepen their thinking (National Institute for Education, 2014; Okada, 2017).

Second, within this university study, quite a few students reported that they do not dare to think independently, as demonstrated by having no opinions or questions to express their opinions. They cannot find any reasons for expressing opinions. It was assumed these students accepted whatever was given by authorities, such as teachers and books, without thinking for themselves. In addition, a third finding was that although students do not ask questions or express opinions, it does not necessarily follow those students do not think for themselves (Okada, 2017). Okada further suggests that after analysing the students’ responses, there was the assumption that there are other reasons for refraining from asking questions or offering opinions in class. Among these assumptions are that (1) teachers do not allow enough time for students to express opinions, (2) students do not appreciate expressing themselves to teachers in class, and (3) students are afraid of losing face among peers in class.

## ***2.1.2 Belief Systems, Race and Gender Factors Affecting Critical Thinking in Japanese Students of English***

**2.1.2.1 Belief Systems.** Horwitz (1988) found that a language learner's beliefs about how a language is learned are affected by past experiences and cultural background. Like Okada (2017), researchers and others note the importance of learner perception towards language learning. Therefore, the literature review asks the question: How do societies create their belief systems? Or what influences belief systems?

A society's belief system entails the traditions, perceptions, and norms of individuals and groups (Collins, Benson, Grand, Lazyan, & Weeks, 2012). Horwitz stated that these beliefs could then impact the learners' behaviour towards learning a language. If learners' beliefs about how a language should be learned do not align with how an instructor conducts a language class, the quality of the instructor may then be questioned. The students' motivation to participate in a class or learn a language may decrease. In addition, the language learning beliefs of an individual will directly affect the individual's success in learning a new language. These ideas have led to the central theory of belief systems being the Self and Identity theory.

**2.1.2.1.1 Self and Identity Theory.** The Self and Identity theory in the sociological schools of thought dissects the questions posed above. Within these schools of thought, many points of view and research support dozens of claims which have contributed to societal relationships in education. For instance, Vygotsky's work in the early 1900s was referenced in 1978. His work allows for a framework for applying sociological and psychological learning theories, including how learning is rooted in social interactions mediated by abstract symbols rather than as tools.

In addition, an anthropologist, Mead (1934), analyses the environment in reflexivity as it constitutes the core of selfhood (McCall & Simmons, 1978). This idea suggests that researchers such as Stryker (1980) agree that the sociological approach to self and identity

starts with a common practice with the self and society. For example, the self, considered human behaviour, influences culture through individuals, groups, organisations, institutions, and networks. They have a reciprocal relationship with themselves though they share languages, norms, and beliefs (Stryker, 1980). Thus, this kind of relationship allows the fibre of society to create cultures through social interactions.

As social interactions between the self and society create that society, a question is: What is at the root of an individual's identity? There are various views on this question, for example, Vygotsky in social constructivism or the sociological approach as delineated earlier and Alder's psychological theory (Collins, Benson, Grand, Lazyan, & Weeks, 2012). Both theoretical backgrounds posit how people reflect on their society, insofar as the sociological approach to understanding the self and its parts and its identities means that there is also the understanding of the society in which the self is acting. This concept demonstrates that the self always works in a social context where the other selves exist (Stryker, 1980).

Social constructivism is part of the sociological approach that propels a symbolic interactionist perspective (Stryker, 1980). Within this perspective, we do not see society as tentatively shaped. Instead, we assume that society is stable and durable, as reflected in the "patterned regularities that characterise most human action" (Stryker, 1980, p. 65). Patterns of behaviour within and between individuals have different levels of analysis, which is critical to understanding the link between self and society (Mead, 1934). Mead (1934) also notes that these behaviour patterns arise from how people interact in social settings. As people interact in society, the mind develops from those interactions, where it absorbs different symbols that form behaviour patterns.

These behaviour patterns can manifest in a society's way of life; for instance, in Japan, long working hours and other work-life balance practices are absorbed into the community (Ono, 2018). Ono also argues that the true causes of long working hours lie not in

the “observable” barriers such as public policy and law but rather are embedded in “unobservable” or “unmeasurable” attributes such as social norms and work conventions. The Japanese employment system institutional complementarities and its cultural particularities led to the idea of workload equating to long work hours (Ono, 2018).

Although the social environment is a vital part of what shapes a person, it is not done in isolation as the language through its interpretation, is the mind and the thinking part of the “self” (Mead, 1934), which plays another important role in socialisation. Since in a covert action in which the organism points out meanings to itself and others, the mind can create definitions and indicate them to others and to itself through language, which encapsulates meanings in the form of symbols (Stryker, 1980; Mead 1934).

In Vygotsky’s quest to dissect the mind, it is noted that when one is encapsulated as a set of symbols to which, one views themselves as an object. This response posits other characters so that the self emerges, which is called reflexivity. Within the social scope, people can reflect upon themselves as objects. In so doing, they can evaluate, consider themselves and plan accordingly to bring about future states. For instance, humans can be self-aware or achieve consciousness concerning their own existence. This idea suggests that there are formulation and reflection, which is ongoing. By taking the role of the other and seeing ourselves from others’ perspectives, our responses become like others’ responses, and the meaning of the self becomes a shared meaning. Thus, paradoxically, as the self emerges as a distinct object, there is simultaneously a merger of perspectives of the self and others and becoming one with the others with whom one interacts (Stryker, 1980).

In examining some theoretical frameworks, Kafka (2016); Farrington, Roderick, Allensworth, Nagaoka, Keyes, Johnson and Beechum (2012) provide a deeper understanding by delving into the surface of individual-level skills. This process aided in learning how



students interact within their educational context regarding attitudes, motivation and performance based on one's own desire to excel.

As ongoing educational research ensues over the years, how to improve academic outcomes for young people has become its focal point. This has led to this study looking to establish innovative and non-traditional ways to support students. In addition, most research has focused on the association between cognitive skills and academic outcomes, such as test scores and grades (Rosen, Glennie, Dalton, Lennon & Bozick, 2010), and this relationship has largely been fixed but transferable. This notion suggests that this association has been a cultural part of young people's development. Since researchers have mainly focused on the relationship between cognitive skills and academic outcomes (Rosen et al., 2010), there is a recent focus on academic skills and how they are linked to outcomes. However, these outcomes are not fool proof (Zigler & Berman, 1983).

This study considers that academic performance is an outcome that is affected by a range of factors that are both intrinsic to the individual learner and apparent within the context of their environment. Various skills and attributes are categorised into five areas, including (a) academic behaviours, (b) academic perseverance, (c) academic mindsets, (d) learning strategies, and social skills (Rosen et al., 2010). According to Rosen et al. (2010), many of the motivational factors highlighted here are reliant and interact to affect students' academic success. However, though these have influenced students' success, they are considered flexible and conducive to change. Therefore, according to Rosen et al. (2010) and Farrington, Roderick, Allensworth, Nagaoka, Keyes, Johnson and Beechum (2012), students can be supported across all areas of study as follows (see Fig. 1).

#### a. Academic behaviours

Describing the features of academic behaviours amounts to students' visible and observable signs (Rosen et al., 2010). These visible signs are, for example students' great

efforts in their learning, which include but not limited to being attentive, going to class with the required materials, studying outside of class and submitting homework on time. With students exhibiting these behaviours, their performances could lead to successful outcomes. Therefore, academic behaviours directly related to how well a student performs in class and significantly influence achievement.

b. Academic perseverance

Psychological concepts relating to forming “good” study habits can influence academic perseverance. These good habits include having the ability to stay focused and work hard to achieve specific goals. For instance, this ability is reflected in being timely, avoiding distractions, overcome obstacles and challenges. Thus, regardless of their circumstances, students will keep working hard towards success. This also requires a commitment to putting in additional hours of study, mastering a skill and subject area, and working towards achieving more long-term educational goals.

c. Academic mindsets

Young people's beliefs and attitudes can be related to their academic mindset. This holds because it helps to demonstrate motivation and how students can improve academic behaviours and performance. Therefore, there is a strong interconnectedness between each of these factors (Rosen et al., 2010). As Rosen et al. (2010) point out, the reverse also applies, whereby strong academic performance reinforces positive mindsets, perseverance, and academic behaviours. However, on the other hand, students with a negative attitude can decrease their endurance, academic behaviours and performance. Thus, some critical components to developing a more positive are, but are limited to:

- establishing a sense of connectedness and belonging within the school community,
- holding a belief that their abilities can change and grow through effort,
- believing in their own ability to succeed, and

- finding value in the subject areas and work tasks that they are required to do.
- a. Learning strategies

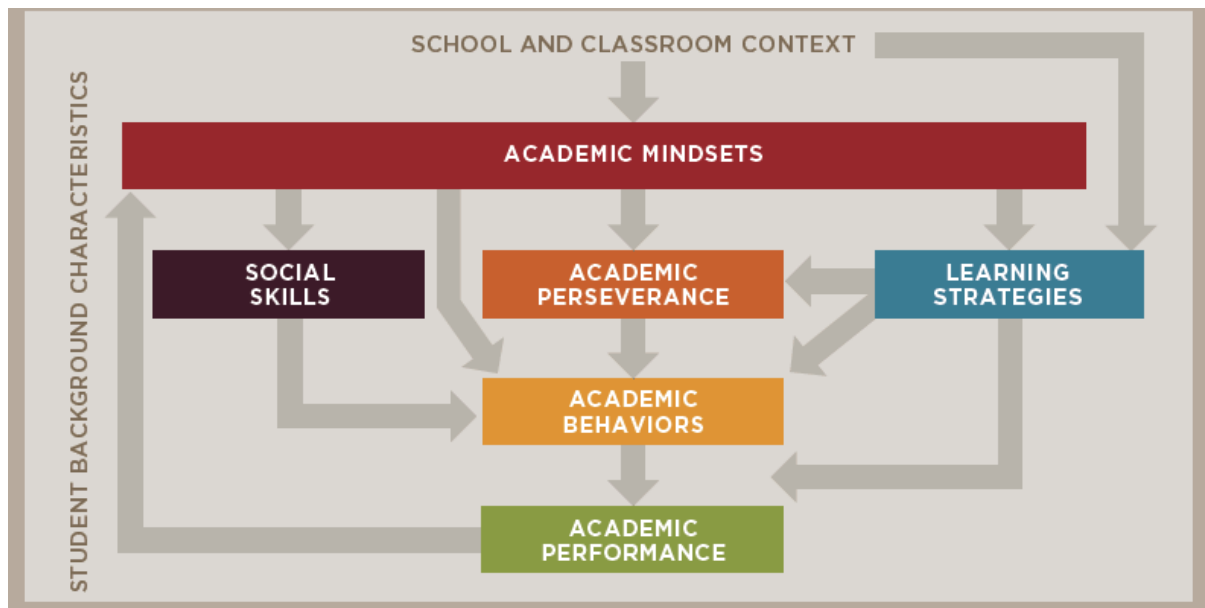
Another factor, as delineated, learning strategy is the process by which students can participate in class activities designed to enhance cognitive tasks. These tasks are thinking, remembering, and learning (Rosen et al., 2010). Therefore, specific strategies can assist students with recalling information, monitoring their understanding of content, detecting when they are confused, and self-correcting errors in thought processes. Through developing and applying effective learning strategies, students can then draw upon effective academic behaviours to maximise their learning.

- b. Social skills

The social interaction between humans requires social skills. Therefore, the literatures are extrapolating the focus on having interpersonal qualities. As such, human behaviours facilitate social interactions with others. Students, by extension, should possess communication skills, problem-solving, empathy, working cooperatively with others, being assertive, and taking responsibility (Rosen et al., 2010). This may be reflected more directly in a classroom context through working cooperatively in groups, contributing appropriately to classroom discussions, and collaborative problem solving. Social skills have been found to indirectly impact academic performance and are primarily expressed through students' behaviours at school (Rosen et al., 2010).

**Figure 1**

*Academic Performance (Farrington et al., 2012)*



The National Research Council (2000) notes the importance of tracing education from early childhood to young adults. In looking at how students learn from the early childhood stage of development to adulthood, education development is divided into three areas: (1) cognitive skills, (2) school readiness, and (3) social and emotional development (Zigler & Berman, 1983).

These areas are further explained as follows:

#### 1. Cognitive skills

Cognitive skills and intelligence quotient (IQ) were used to describe the first skills. Although high IQ is not a perfect predictor of adult outcomes, it positively correlates with success in many areas. Still, while we know that the IQ of developing children can be impaired through deprivation, it is not evident that it can be increased via extra stimulation in normal children. Moreover, although the gains in measured IQ scores associated with early intervention are often short-lived, it is unclear what significance can be attached to this finding. It can be surprisingly easy to create short-term gains in measured IQ scores.

Knowing that IQ scores can be an easy indicator of short-term gains, Zigler and Berman (1983) cite the case of an eight-week summer program which created a point increase in measured IQ scores. This citation also shows that simply repeating an IQ test at an interval of one week produced similar “gains” as children became more comfortable with the test (Zigler & Berman, 1983).

## 2. School readiness

According to Zigler and Berman (1993), school readiness is one of the indicators of education development recognised, given the uncertainties regarding measures of IQ. The attention has shifted to school readiness; for instance, a survey of kindergarten teachers by the Carnegie Foundation (1991) found that only 65 per cent of entering students were deemed ready to learn. Many assume that the teachers referred to shortfalls in the children’s cognitive skills. Yet when asked to name the most critical determinants of readiness to learn, the attributes cited most often by teachers were (in order): being physically healthy, rested, and well-nourished; being able to communicate needs, wants, and thoughts verbally; enthusiasm and curiosity in approaching new activities; taking turns, and knowing how to sit still and pay attention.

## 3. Social and emotional development

However, a more encompassing view of what affects educational development arises from the Carnegie Foundation (1991) report. This report notes the importance of social and emotional skills as it pinpoints self-control. The report suggests that self-control, as essential as the ability to sit still and pay attention, may even be necessary for fully developing traditional cognitive skills. For instance, there is evidence that self-control can be taught in activities. Thus, improving the social environment for early childhood education programs by enlarging society's social well-being fosters growth.

### 2.1.3 Gender

In the first aspect of examining gender roles, the literature explores the patriarchy theory. This theory is extrapolated from many schools of thought, including feminist theories, to provide an underpinning of the issues. The literature also looks at how men and women have traditionally cohabitated from patriarchal and oriental theoretical perspectives.

**2.1.3.1 The Patriarchy Theory.** Patriarchy is a societal structure in which males hold dominant power and determine what part females shall and shall not play Scott (2006). Capabilities are assigned to women relegating mostly to the mystical and aesthetic part of socialisation. Still, they are excluded from the practical and political realms, regarded as separate and mutually exclusive realms (Ellis, 2000).

As the broader focus, patriarchy impacts how males and females co-exist in society. Patriarchy points of view go as far back as 1792, when Wollstonecraft, an English advocate of women's rights, rallied around creating awareness for women. Wollstonecraft helped to define the foundation of males and females in society. This foundation was further extended in the late 1960s by feminist Kate Millett and, a decade later, by Italian feminist Della Costa. She argued that a woman's "unwaged labour" is vital to capitalism.

After Della Costa, another decade later, in 1990, Sylvia Walby published the book *Theorizing Patriarchy*. In this book, she notes the complexity of patriarchy. Walby (1990) defines patriarchy as a system of social structures in which men dominate and exploit women. To support this idea, Walby (1990) purports words from Marx. Karl Marx suggests that homemakers are the producing class while husbands are the class that benefits. This school of thought propels what Walby (1990) notes are distinguishing notions of private and public patriarchy. These two kinds of patriarchal categories intersect to affect women; for instance, African-Caribbean is more likely to be seen as part of public patriarchy. For example, they are asking for equal pay or higher-paying jobs. However, on the other hand,

groups like British Muslims experience higher levels of private patriarchy; their restricted ability to make choices for themselves (Danili & Reid, 2004). Therefore, an underlying view of public and private patriarchy is primarily structural and agency. This theoretical perspective also leads us to the understanding that if we regard women from this viewpoint, we can see them as locked in the roles that are defined by society.

Women's education is seen as the key to securing intergenerational transfers of knowledge and providing the substance of long-term gender equality and social change (Danili & Reid, 2004). Thus, gender equity in access to health and education occupies a central place in the global policy discourse on human and social development. Pertinent factors such as (a) social behaviour, (b) self-awareness, and (c) family relations and employment are interconnected, as described to explore such discourse as follows:

a. Social behaviour

In considering the roles of men and women in society, tradition points to women being gentler and more passive, emotional, dependent, patient, and communicative than men (Danili & Reid, 2004). Thus, men are tougher and more independent, influential, inexpressive, and straightforward. Though these descriptions may be taken lightly, traditionally, they have set the stage for gender expectations and have influenced cultural norms in how both genders have reacted to their roles. If the gender labels are used positively, the gender bias associated with them can be lessened or even removed (Denham & Brown, 2010). For example, a woman who believes she is dependent on a man may continue to be dependent for her entire life because she cannot see past the gender label. However, a woman who sees herself as strong and capable may also be more inclined to strive for advancement in the workplace.

On the other hand, a man is labelled as sensitive, which may affect his life choices just as much as if he is labelled a strong man. Since these behaviours have been a big part of

social behaviours, a gap in structure exists, which has somewhat narrowed today (Danili & Reid, 2004). Danili and Reid (2004) also note that women still complete more household tasks than men. Narrowing in that gap can often be attributed to outsourcing tasks that once took more time at home: hiring housekeepers, landscapers, or dry-cleaning services. Even with more women working outside of the home, the amount of and type of household tasks has not changed significantly since the beginning.

b. Self-awareness

In the context of children, they have learned societal expectations regarding gender-appropriate occupations from different places: in their homes, in businesses, in restaurants, from the media, and their peers. As it relates to younger children, girls often have been defined as playing “house” or “teacher” while boys are expected to play “war” or “firefighter” (Ellis, 2000).

With changing social media and community messaging, those traditional occupational roles are also becoming less set as cultural norms (Ellis, 2000). Children are exposed to occupational options that are not based on gender through children's books, television programming, social media, news reporting, and their parents choosing less gender-defined roles. These early introductions to careers set the groundwork for a way of thinking about future jobs.

Traditional occupations for women once were perceived as secretaries, homemakers, teachers, servers and nurses. At the same time, men were defined as police officers, construction workers, truck drivers, chief executive officers (CEOs) or factory workers. With changes in family makeup and media portrayal of traditional occupational choices, children are exposed to many different career choices that are less defined by gender (Ellis, 2000). When children see their mothers completing more household chores than their fathers or



household tasks gender designated as female, that observation can form future gender role ideas.

### c. Family relations and employment

Scott (2006) notes that in the last couple of years, women's roles have transformed, particularly in terms of their participation in the labour market. This has resulted in the general pattern of change in household and family structures in Western European families has seen marriage rates fall, divorce and cohabitation on the increase and a marked drop in overall fertility, despite the increased numbers of children born out of wedlock (Scott, 2006). Such trends are evidence that family life's importance is declining, with dire consequences for social integration.

Many women are now taking the leading role in domestic decision-making and working in whatever way they can to provide an income for their families, even where men are present in the household. On the other hand, Ellis (2000) notes that men's gender roles have tended to contract and that, overall, men remain in control of the political domain and women remain excluded. Still, men have reduced economic and decision-making power in the home. Many men are no longer the family breadwinner; they are now financially dependent on their kinswomen (Ellis, 2000).

Danili and Reid (2004) suggest that basic learning processes, such as memorising facts or information, to higher-level functions of understanding, application, analysis, and evaluation is a crucial part of learning that can hinder, or aid learning based on prior knowledge and prior learning experience. According to Wood and Eagly (2002), the social role theory underpins developments in differential social roles inhabited by women and men, especially concerning the division of labour. Ideally, women and men were assigned labour tasks suitable to their physical attributes. Thus, because of these physical attributes, differential social roles of men and women fulfilled these tasks.

Women's gender roles have been stretched beyond traditional limits to meet the family and local community's new domestic, social, and economic needs. Many women are now leading in domestic decision-making and working in whatever way they can to provide an income for their families, even where men are present in the household. On the other hand, she notes that men's gender roles have tended to contract and that overall, men remain in control of the political domain and women remain excluded. Still, men have reduced economic and decision-making power in the home.

In Japan, gender equality in education, at least in securing equal opportunity for accessing each level of schooling, is achieved. However, sometimes there is an uneven distribution of female students in some university faculties and departments, for example, in education, literature, nursing, pharmacy and domestic science (Global Gender Gap Report, 2020). Furthermore, the Global Gender Gap Index drastically declined overall scores from 80 to 121 out of 153 countries. This decline occurred over fourteen years on variables such as economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment (Global Gender Gap Report, 2020).

As the question for Japan and those countries ranked above 100 out of 153 remains on how to close the gender gap, social role theory explains the behavioural sex differences that arose from the differential social roles inhabited by women and men, especially those concerning the division of labour (Eagly, Wood, & Dickman, 2000). Historically, because of economic, ecological, social, and technological pressures, women and men were assigned labour tasks suitable to their physical attributes. Thus naturally, men were more likely to fulfil tasks that required speed, strength, and the ability to be away from home for expanded periods. On the other hand, as women were primarily responsible for childbearing, they were more likely to fulfil tasks related to home and family. As a result of these differential social roles played by men and women based upon this division of labour, gender roles developed

concerning expectations about the characteristics and behaviours of women and men (Wood & Eagly, 2002), which is still perceived in countries such as China (106/153), South Korea (108/153), India (112/114) others over 100.

Western Europe is the best-performing region on the Global Gender Gap Index (2020). In 2020, the region has an average score of 76.7% (out of 100), which further shows that it closed 77% of its gender gap up from 76% in the previous edition and 71% in 2001. If progress over the period 2006-2020 were to continue at the same pace, it would take 54 years to close the gap in Western Europe, seven years shorter than predicted (Global Gender Gap Index, 2020). The region is home to the four most gender-equal countries in the world; Iceland (1/153), Norway (2/153), Finland (3/153) and Sweden (4/153); seven of the top 10 and half of the top 20. Twenty-one of the 24 Western European countries studied feature in the top half of the overall rankings.

The social cognition approach investigates how people store and process information as the behavioural patterns in males and females (Markus, Crane, Bernstein & Siladi, 1982). In this research, social cognition is used implicitly to explain how both males and females process information and exhibit behavioural patterns differently. Information processing includes attending to cues, retrieving from memory, and making judgments, inferences, attributions, and predictions about oneself and others. This approach loosely views cognition as social because it derives from social experience and has consequences for subsequent interpersonal behaviour. For example, masculine and feminine schemas are presumed to be the products of traditional sex-role socialization and function as heuristic models for rapidly recognising and classifying one's and others' behaviour (Markus et al., 1982). The emphasis in this branch of social psychology once again is on understanding mechanisms or processes, in this case, the mental processes through which an individual's (socially derived) cognitions affect their thoughts, feelings, or behaviours.

The importance of schools focusing on pupils' development of social and emotional skills is now widely accepted (Denham & Brown, 2010; Gillies, 2011; Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnik & Elias, 2003). The recognition that emotions can facilitate prosocial behaviour and learning has developed from the understanding that 'schools are social places and learning is a social process. In such social contexts, educators often focus on reducing so-called problematic behaviours, including internalising behaviours (such as social withdrawal and depression) and externalising behaviours (such as aggression and disruption). Concerns about inappropriate behaviours relate to their long-term impact on the individual child and the potentially disruptive impact of externalising behaviours on the classroom.

Longitudinal research indicates that problematic behaviours that develop in early childhood may be stable through adolescence for some individuals (Moffitt, Caspi, Dickson, Silva & Stanton, 1996) and that boys are more affected by such behaviours than girls (Kaiser, Cai & Hancock, 2002). Children displaying externalising behavioural problems at a young age are at a greater risk of developing antisocial behaviour, juvenile delinquency, and other behavioural disorders. As such, it is essential to better understand the mechanisms behind such problematic behaviour to prevent its initial occurrence and to develop appropriate educational programmes for the early years.

However, the literature surrounding the concepts is sometimes confused, and contradictory and more clarity is needed about the direction of relationships between key variables and potential gender differences. This has been a point highlighted by Wigelsworth, Humphrey, Kalamouka and Lendrum (2010). However, despite the widespread exclusion of girls from education in several countries, policy agendas have been influenced only to a limited and selective degree by advocacy arguing for a strong gender focus. The focus on gender has been limited to a concern with either demonstrating the benefits of education for

women and of women's education for society or with identifying factors that constrain education participation in terms of supply and demand (Wigelsworth, Humphrey, Kalambouka, & Lendrum, 2010).

Two areas are addressed in this section: first, the links between the supply of education and the demand for it and second, those between economic and gender factors in shaping constraints and opportunities for female education. Studies identifying causes underpinning the exclusion or inclusion of girls and boys in education have conventionally used the terms supply and demand to identify those factors arising from the provision of education and household investment that constrain or facilitate education participation. These studies vary in the extent to which they emphasise supply or demand factors, although it is also argued that the analytical separation of the two represents a false dichotomy between strongly interconnected elements (Colclough, 1996; Wazir, 2000).

#### **2.1.4 Race**

According to Smith (2012), one of the critical functions of social theory is to provide a framework for undertaking empirical social research. It does this by “equipping the researcher with a vocabulary for describing social phenomena, together with a related set of assumptions about how to explain them.” Smith further notes the importance of a critical function of the social theoretical perspective by highlighting Bourdieu’s work while crediting Edward Said’s (1978) Orientalism theory.

**2.1.4.1 Oriental Theory.** As the Orient is integral to European material civilisation and culture (Richardson, 1990), orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and ideologically as a mode of discourse. In addition, with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies, and colonial styles are demonstrated (Said, 1978). In contrast, the American understanding of the Orient will seem considerably less dense. However, our recent Japanese, Korean, and Indochinese adventures

should now create a more sober, more realistic “Oriental” awareness. Moreover, the vastly expanded American political and economic role in the Near East (the Middle East) makes extraordinary claims on our understanding of that Orient.

Pierre Bourdieu (1990) provided a template for social theory in the form of a conceptual vocabulary in applied research settings. This conceptual vocabulary forms capital acquiring visibility both in the research literature and popular press. Bearing this impact in mind, Bourdieu’s Habitus theory provides a framework for race relations and their social impact on society. In addition, the central idea of Said’s work (1978) is that Western knowledge about the East is not generated from facts or reality but from the preconceived notion that envisions all “Eastern” societies as fundamentally as one another and fundamentally dissimilar to “Western” societies. This a priori knowledge sets up “the East” as antithetical to “the West” (Roberts, 2007).

**2.1.4.2 Habitus Theory.** Habitus encapsulates social action through dispositions and can be broadly explained as the evolving process through which individuals act, think, perceive, and approach the world and their role in it. Habitus, thus, denotes a way of being. An assimilated past without a clear consciousness, habitus is an internal archive of personal experiences rooted in the distinct aspects of individuals’ social journeys. Individuals’ dispositions reflect their lived paths and justify their approaches to practice (Bourdieu, 1990).

Analysing habitus is not straightforward; the challenges arise on multiple fronts. For a start, they lie in operationalising the theoretical concept of habitus, that is, in capturing this fluid, broad concept with specific methodological tools. Nonetheless, researchers tend to agree that sets of dispositions, however, defined, are a valuable gateway to habitus and its effects. This is understandable and to be expected. What is more interesting is how researchers define these dispositions in accordance with their research questions and the methods they employ to capture them.

On par with Bourdieu's treatment of capital, habitus has now acquired currency in the Anglophone world and further afield, as it has been applied to different research areas, a range that continues to broaden at pace, but what is habitus? Habitus encapsulates social action through dispositions and can be broadly explained as the evolving process through which individuals act, think, perceive, and approach the world and their role in it. Habitus, thus, denotes a way of being. As assimilated past without a clear consciousness, habitus is an internal archive of personal experiences rooted in the distinct (Bourdieu, 1990). The shift from material to cultural and symbolic forms of capital is, to a large extent, what hides the causes of inequality.

Said (1978) restricted the consideration of academic study to the Middle East, African and Asian annals, and heritage to explore orientalism. However, though his research was limited in scope, orientalism comprises a significant dimension of modern political and thoughtful culture. Said's consideration of academic orientalism is almost solely limited to late 19th and early 20th years of scholarship. The concept of an "Orient" is a vital facet of attempts to characterise "the West". Thus, records of the Greco-Persian conflicts may compare the monarchical government of the Persian domain with the widespread custom of Athens to make a more general comparison between the Greeks and the Persians and between "the West" and "the East", or "Europe" and "Asia", but make no mention of the other Greek city-states, most of which were not directed democratically (Richardson, 1990).

In a study which looked at the intersection of inequality in young people, Priest (2015) documented the importance of this inequality concerning the social identity of gender, race, or class. Though this social identity leads to intentionality, socio-economic status adds a third important dimension to these processes, with individuals of the same race/ethnicity and gender having access to vastly different resources and opportunities across levels of socioeconomic status (Priest, 2015). For instance, national assessments for science,

mathematics, and reading show that White students score higher on average than all other racial/ethnic groups, particularly when compared to Black and Hispanic students in the United States of America (Priest, 2015).

According to Priest (2015), economic factors are diverse characteristics that operate across different levels: individual, household, neighbourhood, and influence outcomes through different causal pathways. Furthermore, some of these factors are interrelated, including education, income and employment. For instance, teaching aids work which leads to some amount of income. However, though these factors are diverse, their perceived impact on society has its foundation back in some early beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century. During this time, works from people such as Comte, Weber and Cassel have played a key part of socio-economics theory and development until today.

#### ***2.1.4 The Intersectionality of Belief Systems, Race and Gender***

The societal configuration of race, class, gender relations, and structural patterns affect individual consciousness, group interaction and group access to institutional power and privileges (Thoits, 1992). To examine how belief systems, race and gender are connected to education, it is pertinent to explore the interrelationships. Crenshaw (1989) and Hankivsky (2014) note the importance of such relationships as the term “intersectionality” was coined in 1989 by Crenshaw. The term’s significance moves beyond single identities or group-specific concerns, which are ineffective in explaining the nuances of human lives; in this way, meaningful information about the unfair impacts of politics and policies is less likely to ‘fall through the cracks’ (Hankivsky, 2014). Hankivsky (2014) also notes that the “intersectionality” perspective delineated inequities never result from single, distinct factors. Instead, they are the outcome of intersections of different social locations, power relations and experiences.



However, the central ideas of intersectionality have long historical roots within and beyond the United States. Black activists and feminists and Latina, post-colonial, strange and Indigenous scholars have all produced work that reveals the complex factors and processes that shape human lives. Other researchers such as Collins and Bilge (2016) explore “intersectionality” as a modern-day “key concept” but have acknowledged that the word has been taken up in a wide variety of contexts in academia. However, the word “intersectionality” is now part of a broader scope within academic works of literature. This term dissects the intersectional experiences of racism and sexism in which Black women are subordinated. Thus, its inclusion in the literature here is not only to offer insights into the race but also to provide a theoretical framework for the overlapping elements of belief systems, gender and race that this research process will be covered.

According to Collins and Bilge (2016), modes of analysis of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, and other aspects of identity are considered mutually constitutive. This definition, as noted by Collins and Bilge (2016) suggest that people have multiple aspects of identity simultaneously, and the meanings of these different aspects of identity are shaped by one another. Additionally, notions of gender and how people’s gender is interpreted are always impacted by ideas of race in how society institutes its belief systems. This concept denotes that men and women are never received as what they are but in how they are racialised (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins & Bilge, 2016). This idea impacts how both men and women are received in society. Thus, concepts of blackness, brownness, and whiteness always influence the gendered experience, and there is no experience of gender that is outside of an understanding of race (Crenshaw, 1991).

A particular way of digesting intersectionality is understanding how it applies to identity, that is, which humans are in life (Morgan, 1996). Therefore, intersectionality relates to some commonality between belief systems, race and gender in how identity models dissect

humans. One such identity model is called the single determinant model, which resides on the premise that people of the same identity are either disenfranchised or have access to power (Morgan, 1996). That is, according to Morgan (1996), it would make sense if women share a standard set of ideas to either unite based on their gender and their beliefs (Hankivsky, 2014) to deal with macro (global and national-level institutions and policies), meso or intermediate (provincial and regional-level institutions and procedures), and micro levels (community-level, grassroots institutions and policies as well as the individual or ‘self’) of internal and external forces.

### ***2.1.5 The Role of Intersectionality in Education***

The role of intersectionality possesses different theoretical orientations and concerns (Dole & Sinatra, 1994). These orientations have produced somewhat different but related views of the nature of beliefs (Dole & Sinatra, 1994). Dole and Sinatra note that social factors, through norms and values, would be argued based on Vygotsky’s (1978) idea that people cannot be understood in isolation from their surrounding society and the self. This idea manifests itself in various cultures, for instance, Japan, the country of focus of this study.

The effects of cultural factors in Japan and other countries can be seen in how social and political structures encourage, influence, and develop critical thinking skills. Differences and similarities reside in the context of being collectivists versus individualists (Long, 2004). Japan and other Asian countries have a collectivist culture over western countries, which suppresses the active way students are socialised to encourage their reasoning ability in class. For instance, in Japanese, students tend not to question the teacher but conform to the learning environment. This kind of tradition somewhat limits the teacher-student relationship in which teachers from different cultures (non-collectivists) try to understand and relate to their students (Long, 2004).

To dissect globalisation, over the last twenty years, it has impacted the world profoundly in areas such as politics, socioeconomics, and the cultural dimensions of societies (Harvey, 1990). Like Harvey, Beck (1999) further strengthens this notion, noting that globalisation creates risks that concern people from all different classes, such as radioactivity, pollution, and even unemployment. Wealthy households act to protect themselves from these risks but cannot do so for some, for example, from the global environmental change.

Globalisation has brought together people through different cultural dimensions, namely, English, which has critically impacted non-English-speaking countries. This impact has caused Asian countries to explore the rules of language policies in the social construction of national cultural identities and the relationship between language, culture, and identity (Harvey, 1990).

Language is not purely a scientific tool in examining language and its relationship to culture and identity. It is a cultural artefact created within specific sociocultural and historical contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). This idea points to the language being deeply rooted in the history, beliefs, cultures, and values it has for its speakers. Vygotsky (1978) also note the importance of language and culture in that cultural identity is mutually constitutive, demonstrating a reciprocal relationship between both.

Globalisation has been propelling educational changes where English has been used as the global language for communication. Therefore, such communication requires various knowledge, competencies, and attitudes in addition to linguistic ability (Murai, Watanabe, Ozeki, & Tomita, 2012). To achieve language competencies or linguistic capability, Brown (2004) suggests that there are various approaches to language second language teaching, of which Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been the central accepted paradigm in this area (Brown, 2004).

As globalisation makes the world a much smaller place, the institution where the research is focused and others are competing (Natthanan, 2009). Thus, as a language-centred organisation, this institution has set language goals and envisions transforming students into lifelong learners. Thinking skills are tied with the current educational paradigm; lifelong learners initiate thinking for themselves regardless of language levels and Communicative Language Teaching. For example, through Communicative Language Teaching, teachers can use different activities to propel thinking skills development (Brown, 2004).

How educators use teaching and learning approaches is vital to employ critical thinking skills in English language education (Bloom, 1956; Elder & Paul, 2010; Jacobs & Farrell, 2001). Delineating Elder and Paul's (2010) definition of critical thinking, they purport that it is the process of analysing and assessing thinking to improve it. For learning to occur, students should learn critically at every educational level (Elder & Paul, 2010). Thus, learning is not just memorising lower-order facts. Learning at school is for applying such knowledge toward an improved society (Jacobs & Farrell, 2001).

Though there are various methods for improving and developing critical thinking skills, Bloom's (1956) taxonomy, revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), has aided in looking at approaches to teaching and learning critical thinking relating to my practice. Bloom's (1956) six-level taxonomy looks at cognitive levels from higher to lower-order consideration of evaluation, synthesis, analysis, application, comprehension, and knowledge. The revised version by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) provides a more recent viewpoint of levels, which includes words used as verbs. These verbs are created, evaluated, analysed, applied, understood, and remembered based on higher to lower-order thinking. Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) taxonomy are slightly less strict, allowing more overlapping between categories. Though Bloom's taxonomy has been revised, both versions expand knowledge to enhance teaching practices.

Delving further into the cognitive levels of developing critical thinking skills has given pertinent insights into what Bloom (1956) contends to be an effective teaching strategy. In addition, Bloom suggests that asking different questions to students is a proper way of facilitating learners to improve their critical thinking skills, and these questions should be geared towards different levels. For instance, evaluation, synthesis, and analysis are higher-order thinking surrounding questions about how or why to encourage the process. Lower order thinking of application, comprehension, and knowledge encompasses questions of when, where and what. Materials designed to teach higher-order thinking skills should be structured and utilised differently. Group activities must be highly utilised as a venue through which L2 learners gain and use thinking skills because group work requires students to teach other classmates and provide constructive criticism for different learners (Jacobs & Ferrell, 2001).

Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) note that the work of teaching is simultaneously social and mental. They also suggest behavioural, physical, experimental, cultural, and personal. Their notions point to the idea that teaching is complex. Teaching critical thinking skills in the L2, foremost English, presents its challenges. However, on the other hand, Gatbonton (2000) notes that research has shown that there are shared pedagogical practices among the language teacher compared to teachers of different subjects. Thus, shared commonalities in the teaching of critical thinking are seen in many teaching methods.

## **2.2 Summary and Conclusions**

According to Ichimura (2013), Japanese business annually requires 260,000 new workers who can work globally, which means that almost all newly graduating students must be able to work with people from different cultures. Japan urgently needs to train students to be globally competent. EFL teachers must lead in teaching students to think independently, ask questions, and express themselves by including opportunities for these activities in class.

Once students in EFL classes have learned the meaning and importance of asking questions and voicing opinions, they should be able to transfer these skills to activities in courses given in Japanese to English, thereby developing their ability to think deeply and critically (Ichimura, 2013). In addition, apart from how Japanese students perceive their thinking ability, various influences affect this ability to think critically. These influencers are based on belief systems, gender and race factors.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the research methodology. This study follows a Mixed Methods Research (MMR) to examine the research questions. It contains an account of the procedures used in this study, including research design, selection and description of the participants, instrument used for data collection, data analysis, ethical issues and limitations of the study.

### 3.1 Research Questions

The research aim is to understand how belief systems, gender and race influence the development of critical thinking in Japanese students of English. To achieve this aim, the following main research question and sub-questions were developed:

*How do Belief Systems, Race and Gender Influence the Development of Critical Thinking in Japanese Students of English?*

#### *Sub-questions*

1. What are critical thinking skills according to the perceptions of Japanese students of English?
2. What are the perceptions of critical thinking skills according to the perception of teachers of English?
3. What teaching approaches are used to develop critical thinking in Japanese students of English?
4. How are belief systems, race and gender influencing the teaching of critical thinking skills in Japanese students of English?

### 3.2 Research Paradigms

This research embraces a Pragmatist paradigm. As Creswell (2003) notes, researchers use different approaches to understand the nature of reality to make sense of the world, and this research holds the same view. As a researcher approaching Creswell's (2003) perspective, she recognises that reality is sometimes short-lived and situated. Furthermore,

knowledge and truth are built based on socially constructed beliefs and habits (Yefimov, 2004). Each participant's experience in this research study contributes to their unique ideas and reality about developing or improving critical thinking in the classroom. No two individuals will have precisely identical experiences. While views may not be the same, a pragmatist can accept that realities may be single or multiple (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). The individual's environment and experience play an essential role in shaping reality for them (Morgan, 2014; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009). However, apart from the Pragmatist paradigm, there are other claims, namely the Positivist and Constructivist.

The Positivist paradigm, for instance, relies on evidence, such as experiments and statistics, to reveal the true nature of how society operates (Creswell, 2003). Like Creswell (2003), Bassey (1999) has similar views, noting that positivists see the world as rational through human actions that should foster objectivity. Bassey also notes that this reasonable view is denoted in hypothesis testing, where test results are quantified. This quantification is measurements subjected to statistical analysis, referred to as the quantitative approach in social and educational research.

The other claim, the Constructivist paradigm, has the opposite view. They reject the positivist views of the world that hold to the human mind's subjectivity (Bassey, 1999). This subjectivity is espoused from human interaction with each other based on experiences, which have created the qualitative approach to research. The pragmatist view, however, extrapolates the positivist and constructivist points of view in a pluralistic way to dissect what works. Researchers “recognise that there are many ways of interpreting the world to undertake research and that no single point of view can ever give the entire picture, but that there may be multiple realities” (Creswell, 2003). This idea focuses on the research questions rather than the data collection method.



### **3.3 Research Design and Rationale**

According to Creswell (2003), certain research problems use different designs based on the scope of the research. Therefore, as this research uses a pragmatist school of thought utilising a Mixed Methods Research (MMR), the design used follows an embedded (nested) approach. The rationale for using the embedded design over others was to gain a broader perspective than could be gained from using only a predominant data collection method. Another reason was that the embedded method addressed different research questions or garner information from different groups, teachers and students within the institution.

Priority was given to the primary data collection approach with less emphasis on the embedded approach. For this research, the primary approach was qualitative as interviews were conducted with teachers of the institution and the embedded approach was quantitative, with online surveys given to students. Data types were simultaneously collected, allowing for perspectives from each.

### **3.4 Research Strategy**

In the logic of research inquiry, there are four main research strategies (Blaikie, 2007), inductive, deductive, retroductive and abductive (see Table 1). Though each has pros and cons, a researcher chooses their strategy based on the aim, ontology, epistemology and starting and finishing points. Thus, as the research follows a pragmatist school of thought, this research perspective accepts a reproductive approach, which combines elements from deductive and inductive study (Downward & Mearman, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). This research perspective is best suited to address the nature of this inquiry as it highlights the interplay of theory and data (see Table 2) as a central process in empirical research that involves a dialogue between ideas and evidence (Ragin, 1994).

**Table 1***Revised Research Strategies (Blaikie, 2007)*

	Inductive	Deductive	Retroductive	Abductive
Aim	To establish descriptions of characteristics and patterns	To test theories, to eliminate false ones and corroborate the survivor	To discover underlying mechanisms to explain observed regularities	To describe and understand social life in terms of social actors' motives and understanding
Ontology	Cautious, depth or subtle realist	Cautious or subtle realist	Depth or subtle realist	Idealist or subtle realist
Epistemology	Conventionalism	Conventionalism Falsificationism	Modified neo-realism	Constructionism
Start	Collect data on characteristics and/or patterns Produce descriptions	Identify a regularity to be explained	Document and model a regularity	Discover everyday lay concepts, meanings and motives
Finish	Relate these to the research	Construct a theory and deduce hypotheses Test the hypotheses by matching them with data	Describe the context and possible mechanisms Establish which mechanism(s) provide(s) the best explanation in that context	Produce a technical account from lay accounts Develop a theory and elaborate it iteratively

### ***3.4.1 Retroductive Strategy***

To explain the retroductive research strategy, Blaikie (2007) explains that the retroductive approach adopts a depth realist ontology, with three areas of reality: the empirical, the actual and the real. Furthermore, it embraces an epistemology of neo-realism or a combination of neo-realism and constructionism. Klein and White (1996) that theory plays two significant roles in retroductive inferences:

1. Establishing Connectedness: Theories are used during the retroductive process to conceptualise research problems by seeing how the researcher's various ideas and “hunches” are interconnected. The different conceptual elements within a theory (theories) allow the researcher to see distinctions and commonalities that are useful in framing the research problem in tandem with theory/theories.

2. Interpretation: Theories help make sense of the mechanisms by which certain phenomena operate. Truex, Holmstrom and Keil (2006) emphasise this role further by stating that: “... theory guides the process of making sense of complicated and often contradictory real-world phenomena. Theory acts as a lens through which we focus and magnify certain things while filtering out other things presumed to be noise.” Thus, some theoretical perspectives may be used to interpret the context before data collection starts.

Though Blaikie (2007) and Klein and White (1996) outline its theoretical directions, and there is an interplay of theory and data as delineated above, it is also pertinent to note that retroduction is chosen based on how the research aim, ontology and epistemology are interconnected (see Table 2).

### ***3.4.2. Retroductive Strategy and its Connection to a Pragmatist View***

Is there a connection between pragmatist views and retroductive views? A realist approach posits this question as it recognises the reality and importance of meaning, physical and behavioural phenomena, as having explanatory significance and the essentially interpretive nature of our understanding of the former (Sayer, 2000). The ontological and epistemological perspectives outlined by Blaike (2007) and shown in table above support the view of some aspects of realism in research. Thus, with a pragmatist philosophy deployed in the research process, there are ideas of realism.

Epistemology and Ontology incorporate the philosophy of realism to aid in the perspective that people's social and physical contexts have a causal influence on their beliefs and perspectives. While this notion is widely accepted in everyday life, constructivists have not fully supported the reality of such effects. From a realist perspective, not only are individuals' perspectives and their situations both natural phenomena, but they are also separate phenomena that causally interact with one another. Thus, a realist perspective can provide a framework for better understanding the relationship between individuals' perspectives and their actual situations. This issue has been a prominent concern in the philosophy of social science for many years (Menzel, 1978) and is central to "critical" approaches to qualitative research. Critical realism treats individuals' perspectives and situations as natural phenomena that causally interact with one another.

Moreover, critical realism supports the emphasis that critical theory places on social and economic conditions' influence on beliefs and ideologies of the constructivist or interpretivist school of thought. According to Sayer (1992), these views state that the objects of interpretive understanding are influenced both by the material circumstances in which they exist and by the cultural resources that provide individuals with ways of making sense of their situations. However, critical realism approaches understanding this interaction without assuming any specific theory of the relationship between material and ideational phenomena, such as Marxism.

Realist philosophy legitimates and clarifies the concept of "ideological distortion" that cultural forms may obscure or misrepresent aspects of the economic or social system or the physical environment while affirming the causal interaction between the physical and social environment and cultural forms (Sayer, 1992). Mainly, critical realism establishes a connection with the ideological or non-reflection approaches to culture. Cultural documents that contradict aspects of social structure may serve ideological functions that sustain the

social system or constitute adaptive responses to the physical or social environment. Therefore, as there is an emphasis on causal processes rather than laws in explaining sociocultural phenomena, it allows for the inclusion of both a constructivist and post-positivist view. Though this kind of inclusivity is mostly skewed toward constructivism, critical realism facilitates different individuals or social groups with varying responses to similar situations depending on differences in specific personal or cultural characteristics that are causally relevant to the outcome (Menzel, 1978).

### ***3.4.3 Retroductive Research Strategy Guiding the Research***

As the retroductive strategy is centred around critical realism, there is a reality external to thought, but knowledge of that reality is generated by human thought and activity. This is a necessarily simplified presentation of some of the critical issues in the philosophy of social science. In practice, it is not easy to separate one perspective in ontology or epistemology from another (Downward, Finch, & Ramsay, 2002). Working social researchers often develop a work programme that draws on overlapping positions. For instance, a working epistemological position may not neatly map onto the typology in the table above (Blaikie, 2007). Still, this study thought about epistemology and ontology regarding the research questions.

**Table 2***Retroductive Strategy Guidelines for the Research (adapted from Ragin, 1994)*

<i>Aim</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Examined critical thinking skills according to the perceptions of Japanese students of English.</li> <li>2. Examined key belief systems, race and gender factors and their influences on critical thinking skills development in Japanese students of English?</li> <li>3. Investigated the relationship of key belief systems, race and gender factors and their influences on critical thinking skills development in Japanese students of English.</li> </ol>
<i>Ontology</i>	<p>Depth realist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the empirical: primary sources of data collection, interviews, and surveys.</li> <li>(b) the actual: findings.</li> <li>(c) the real: discussion which entails comparison between the findings the literature.</li> </ol>
<i>Epistemology</i>	Pragmatist school of thought: Mixed methods research design.
<i>Start</i>	Concurrent collection of survey data gathered from students and interviews from teachers.
<i>Finish</i>	<p>Convergent embedded analysis of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Descriptive statistical analysis of the survey data.</li> <li>2. Thematic analysis of interview data.</li> </ol>

According to Blaikie (2007), theories about social reality are morphed into two opposed, mutually exclusive categories, idealist and realist. Thus, with this perspective in mind, the idealist theory surrounds what is deemed the external world, while the realists hold views on the activities of human observers. This perspective suggests that ontological questions are fundamental to social research because how research subjects answer them will significantly impact the chosen methodological choices in a study.

As ontology refers to what reality is, this section highlights the ontological approach used (see table 2). Given that the literature review examines the theories from belief systems, gender, and race as the framework for the research question, the connection between the use of the retroductive approach and this research supports the research paradigm. Furthermore, by the retroductive depth realist focus, its inclusion is a research strategy aid in describing the

essential prerequisites or conditions of social relationships, reasoning, knowledge, and people's action.

In a broader context, there are two opposing ontological positions, materialist and idealist. The materialists factored in the scientific world in the social world with an existence that is key to human knowledge. In contrast, the idealist's social world primarily consists of human thought and reflection. Thus, the world is mainly what human beings think it to be. As stated here, materialism and idealism are no more than abstract ideal types intended to help us think through fundamental issues affecting our research (Sayer, 2000). How real-life researchers address ontological question is a complicated process involving reading, reflection, and interaction with other researchers. Where we might find ourselves on an ideal continuum of realism or materialism versus idealism will partly depend on our personal and political outlooks, our biography, and what we understand ourselves as wanting to achieve in pursuing social research.

In the process of retroduction, depth realists, with their core focus on the empirical, actual and natural domains, consider the research's constructionist element. This constructionist element manifested itself in the literature and data collection techniques. Therefore, the literature asserts what reality is as demonstrated by Vygotsky in social constructivism or the sociological approach as delineated earlier by Alder's psychological theory (Collins, Benson, Grand, Lazyan, & Weeks, 2012). Both theoretical backgrounds posit how people reflect their society, insofar as the sociological approach to understanding the self and its parts and its identities mean that there is also the understanding of the society in which the self is acting. This concept demonstrates that the self always works in a social context where the other selves exist (Stryker, 1980).

According to Meyer and Lunnay (2013), epistemology concerns itself with the question of how we generate knowledge of the world. Therefore, to create this knowledge, the following are some of the leading epistemological positions adopted in social research:

- Empiricism: knowledge is seen to derive from sense experience or observation.
- Rationalism: knowledge is derived from thought and reason.
- Relativism: knowledge is culture-bound and relative to perspective; sees the world as socially constructed (overlaps with ontology).

In this research, quantitative and qualitative methods are combined as a Mixed Methods Research study to give a fuller picture of the problem under discussion. Within this lens, descriptive and thematic analyses aid the researcher in adding to an existing body of knowledge in a system of enquiry orchestrated to add value to why people know something (Adler & Adler, 1987). Bearing this fundamental notion in mind, the surveys and interviews, which have their roots in empiricist epistemology, are combined.

As one of the four research strategies, retrodution provides an avenue through which researchers can explain their analysis. This kind of strategy is crucial to the interpretation of data. Danermark, Ekstr, Jakobsen and Karlsson (1997) outline five key areas of retrodution designs geared towards assisting researchers, which can facilitate the employment and description of retroductive inference regardless of whether the research is in line with critical realism. These designs are (a) counterfactual thinking, (b) social and thought experiments, (c) studies of pathological cases, (d) studying of extreme cases and (e) comparative case studies. To explain the five designs, Danermark et al. (1997) delineate them as follows:

- a. Counterfactual thinking refers to exploring knowledge and experience of social reality using questions such as, could one imagine X without Y? This kind of thinking is, at the same time, dialectic since this reasoning is something concerning its opposite.



- b. Social and thought experiments are to imagine and work through the detailed implications of hypothetical worlds. Similarly, both methods aim to get researchers to identify the constitutive factors of everyday conversations to counterfactual thinking. However, unlike counterfactual thinking, social and thought experiments focus on constitutive social interactions and conversations.
- c. Studies of pathological and extreme cases and circumstances referred to studies that can assist researchers in identifying specific conditions under which X is possible. For instance, (1) extreme cases where mechanisms appear in an almost pure form and (2) circumstances where the mechanisms are disturbed and conditions are challenged.
- d. In designing research, comparative case studies can utilise retroductive inference in the analysis. Researchers may choose to study several cases that are assumed to manifest the structure she wishes to describe but are very different in other aspects. In addition, if the researcher wants to develop a theory of the ritual element in social interaction, they will preferably endeavour to compare several different interaction situations to discern the structure all these cases have in common.
- e. Since this study follows a pragmatic view, retroductive inference provides a means of identifying distinctions between trust and other concepts such as dependence. Thus, the research design most suited for this study is social thoughts and experiments. This design aids the strategic line of argument to investigate the research question insofar as its description of the process guides the researcher to acknowledge their role in the design and analysis of empirical research.

## **3.5 Role of the Researcher**

### ***3.5.1 Researcher Stance***

Bonner and Tolhurst (2002) identified three key advantages of being an insider researcher: (a) having a greater understanding of the culture being studied; (b) not altering the flow of social interaction unnaturally, and (c) having an established intimacy which promotes both the telling and the judging of truth. Further, insider researchers generally know the politics of the institution, not only the formal hierarchy but also how it “really works”. They know how to best approach people. They generally have a great deal of knowledge, which takes an outsider a long time to acquire. Although there are various advantages of being an insider-researcher, problems are also associated with being an insider. For instance, greater familiarity can lead to a loss of objectivity. Unconsciously making wrong assumptions about the research process based on the researcher’s prior knowledge can be considered biased.

Furthermore, educational research is concerned with human beings and their behaviour (DeLyser, 2001), involving many players. Each of them brings a wide range of perspectives to the research process, including the researcher’s perspective. This situation can produce a more balanced and, in this sense, more ‘objective’ account of the gradual development. Insider researchers may also be confronted with role duality. They often struggle to balance their insider and researcher roles (DeLyser, 2001).

On the other hand, being an insider could indicate that the researcher sees important information and gains access to sensitive information (Smyth & Holian, 2008). Therefore, to conduct credible insider research, the insider researchers must constitute an explicit awareness of the possible effects of perceived bias on data collection and analysis, respect the ethical issues related to the anonymity of the organisation and individual participants and consider and address the problems about the influencing researcher’s insider role on coercion, compliance and access to privileged information, at every stage of the research.

There are two doctrines related to the issue of insider and outsider researchers. The first one is promoted by Simmel (1950), who argues that a researcher can only be objective if he is an outsider. Simmel (1950) believes it is difficult for a researcher to be natural unless he is an outsider. This view is opposed by outsider doctrine, which argues that if an outsider takes up research, which is not related to him in the topic area, culture, group and status, he will not be able to understand the issue he is working on and therefore, will find it difficult to justify his study's findings. However, both views have advantages and disadvantages; therefore, what is essential is that both insider and outsider researchers follow all the research ethics closely as to what this research will do to carry out research and ensure that the objectives of their study are achieved without bias (see the ethics section).

In addition, Adler and Adler (1987) note that insider researchers are members of organisational systems and communities in and on their organisations. This view contrasts with organisational research conducted by researchers who temporarily join the organisation for the purposes and duration of the study. Moreover, Coghlan and Brannick (2014) note that as the insider, the researcher is engaged in first and second-hand inquiry, which is incorporated into the research as part of its strategy in tackling the research question. Thus, being in the process fosters an in-depth investigation into the issue from a practitioner/scholar-based doctoral research perspective. This insider perspective has enabled the research to define the problem of interest to which there is an underlying assumption of a collaborative process (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

Though it is argued that insider researchers are always passionate about the topic of study, they are practitioners working toward creating knowledge. The research presents various positive impacts to researchers as it adds value to human lives. Therefore, some benefits will be gained if a researcher chooses a topic. In addition, as the strategic backdrop of the research centres on an insider view of the problem, insider research has the dynamics

that distinguish it from an external-researcher approach (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). Furthermore, the researcher is already immersed in the organisation and has built up knowledge of the organisation from being an actor in the studied processes (Blaikie, 2007).

**3.5.1.1 Researcher Stance on Belief Systems, Gender and Race.** The literature review explained intersectionality as the mutually constitutive relations among social identities central to feminist thinking. Research has transformed and conceptualised these relations (Shields, 2008). Hence, as the researcher's stance encompasses the researcher's place of work, it also takes into consideration the belief systems, race and gender of the researcher's background.

Furthermore, the literature review description of how social identities of beliefs, gender and race overlap. Explaining that the research comes with a fair number of biases is essential. Though these biases have not influenced this study from the perspective of the researcher's background, being a black female from a predominantly black country has impacted her way of life in Japan. The focus on the intersectionality of race and gender only highlights the need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed in the scope of this research. Crenshaw (1991) and Shields (2008) outline that the social world impacts gender and race in social categories that an individual claims membership has personal meaning, which has influenced this study.

## **3.6 Qualitative and Quantitative Methodology**

### **3.6.1 Qualitative Design**

Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with various teachers, including those who taught the students involved in the quantitative study. These interviews were geared towards dissecting a richer understanding of the problem, the central phenomenon of the problem's heart. Since the research aims to understand teachers' lived

experiences within their current teaching environment in the British and American and Global Studies departments, the study embraced a multiple case study design. This design allowed for an in-depth exploration of the research question. Furthermore, data were collected qualitatively (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011) and geared towards quantifying the data (Cohen et al., 2011) to establish a holistic view or experience of the teaching practices of the interviewees.

In the individual interviews of teacher-participants, they were asked approximately 14 questions, including follow-ups (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). These questions were related to their views on critical thinking skills, their incorporation of necessary thinking skills in a language classroom, and their attitude in a classroom (see appendices). Moreover, this change allowed the questions to be organised around a set of predetermined open-ended questions relating to background, current teaching practices or approaches to teaching and learning critical thinking skills, which did not necessarily follow the number order on the interview script, but all questions were asked.

The interviewees were colleagues who were teacher-practitioners themselves with extensive knowledge about the organisation and the subject matter as they have been at the institution for a while. The first question about teaching approaches was open-ended and reflective to ease any nervousness (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006) between the interviewees and the researcher. In addition, there was the utilisation of prompts (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree), which allowed the researcher to repeat some words from the interviewees' responses to ask follow-up questions. Also, an atmosphere of trust and relaxation between the interviewer and interviewees was created, which was vital for a fruitful engagement.

### ***3.6.2 Quantitative Design***

The scope of quantitative research allows for researchers find the objective evidence of the investigated phenomena through the scientific processes based on reason and logical deductions (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). The quantitative findings are deduced from numbers and statistics. Following a quantitative research method in using a questionnaires and surveys provide unambiguous data that need to be analysed.

The probability that a quantitative researcher may exclude variables that matter to the study would be much higher than that of the qualitative researcher. This is attributed to the distance between participant and the quantitative researcher limiting opportunities for expansion or clarification since such studies do not include any narratives. In such a situation, quantitative findings cannot truly claim accuracy or truthfulness (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Given that this problematic issue, quantitative methods usually require a larger sample size than in a qualitative process to achieve generalisable results pertinent to larger populations. However, regardless of the rigour of the statistical error tolerance accepted by the quantitative researchers, there is always a possibility that the deduced results may not be accurate. It remains that the amalgamation of both the qualitative and quantitative paradigms could offset each other by utilising the strengths while countering and eliminating each other's weaknesses.

Data was collected in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered online utilising the Survey Monkey website. This survey ascertained a broader context to how students view critical thinking or what role their teachers' race and gender play in their development at this institution. Using a survey-only instrument aided the need to adequately cover a substantial number of the student population. In addition, while the survey had closed-ended and open-ended questions, most were closed. At the same time, a few were open to allowing participants to freely share their personal experiences of how their cultural

contexts, race and gender, influence their critical thinking skills. Graphs and charts were used to show the closed-ended findings, while the open-ended questions were coded. These codes were derived from the specific open-ended questions administered that evolved through the coding process.

### 3.7 Population Selection

#### 3.7.1 Rationale for Interviewing Non-Asian Teachers

The interviewees are colleagues of the researcher with an insider perspective. This insider perspective (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002). As an insider, like the researcher, these interviewees have a unique position in the study. Also, they have special knowledge about the institution. Not only do they have their own insider knowledge, but they have easy access to people and information that can further enhance that knowledge perspective (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002).

Table 3

#### *Interviewees*

Participants	Home country	Years teaching at the institution
Interview 1	United States of America	8
Interview 2	Canada	5 1/2
Interview 3	United Kingdom	4
Interview 4	United States of America	30
Interview 5	Canada	8
Interview 6	United States of America	28
Interview 7	United Kingdom	2

The interviewees are non-Asian practitioners, notably Caucasians. With the researcher being the only black teacher at this institution, white teachers were the other options. Jeon and Lee (2006) note the impact of globalisation and internationalisation on Asian countries hiring native-speaking English teachers. Asian countries hire native English teachers to work

in their educational institutions. Therefore, based on the nature of the study, non-Asian teachers were used to provide a different cultural context.

### ***3.7.2 Rationale for Surveying Japanese Students***

Japanese students of English were selected based on the primary research question. This selection meant that the surveys for the quantitative study were administered to native-Japanese students. This allowed the study to understand the students in the researcher's department. However, on the other hand, the researcher's own students were not asked to be part of the study. This exclusion allows the researcher to precisely study the needs of a relatively homogeneous group of students without the researcher's bias.

### ***3..7.3 Sample Selection***

Two kinds of participants were involved: teachers and students. As the research questions were addressed through a Mixed Methods Research approach, it dictated the sample size and the strategies used to create a sampling procedure. The participants were from across the British and American Studies and Global Studies Departments at the university under study. As purposeful sampling is mainly used in qualitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), it plays an integral part in the process. Purposeful sampling was used to select teachers from the British and American Studies Department who have been experienced and have been in the education field for over five years. The kind of experience sought by the researcher was based on the participants' knowledge of language teaching. Though several purposeful sampling strategies exist (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), the more common type, maximal variation, was used. This strategy was used not only based on its popularity but because it ensured that a diverse mix of individuals with various views on the research questions was selected.



To select a diverse group of interviewees, maximal variation sampling considered the sample size's demographic background, gender and race. A total of seven teachers were interviewed. Furthermore, to employ the quantitative approach, the study selected students who were representatives of the more extensive British and American and Global Studies Departments population based on random sampling. This method ensured that each member of the population was equally likely to be chosen as part of the sample, and the results could be generalised to the people. Thus, the selection was 145 students from the British and American Studies Department and 53 from the Global Studies Department.

The inclusion criteria for the students involved were determined by their English ability and the courses they were studying. This selection of 145 students from the British and American Studies department was chosen based on the English classes they were taking, for example, if they were taking communication or skills-based courses. Of about 85-90 students in the Global Studies department, 53 were selected from mainly years two and three.

Additionally, this selection was based on them being in an English-only programme, where they were taking courses only taught in English and were more knowledgeable about the practices, unlike first-year students. The taught courses required students to engage more in higher-order thinking expressed in English. The range of the interviewed teachers was mainly determined by purposeful sampling, which entailed their willingness and experience with teaching language learners in an English Studies environment.

The exclusion criteria were based on not being in the British and American Studies and Global Studies Departments or were in both departments but were classified as “returnees” and international students. Describe the Global Studies department; it has a small number of returnees, and international students, which will not be included in the study as the idea is to track the progress and process of how Japanese students born and raised in Japan view critical skills development. Year one students were not part of the study because it is a

new department and was still trying to recruit students. Others excluded were faculties or departments that the researcher was teaching. This exclusion prevented any coercion.

### **3.8 Data Treatment**

#### ***3.8.1 Data Collection Process***

Based on the utilisation of a Mixed Methods Research (MMR) approach, the study followed a convergent embedded (nested) design over other designs such as explanatory or exploratory sequential, mixed methods experimental, mixed method case study, mixed methods participatory-social justice and mixed methods evaluation (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). The use of a convergent design was based on the study's purpose, which was to: (1) gain a broader perspective than could have been gained from using a predominant data collection method, (2) use an embedded method to address different research questions and (3) garner information from different groups (teachers and students) within the institution.

The first step in the process was that qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently, roughly simultaneously. According to Plano Clark and Ivankova (2016), this step reduces the time required to collect data to create efficiency. Therefore, data were collected in this format to reduce time and improve efficiency. The weighing was also crucial. While weighting each phase may be equal, an embedded design was used to emphasise the method over the others (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). By following this idea, deductive logic studies tend to weigh the quantitative portion more heavily to explain a phenomenon. In contrast, inductive or exploratory reasoning will emphasise the qualitative part (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). Given the purpose of this study, quantitative data formed the embedded portion, while qualitative data was the focal point for a more deductive or retroductive approach to reasoning.

### ***3.8.2 Data Analysis Plan***

Researchers' common justification for using mixed methods is combining different data components that contribute to better support outcomes and more robust inferences than using one way alone. In this study, the evidence of both the qualitative and quantitative parts adequately answered the research questions (Bazeley, 2018). Using a mixed methods approach allowed the data collected from different sources, interviews, and questionnaires, each with different strengths, to come together beneficially in a complementary way. Each contributes to unique aspects and differing perspectives on the research subjects, teachers and students to produce a more refined and rounded understanding, thus giving a better sense of the whole (Bazeley, 2018).

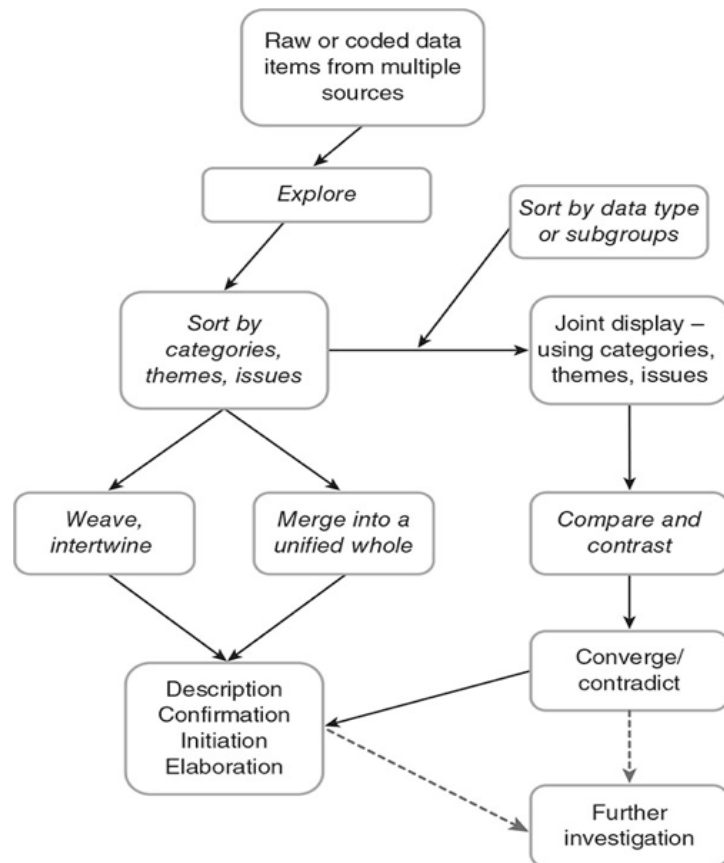
Through complementary data analysis (Bazeley, 2018), information and ideas from both qualitative and quantitative methods were merged to reinforce and create a complete and more comprehensive whole. Bazeley (2018) notes that complementary strategies include descriptive, comparative, and iterative approaches. Based on these strategies, an iterative approach was used where the data merged to "jointly constitute" the subject of study. This was an area where metaphors for both the processes and the outcomes of mixing methods abounded, or triangulation produced completed puzzles and collages or perhaps an archipelago (see Figure 2).

To compare the construction of a patterned mosaic or a jigsaw with the bricolage. Being more strategic starts at the planning phase for the project; it requires foreknowledge of the types of sources available and the kinds of data they will provide (Bazeley, 2018). Documents were sourced, surveys planned, observations made, and interviews held; each designed and contributed specific data and additional insights to answer the research questions. The qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously, combining data sources with being complementary, like figuring out maise. Through a series of

emergent analyses, this research presented data ascertained based on Figure 2 (Bazeley, 2018).

## Figure 2

*Mapping Complementary Data Analysis (Bazeley, 2018)*



A coherent composite picture with both breadth and depth involved a more profound, potentially more complex integration process in combining complementary sources and analyses. With this composite in mind, the researcher carefully added elements by placing or weaving them together to create a comprehensive and complete picture (perhaps experimentally), merging or juxtaposing the diverse media and varied colours available. The process included having to manage clashing themes. It involved iteratively reworking parts of the process and gradually brought it through a mutually enriching variety of elements and creative strategies. As the analysis became “a creative and at times even playful meshing of

data-collecting methods to encourage serendipity and openness to new ideas” (Bazeley, 2018), it was a tedious process.

**3.8.2.1 Qualitative Analysis.** The qualitative researcher tries to make sense of the phenomena based on the meanings suggested by the study participants (Creswell, 2009). This process offered some correspondence with my reality/practice (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Moreover, parts of the recorded interviews were transcribed so that the audio data were converted into notes (Dörnyei, 2007) as much as possible. After this transcription, the data were coded using a “First Cycle method” (Saldana, 2016). First Cycle methods are those processes that happen during the initial coding of data. They are divided into seven subcategories: Grammatical, Elemental, Affective, Literary and Language, Exploratory, Procedural, and a final profile entitled Theming the Data (Saldana, 2016). Coding enabled the data to be grouped into different categories and was labelled based on the interview headings.

Moreover, coding aided in pursuing the analysis as an iterative process involving active reflexivity. This process is administered in organising the data into producing explanations narratively (Cohen et al., 2011), using verbatim quotes. This approach allowed me to analyse the data thematically, with the identification of patterns amongst the participants’ responses (Cohen et al., 2011). Though there may not be many themes/patterns, based on the number of participants, some patterns were observed and outlined.

**3.8.2.2 Quantitative Analysis.** Descriptive statistics were utilized as parts of the data needed to be descriptive, and others were inferred based on the deductive or retroductive nature of the study. For example, fourteen closed-ended questions showed descriptive results from the survey instrument of 20 questions, while six open-ended questions were included (see Questionnaire in appendices).

To first explain the process, descriptive statistics (also known as descriptive analysis) is the first level of analysis (Creswell, 2009). It helps researchers summarise the data and find

patterns. Quantitatively, descriptive statistics provide absolute numbers to forge a basis to describe the study's results. For example, percentages were used to show the gender distribution of respondents. The use of descriptive statistics proved helpful as it was limited to the sample and the closed-ended questions the survey had.

On the other hand, these descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to infer trends about a larger population based on the closed-ended questions from the questionnaire. For instance, to look at the relationship between belief systems, race, and gender and their impact on critical skills development, and then make generalisations or predictions about how these variables relate to the larger population. Some techniques used included coefficient correlation relating to the correlation of scatterplots of graphs and linear regression of dependent and independent variables.

### **3.9 Trustworthiness and Threats to Validity**

The researcher in person contacted the participants. Since the researcher works at the research site, it was more beneficial to speak to the teachers whose classes the potential participants or students were to come from to arrange a time to hand out and explain the participant information sheets (PIS). This process was then done in preparation for students to fill out the questionnaires online after five days of my meeting with them. This process will prevent any coercion by anyone, namely their teacher.

The exact process was carried out for the interviews as teachers were contacted by the researcher in person to be given (PIS) but was given some time, about five days, to read and ask any questions they might have. If they agreed, they were given consent forms in person or via email to sign and return to the researcher. Then, after signing the consent forms, they were given time slots for when the interviews will take place. The discussions took place in a private office on the research site, which was booked to ensure privacy.

The survey questions were written in English and Japanese, the native language (see appendices). The translation of the English version to Japanese was done by a certified Japanese translator who translates academic documents. The translations were simply for understanding the survey questions; to only provide clarity for students when reading questions being asked. The translator had no access to any part of the collected data. These student surveys were filled out in Japanese, and the teacher interview questions were in English.

Furthermore, after the student data were collected, it proved to be a bit difficult to translate. This difficulty led to the time-consuming nature of going through the data to provide the English version of the data responses for questions 15 to 20. To explain how the Japanese responses were translated, three steps were undertaken. First, the data were downloaded as an Excel file. Then, some of the more manageable parts were written in hiragana and katakana, some of the parts were written in kanji, and others were put into Google translate to aid the translation. These steps were necessary not only given the time-consuming nature of the research but the fact that there are three writing systems in Japanese, Katakana and Hiragana syllabaries and Kanji, Chinese characters. These combinations often make Japanese writing more complicated to understand or translate.

### **3.10 Ethical Procedures**

Being ethical is pertinent to the research. Ethical principles should be followed during data collection and analysis according to the ethical codes of conduct from the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2018) and any other bodies designated by the University of Liverpool, the research facilitator. BERA (2018) promulgates the responsibility of the researcher to its participants, the educational community, publication and dissemination of the research and their overall well-being.

The researcher received all the advantages of being an insider researcher not only during the interview session but also during the technical aspects of the research, such as finding the participants, dealing with schools and making appointments, and getting consent from school administration and the participants. When the researcher introduced herself, the officer in charge was supportive and fully cooperated with the researcher to be conducted.

Participants of this study were based in Japan; as such, in accordance with BERA 2018 Ethical Guidelines, a password-protected document containing the names and contact details of the participants is stored in the researcher's computer that is password protected and away from the research site. This document has been kept until the data collection process ends. For anonymity, pseudonyms are used for the name of the research site and any other references. In addition, no names will be known to the public, and these will be kept on my password-protected computer at home. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of participants, and personal information will not be disclosed in written documents. These will be kept on my password-protected computer at home. There will be an iPhone or iPad, which will be used for recordings, and it will be password protected. No one will be able to gain access. The researcher will keep the code in a locked drawer at home in safe storage space.

O'Leary (2014) contends that there is a need to manage the entire research process effectively. Therefore, time management is pertinent. The ability to manage my time wisely will be of value to the completion of the project. Moreover, as the research requires the researcher to write and explore ideas, concepts and themes, the researcher's writing and communicative skills and research techniques have improved based on the modules in the program's first stage. With these improvements, clarity, purpose, and organisation will be achieved.

As the research sought to get to the heart of the problem, the research was conducted through interviews and the dissemination of questionnaires (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree,



2006) by using mixed methods research. To garner participants, there were limitations (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). The limitations that came to mind would be: (1) the willingness of teachers and the student body to participate; the potential reluctance of them to participate in research with race and gender elements, and (2) and the access and translation of certain Japanese documents in a timely and accurate manner.

After using the recordings, they will be stored on a flash drive and kept for up to five years. The flash drive will be held for up to five years, then the recordings will be deleted, and the anonymised verbatim word transcripts and surveys are stored in a locked drawer at the researcher's home and the key kept by the researcher. Also, a document shredder will destroy papers or notes after five years.

The responsibilities as defined by BERA (2018) are entwined into dealing with limitation one as delineated above, getting teachers, students and the institution to be a part of the study. The research first highlighted its benefits and demonstrated an ethical code of conduct. This process encompassed informed consent and anonymity (BERA, 2018). As social research requires informed consent and participation without duress (Oliver, 2003), the participants were informed about the study to deal with such an issue. Then, the researcher gave them time to decide if they wanted to participate. In addition, ethical concerns surrounding data analyses included the presentation of strategies that followed triangulation to verify various sources to show respect for truth in the dimension of respect for democracy and person (Bassegy, 1999).

### **3.11 Summary**

This study utilised a Mixed Methods Research approach to understanding how belief systems, gender and race have influenced the development of critical thinking skills. This study also includes participants in the environment to provide a basis for how their lived experiences are pertinent to this study for knowledge creation.

## Chapter 4: Reporting the Findings

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from both qualitative and quantitative data analyses. This chapter also delineates the use of a mixed method convergent embedded design, comprising both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to examine the research questions. This design facilitated data to be collected to gain a broader perspective, address different research questions, and garner information from teachers and students within the institution. This study seeks to answer the primary research question: How Belief Systems, Race and Gender Influence the Development of Critical Thinking in Japanese Students of English.

### 4.1 Findings from the Qualitative Data

The qualitative perspective is derived from teachers and presented in this section. In addition, this section reports the understanding of critical thinking and critical thinking skills and how they are developed in the classroom.

#### 4.1.1 Number of Referenced Themes and Sub-themes

**Table 4**

*Number of coded themes and sub-themes referenced*

<b>Interviews</b>	<b>References of theme and sub-themes</b>	<b>Main themes and sub-themes identified</b>
Interview 1-Male	28	11
Interview 2-Female	15	8
Interview 3-Male	7	5
Interview 4-Male	18	8
Interview 5-Female	4	3
Interview 6-Female	2	2
Interview 7-Female	15	8

Table 4 presents seven teachers at the institution who participated in the study. The interview data was systematically coded where concepts were ascertained and later turned into themes using NVIVO qualitative software. The table shows the number of references cited per every interview and the themes and sub-themes identified. Table 4 also shows that from the seven teachers interviewed, there were 3 males and 4 females based on purposeful maximal variation sampling technique.

#### ***4.1.2 Background of Respondents***

**Table 5**

*English courses currently teaching/taught by respondents*

<b>Interviewees</b>	<b>Courses currently teaching/have taught</b>
Interview 1-Male	4 Skills courses [listening, speaking, reading writing]
Interview 2-Female	English Workshop, Academic Writing and English Seminar courses
Interview 3-Male	4 Skills courses [listening, speaking, reading writing] and Academic Writing
Interview 4-Male	Hospitality, English, Debate, Advanced Debate, Practical English courses
Interview 5-Female	Hospitality and Tourism courses
Interview 6-Female	Did not state any courses
Interview 7-Female	Communication skills and research courses

Based on background questions asked, table 5 provides information relating to the English courses the respondents are currently teaching or have taught. As the table shows, 6 out of the 7 respondents highlight the courses they are currently teaching or have taught at this institution.

**Table 6***Main Themes and Sub-Themes Identified*

<b>Main Themes - Sub-Themes</b>	<b>Respondents/ Interviewees</b>	<b>References of themes and sub-themes made from the interviews/interviewees</b>
<b>1. Understanding of Critical Thinking Skills</b>		
- Critical Thinking Classroom Activities	Interview 5-Female	12
- Definition or Explanation	Interview 3-Male	8
- Student Inability to Think Critically	Interview 1-Male	2
- Teaching Approach	Interview 3-Male	4
<b>2. Belief Systems</b>		
- Socialization	Interview 1-Male	4
- Teacher Perception	Interview 4-Male	10
<b>3. Gender Issues</b>	Interview 2-Female	10
- Description of Students Background	Interview 4-Male	9
- Student Perception	Interview 1-Male	2
<b>4. Other Effects on Language Learning</b>	Interview 3-Male	5
- Student Recruitment	Interview 1-Male	4

Table 6 shows four main themes and sub-themes that were delineated by the interviewees. Column 4 shows the number of times that main themes or sub-themes have been referenced or identified from responses. In the table, each interview is identified by their gender and the order in which they were done. Therefore “Interview 1-Male” means that the first interview was with a male teacher. The table also offers the direction on which areas respondents identified as being mostly knowledgeable about as they answered the questions.

### 4.1.3 Main Theme: Understanding of Critical Thinking Skills

The analysed data indicates the participants' perspective to questions relating their personal understanding of critical thinking skills and how they have developed them in the classroom. When asked a series of questions about approaches to teaching and learning, the understanding of critical thinking skills was identified as a main theme. The identification of this theme promotes the following sub-themes:

**4.1.3.1 Sub-Theme 1: Critical Thinking Classroom Activities.** As shown in Table 6 only one respondent, Interview 5-Female provided a lengthy response to critical thinking in the classroom. She notes that she asks her students a lot of questions, for example about their life, and what aspects of their life they are grateful for or what aspects of their life they would like to change. These questions, according to Interview 5 suggest that there are different ways of encouraging deep thinking. Bearing that in mind, she further notes the following:

*"...I get them trying to use the vocabulary in their answers to these questions. And it always keeps coming back to them and their experience. Have you ever had an experience of being discriminated against? If you ever had or you have ever seen someone discriminated against?"*

In addition,

*"I think at a level where it surpasses not just understanding or comprehension, but to be evaluative to analyze things. I know that these students at these levels are not that high, but how do you go about taking what they have understood to a level where they can use that to analyze things, come up with their own ideas to create, something by themselves, right or okay?"*

Interview 5- Female's perspective shows how she goes about creating activities for the classroom. Interview 5 notes:

*"I notice in students when they come into my classroom, many of them just accept things at face value because that's what they've been told or that's what they've read. And I try and get them doing several things. One of the things that I tried to get him to do is to always ask the two questions, why and how, how does that work and why does it work that way? Why does it exist that way? And in doing so, I'm getting them to try to break down, get through the surface of whatever phenomenon we're examining and see what it's composed of. What does it mean and why is it that way? And so that I*

*think that's the first step is to foster and critical thinking is I don't get them just talking about, let's say inequality or gender bias, which is what we're at."*

While there was only one female, Interview 5 who asserted that the kind of activities used in her class was geared toward critical thinking skills development, others seem not to have offered a thorough view of their activities. However, a male participant offered some view as all three outlined their classroom activities.

Interview 3-Male:

*"So, I do like to try to probably active learning in classes as much, for critical thinking activities with these kinds of classes. It's very difficult because they're very low-level students and they're having problems, even just trying to vocalize in English."*

Interview 4-Male:

*"That starts off as a writing exercise. And then from there we turn it into a presentation, develop outlining and then try to escape the paper. But it requires a lot of critical thinking, you know, kinds of things. And I believe personally as very important, this kind of critical thinking in language learning. If you don't have something to say, then language sharing isn't all that much fun for me."*

Interview 7-Male:

*"I've split the evaluation into content knowledge. So, the effort they've put into learning about the topic plus content language, like how much of this specialist language, like vocabulary expressions, how they try to use, and I just, I tried to focus it that way. So, I tried to create a break from the experience of the new shakes and the engines. And so, I just show them that now English is a tool. What you've got is enough, and you're going to use it to study some contents and various topics because do you employ any parts of the lesson where students create anything by themselves."*

As the participants outlined their view of critical thinking activities in the classroom above, they note that their activities help in giving information and active learning. According to them, they are fostering critical thinking with increased engagement to achieve favourable results.

**4.1.3.2 Sub-Theme 2: Teaching Approach.** To discover how teachers implement teaching activities, ideas, and excises in their classes, a teacher's teaching approach seems to

provide pedagogical insights. In developing pedagogical creativity, the participants were asked how learning objectives and skills were achieved by the end of lessons, whether their approaches were teacher or learned-centred, and the inclusion of critical thinking skills. The participants were also asked if the promotion and development of critical thinking was a skill set for their students. Their responses are highlighted in this section.

On the topic of teaching approaches, Interview 1-Male notes that he tries as much as possible to engage his students to stimulate them. He also notes that students must be interested in what they are doing and talking about. Therefore, he gets his “students writing and reading and talking and listening and it can't be boring, but fun.”

In addition, Interview 3-Male notes that “In my classes, I take a learner-centered approach. I always have done so because I took a teacher's training course, and I was quite taken by that style of teaching.” He further notes that,

*“A lot of English teachers from England don't like students talking for example when they're talking. So, I think that manners play a lot in the influences. I think the approaches to teaching and learning a language outcomes objective, they usually set out at the beginning of the course.”*

The last response relating to the teaching approach came from Interview 4-Male who suggests that the “cultural context” of the students aids in teaching. He notes that “...depending on the subject, my British culture classes, for example, would be more teacher-centred in a lecture oriented. But largely, I'm there to teach English as a foreign language. And I try to make those classes as student centred as possible.”

**4.1.3.3 Sub-Theme 3: Definition and Explanation of Critical Thinking.** Based on the participants' views on questions asked about their understanding of critical thinking skills development in the classroom, definition and explanation of the topic had different views, but only three of the participants defined or explained what critical thinking meant to them.

Interview 1-Male believes that,

*“...writing involves much critical thinking, like teaching academic writing because they must, when they have a topic, they're going to write about it. And, to build an*

*argument, you've got to be able to think critically. So that assessment is the assessment of writing. I mean, critical thinking is a necessity to assess writing because you're looking not only for content but structure."*

While Interview 2-Female thinks that critical thinking is abstracted and further notes,

*"I guess then possibly critical thinking is probably abstracted, but more to say critical thinking skills, right? Because when you say skills, possibly, someone can understand it more, right? Not mean right. Instead of critical thinking, right. We don't know what's inside people's heads, right. But being able to ask questions, being able to have a discussion without feeling attacked or attacking others like trying to stay calm within a discussion. You know, the current political situation in the United States. I think critical thinking skills is like you can practice skills through activities which will, it would hopefully lead to a natural set of critical things."*

The last of the three, Interview 7-Female explained the importance of critical thinking in language learning. She thinks, "Students need a variety of skills because it's not just about translating; that's not communication." She also notes, "My image and language learning are a lot about communication and being able to interact with others. And that involves critical thinking, knowledge of culture, creative thinking, everything."

**4.1.3.4 Sub-Theme 4: Students' Inability to Think Critically.** To learn how the participants view their students, they were asked a series of questions regarding their students' beliefs. These questions included the participants describing their students, and the kind of critical thinking skills activities used and accessed. Though asked these questions, only one provided direct views.

This participant, Interview 2-Female infer that regardless of the language structure of Japanese or English students by stating the following:

*"It's not necessarily a matter of level over or vocabulary because I think even if you ask them to do it in Japanese, they wouldn't be able to do it even in their own language. So, they just don't have those discussion skills. And like I said before, I teach a debate class and the majority of the students who take that class are interested in it because they're frustrated in not being able to communicate their opinions and be able to argue different viewpoints because they don't have that experience in any of their classes unless they happen to have a teacher who teaches them debate as part of a speaking course or something like that. But it's not a regular part of anyone's coursework here. So, and what they're supposed to do is write a*



*summary response and they must do that homework every week. One of the reasons that a lot of Japanese have problems at discussing current events is they don't know what current events are because they don't watch the news."*

#### **4.1.4 Main Theme: Belief Systems**

**4.1.4.1 Sub-Themes: Socialisation and Teacher Perception.** Socialisation and Teacher Perception are the sub-themes based on Belief Systems, a core component of the research question. Both sub-themes underscore how the participants view the environment in which they live and teach. One out of seven provided a detailed view, while others steered away from environmental influences on critical thinking development.

As it relates to the sub-theme of socialisation, Interview 4-Male notes that he believes that Japanese students do not learn the argumentative Socratic style of considering the question as being relevant. To arrive at that conclusion, he notes that he had worked with Japanese, Korean and Chinese graduate students in the United States and they quickly adapted to that system and understood the expectations there. Thus, there is cultural bias in that approach to critical thinking from a western point of view, which he further explained as follows:

*"Often as a Westerner I would come at it as someone who is socialize in cultural context where I've been very encouraged to have my own opinion and, in some ways, even try to be unique if not argumentative. I think it's very fair to say that the Japanese approach to education not only Japan, but other education systems that I've seen in particularly East Asia is still about achieving a certain body of knowledge, too. Japan, I think the idea of academic attempting to take on achieved knowledge and teacher centric approach, lecture style continues through most of high school in most subjects and, and on through university. So, critical thinking could be said to suffer."*

In addition, the sub-theme of teacher perception relating to the students' background is based on critical thinking activities done in the classroom. Half of the participants noted how they felt and cited activities done or trying to do. These three participants stated the following:

Interview 1-Male notes,

*“I think there are a lot I know this from talking with a lot of my students, there are a lot of female students that are interested in becoming, you know, airline attendants working for the airline industry, working in the travel industry and maybe these kinds of careers. And then, maybe the males are pushed more towards things like business or engineering or sciences, hard sciences, etc. Becoming computer experts, that kind of thing. And so maybe if we went down the street to another university, where they have a big science focus, I bet it's 70% men and 25, 30% women. So, I think it has to do with the subject matter. And, maybe that's why in the Global Studies [Department], because we have a business sort of track that may be, it attracts some, a few more men than, than let's say, the English Language Department.”*

Interview 7-Female notes the following:

*“I think my approach is when they first arrive, they're almost like zombies. They're so in shock almost at the change in atmosphere of the learning environment. So, my approach is just to get them to feel comfortable bond with each other as soon as possible. You know, by mixing up the groups all the time, getting to work with lots of different people and just praise them as much as possible. I think a lot of students here do want to work overseas even short term. And I'd be slightly worried they'd be lost because work culture is quite different here as well as education.”*

#### **4.1.5 Main Theme: Gender**

##### **4.1.5.1 Sub-Themes: Description of Students' Background and Students'**

**Perception.** The seven respondents were asked about their students' background and how society influences students' development through gender lenses. In addition, they were asked how their students perceived the culture and education. There was a mix of responses capturing the respondents' intense feelings. For example, Interviewees 1 and 2, both male respondents, respectively note:

*“In the Department of Global Studies [new department], the females outnumber the males, but not to the extent that they do in the British and American Studies department where I used to teach. It used to be about 70, 30-70% female, 30% male. Now, in our new department there are more males-not more males than females, but there are more, proportionately, I'd say it's about maybe 60, 40- 60% female, 40% male. I'm just saying that off the top of my head, based on what I see in my classes, just slightly more females than males, it could even be 55, 45. But, at this university whole has more females than males, students, not teachers. It's, the other way around and even more extreme. So, there's a gender problem there. A lot of that comes from the cultural conditioning in any given society. I mean, you're going to see evidence of that and when it comes to the workplace, I mean, Japan is well known for the gender imbalance in terms of the low number of females in positions of power and management and things like that.”*

*“I’ve been in Japan 40 years in teaching all those years. When I first arrived, the females were demurer and reticent to express themselves in classroom situations. And the guys weren’t necessarily stronger, but we’re given sort of more time and perhaps their voice was allowed to have more reticence than the women were more careful than how they contradicted or perhaps, yeah. So, the men have sort of gotten soft and there’s a lot of commentary about this in terms of, um, being outspoken and being sort of macho or machismo and that women are getting sort of stronger and stronger. The women are the communicators and the men have been, you know, in the literature and in my experience are kind of like one of the kids, one of the grownup kids in many ways.”*

On the topic of students’ perception Interview 2-Female raised this unique perspective of personality over the gender. The view was expressed that students’ identity helps to broaden points of view.

*“I think it depends more on the personality of the student rather than the gender. It’s a contemporary time, so I do have the Zemi [research class] that I teach and is primarily focused on gender studies, but I’ve pulled back from gender and broadened it to deal with identity in general. Like what does it mean to be Japanese? because they’re always like we Japanese. And I’m like, who does that include the double or bicultural biracial person beside you? I have a couple of male students who react very strongly against any gender related thing and often feel attacked by it.”*

#### **4.1.6 Main Theme: Other Effects on Language Learning**

It was noted by Interview 4-Male and Interview 7-Female, respectively that there is an opportunity as educators in a classroom of people to engage students in critical thinking. Educators should design activities that foster critical thinking for the benefit of the students and society in general.

Interview 4-Male:

*“Because if we have a society, a Democratic Society of critical thinkers, then I think we can have a much healthier democracy that where, where governments are held accountable, where media is held accountable, politicians are held accountable and power is held accountable, um, for the benefit of the whole.”*

Interview 7-Female notes,

*“I think it’s important to develop critical skills for our society in addition to the health of you know, individuals. But does it play a critical role in learning? Is it necessary to really become proficient in a language that, that you must use? Critical thinking skills? I don’t think so. I don’t think it is. Maybe I would need to examine it more closely to come up with a more accurate kind of answer, but I just think it’s a, we can kill two birds with one stone when we engage students in critical thinking as part of*

*their exercise of using the language and becoming more proficient at it. So that's kind of how I see it."*

Both respondents further note:

Interview 7-Female:

*"We're often working on a particular small presentation or project and so they may have partners and so they'll have more than one student working on a theme or if they are working individually, then we have them do a lot of pair work and small group work. The point is we want, I want them to use in an applied way, their skills as much as possible. In some writing aspects of say TOEFL [Test of English as a Foreign Language] or IELTS [International English Language Testing System] classes."*

Interview 7-Female:

*"Emotional self-awareness, like emotional intelligence. Like that's kind of my research. I know how your cycle of like the effective sites like can really influence how fast or how slowly you progress with your language learning."*

**4.1.6.1 Sub-Theme: Student Recruitment.** A final sub-theme identified under the umbrella theme, Other Effects on Language Learning, recruiting students was suggested by Interview 1-Male as a way students are admitted into this university's language course. This idea of the university structures and recruitment platform was explained.

*"Well, a lot of it has to do with how our university structures students enter the university. So, to recruit international students, the university makes visits to other countries."*

Another perspective from Interview 1-Male was examination requirement as it recruits. It was noted that the TOEIC [Test of English for International Communication] score level is a one of those tools.

*"And part of their pitch is that students must come in at a certain TOEIC [Test of English for International Communication] score level and they set that bar high. They [Japanese Universities] tell students to have 650 TOEIC score. Therefore, the international students that are trying to come into the university, they have that in mind. And so, they feel like if they know that their English ability is not that high, they probably just don't apply. Whereas the domestic students coming in, there's lots of different ways to come in. Some of them were coming in through recommendations through their high school."*

On the other hand, this respondent suggests that,

*“Some of them are coming in through taking standard entrance exams, which may not place such a high value on the English level. The whole system here in Japan to gain entrance into universities is a giant moneymaker for universities, they charge fees to students to even take the test. You must pay a large fee and to prepare for the test, you must go to a school, a Juku [extra classes], too. So, it's a whole industry.”*

#### **4.1.7 Summary of the Qualitative Data Findings**

The qualitative data clearly demonstrates that all the participants of this study had different views about critical thinking and critical thinking skills. Although their familiarity with the concept of critical thinking skills development was relatively high. It is also clear that the participants have are not aware of what those skills are to pedagogical use them in their own classrooms to facilitate students' learning.

Although some participants were aware of the existence of many teaching approaches initiatives and programmes established with the goal of nurturing students, it was unclear if those skills are adding students improve their critical thinking. However, it is encouraging to find that the participants were generally able to suggest the ways which they perceived as fruitful in the quest of increasing students' creativity.

All the participants indicated that they had attempted to increase their pedagogical creativity unaided, the extent of such attempts and the preferred methods differed among the respondents. Interestingly, the reviews were mixed when it came to how students perceive their understanding and critical thinking, and how the Japanese society relating belief systems, gender and race play its role in students learning.

## **4.2 Findings from the Quantitative Data**

This section presents the findings from a quantitative perspective. The quantitative perspective shown is derived from an online survey to Japanese students of English in the English Studies and Global Studies departments. This survey was designed see if students think belief systems, gender and race influence their critical thinking.

### 4.2.1 Section 1: Demographic of Respondents

The information analysed in this section represents the demographic information collected from the respondents, illustrated using graphs. Furthermore, the findings show how responses are presented based on percentages and numbers.

**Figure 3**

*Gender of Respondents*

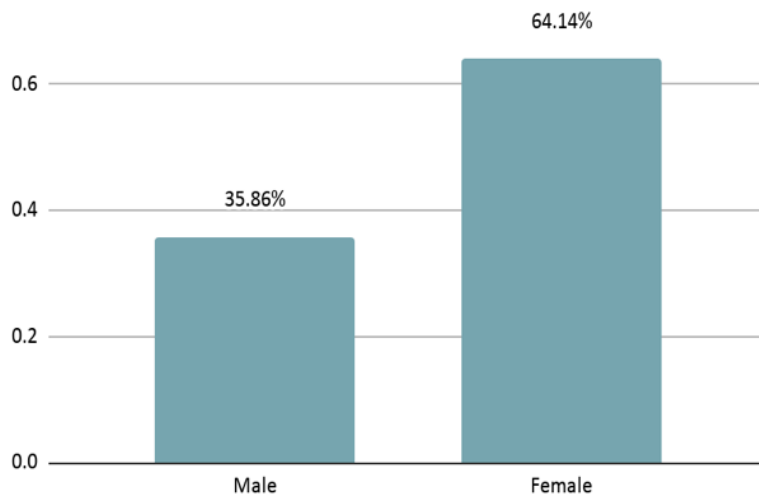
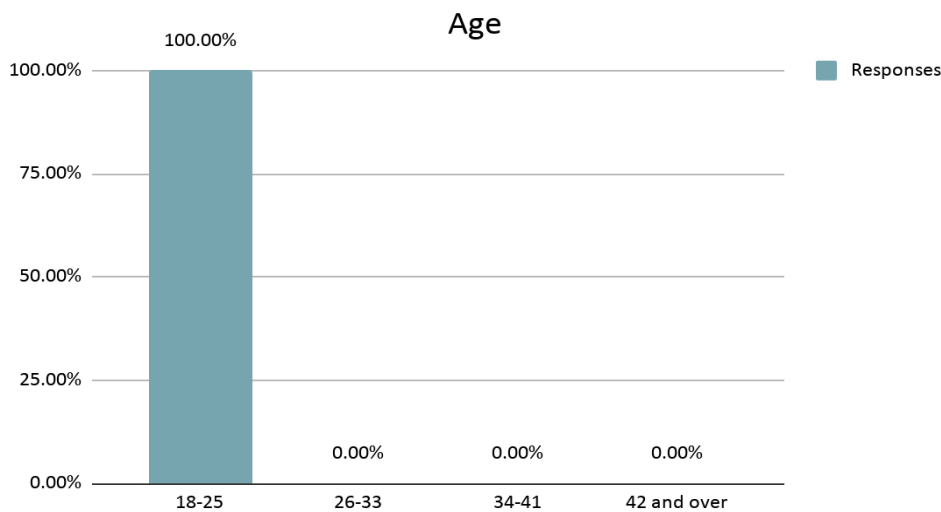
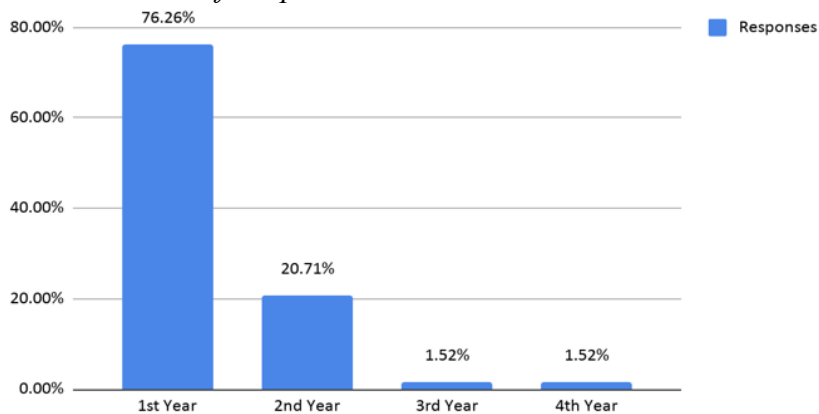


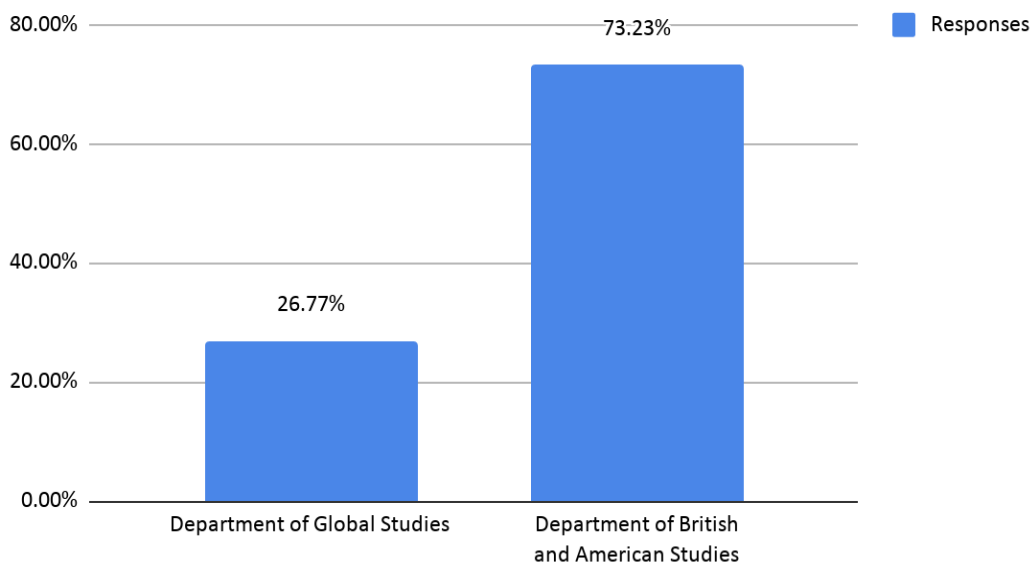
Figure 3 shows 35.86 percent 71 males and 64.14 or 127 are females who gave responses out of a total of 198 respondents. The graph also shows that females outnumbered males by almost a 30% margin.

**Figure 4***Age of Respondents*

Based on Figure 4, 100 per cent of responses fall within the age group of 18-25 years old, which is a total of 198 respondents. The graph also shows that there were no respondents with the ages of 26-33, 34-41, over 42 years old.

**Figure 5***The School Year of Respondents*

Based on Figure 5, 76.26 per cent or 151 of the respondents are 1st-year students, 20.71 per cent or 41 are 2nd-year students, 1.52 per cent or 3 are 3rd-year students, and 1.52 per cent or 3 are 4th-year students. Figure 3 also shows that 1st-year students gave the highest number of responses while 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years gave the lowest.

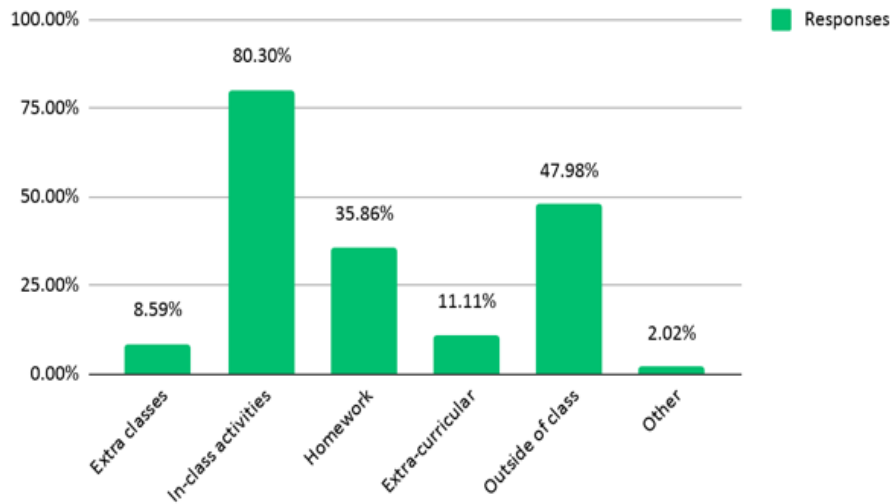
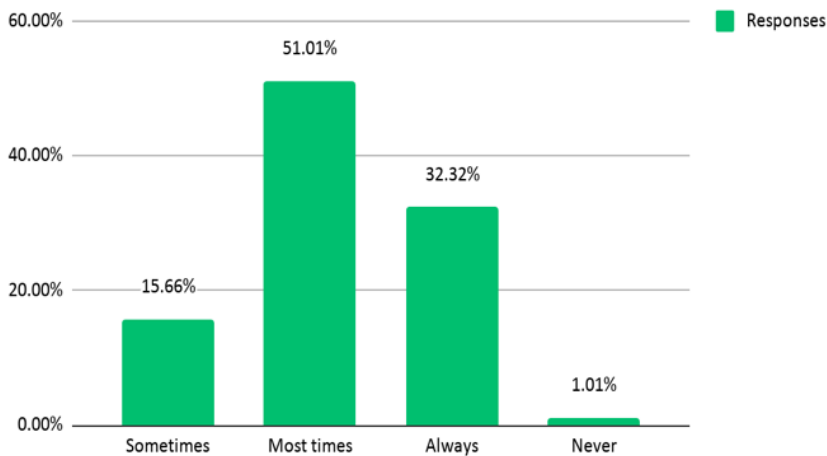
**Figure 6***English Programmes of Respondents*

When the respondents were asked about their programmes of study, Figure 6 shows the result illustrating that 26.77 percent or 53 of the respondents are in the Department of Global Studies while 73.23 per cent or 145 are in the Department of British and American Studies. The graph also shows that the Department of British and American Studies outnumbers the Department of Global Studies by almost 47% of respondents.

#### ***4.2.2 Section 2: Self-studying, Communicative Skills and Activities, and Support***

The information analysed looked at the different learning strategies utilised by the respondents to help them succeed. The information also shows the beliefs of students, language skills viewed to be developed, class hours and academic workload, and support services used.



**Figure 7***Learning Strategies Utilise by Respondents***Figure 8***Beliefs by Respondents of In-class Activities*

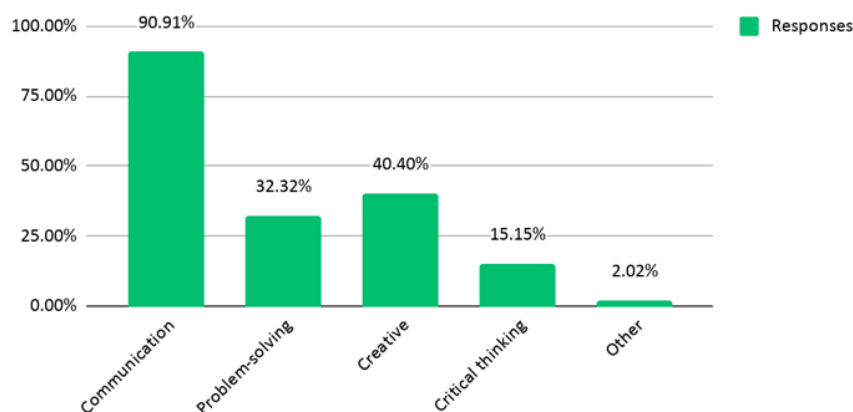
When the respondents asked about what helps you learn, Figure 7 shows that 8.59 per cent or 17 of respondents choose extra classes as a learning strategy, 80.30 per cent or 159 as doing in-class activities, 35.86 per cent or 71 choose homework, 11.11 per cent or 22 choose extra-curricular activities, 47.98 per cent or 95 choose outside of class activities, and 2.02 per

cent or 4 per cent fall within other. According to Figure 7, in-class activities have the highest responses.

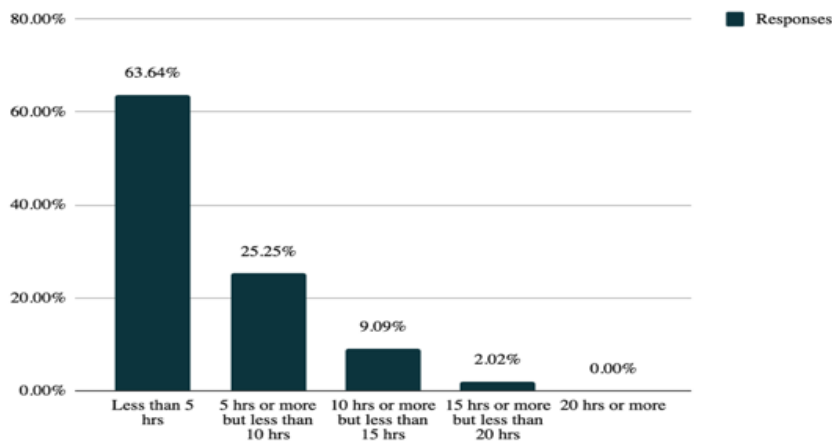
Moreover, the respondents' beliefs of in-class activities and instructions contributing to English skills development is shown in Figure 8. Figure 8 shows that when the respondents were asked about their beliefs, the results demonstrates that 15.66 per cent or 31 of the respondents chose sometimes they believe in the activities being taught, 51.01 per cent or 101 most times, 32.32 per cent or 64 always, and 1.01 per cent or 2 never thought of them. In total, 198 responses. Most times is given as the highest percentage and never has the lowest.

**Figure 9**

*Language Skills to Develop by Respondents*



When asked about what skills, Figure 9 shows that 90.91 per cent or 180 of the respondents reported that communication is a language skill that they need to develop, 32.32 per cent or 64 problems of them chose problem-solving, 40.40 per cent or 80 chose creativity, 15.15 per cent or 30 picked critical thinking and 2.2 per cent or 5 falls into other. Out of all the respondents, communication has the highest percentage point.

**Figure 10***Studying Hours by Respondents*

When the respondents were asked how much time is spent studying, Figure 10 shows that 63.64 per cent or 126 of the respondents use less than 5 hours, 25.25 per cent or 5 uses 5 hours or more but less than 10 hours, 9.09 or 18 per cent or 18 use 10 hours or more but less than 15 hours, 2.02 or 4 per cent 15 hours or more but less than 20 hours and zero per cent or 20 hours or more.

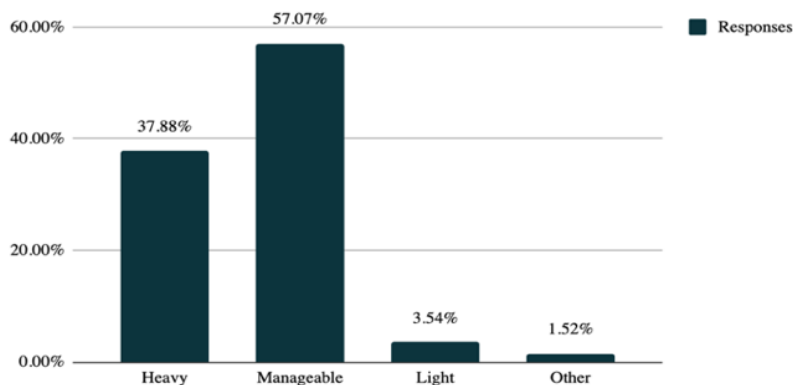
**Figure 11***Academic Workload Per Term by Respondents*

Figure 11 shows that when asked how the respondents manage their workload per term, 37.88 per cent or 75 of the respondents reported that their workload is heavy, 57.07 per

cent or 113 chose manageably, 3.54 per cent or 7 chose light, 1.52 per cent or 3 per cent chose other. Though the results varied, it is shown that manageable has the highest per cent.

**Figure 12**

*Support Services Use by Respondents*

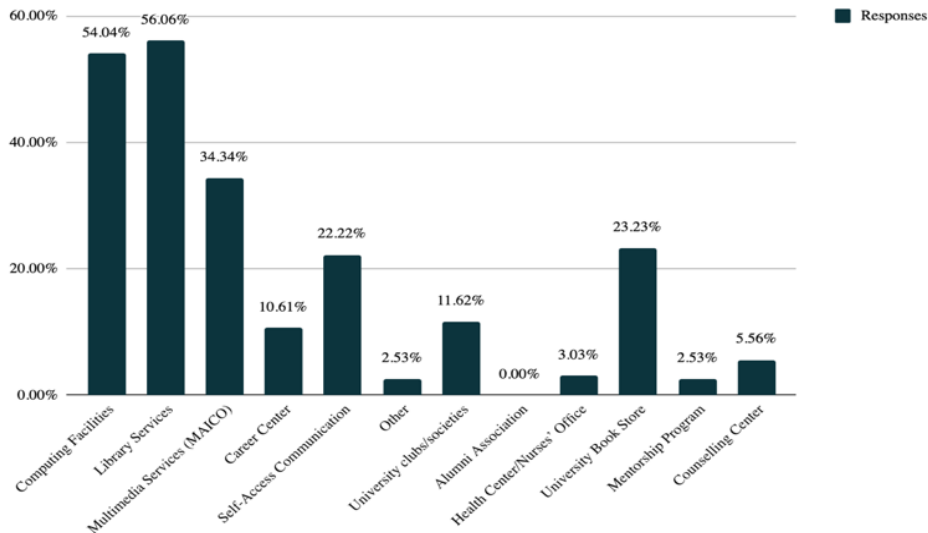


Figure 12 shows answers to the question on support services provided by the university. The respondents noted a combination of support services offered by the university. The results in figure 10 show that 54.04 per cent or 107 use the computing facilities, 56.06 per cent or 44 use library services, 34.34 per cent or 68 use the multimedia services, 10.61 per cent or 21 the career centre, 22.22 per cent or 44 use the self-access communication services, 2.53 per cent or 5 falls into other. In addition, 11.62 per cent or 23 uses the university clubs or societies, 0.00 per cent or 0 for the alumni association, 3.03 per cent or 6 use the health centre or nurses' office, 23.23 per cent or 46 for the university bookstore, 2.53 per cent or 5 use the mentorship programme and 5.56 or 11 use the counselling centre.

### 4.2.3 Section 3: *The Relationship Between Critical Thinking and Beliefs, Race and Gender*

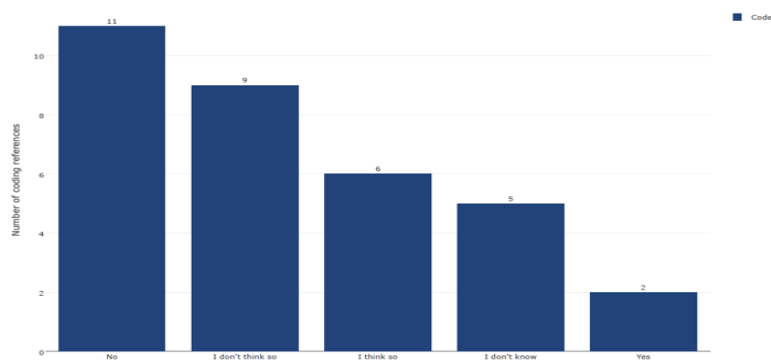
This section examines the relationship between critical thinking, beliefs, race and gender. The section reports the findings that influence the respondents' ability to develop their critical thinking skills. These survey questions were open-ended the results coded in the NVIVO software for a graphical presentation.

**Table 7**

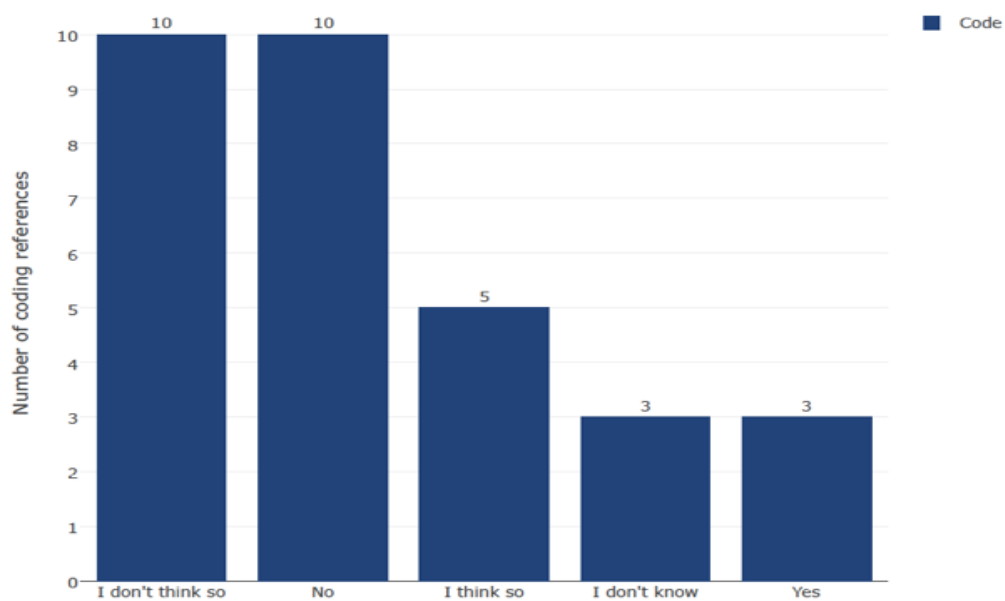
*Critical Thinking Defined by Respondents*

<b>Themes Identified</b>	<b>Number of References</b>
Somewhat defined correctly and/or explained how it affected learning	19
Cannot define	12
Defined incorrectly	12
Do not know	9
Did not define but explained how it affected learning	8
Can define but did not explain how it affected learning	3

When the respondents were asked about their understanding of critical thinking, Table 7 shows that 19 references were made of them somewhat defining it correctly and/or explained how it affected their learning, 12 respondents cannot describe it, 12 defined incorrectly, 9 do not know, 8 did not define, but explained how it affected their learning and 3 can define but did not explain how it affected learning. The references show that most of the respondents could explain critical thinking, but the others could not.

**Figure 13***Gender and Critical Thinking*

When the respondents were asked if their teachers' gender influenced the way they learn or think critically, Figure 13 shows that No, I don't think so and I don't know are most references made towards those terms.

**Figure 14***Race and Critical Thinking*

When the respondents were asked if their teachers' race influenced the way they learn or think critically, Figure 14 shows that No, I don't think so and I don't know are most references made towards those terms.

#### ***4.2.4 Summary of Quantitative Data Analysis***

Quantitative data analysis suggests that students very little awareness of critical thinking and by extension critical thinking skills. It was also evident that findings show that the university provides various services for students. It was interesting to see that while workload load was deemed as manageable, many students reported a high workload.

The teacher gender and race were not a prominently deterrent to participants' beliefs in understanding or perception of critical thinking. On the other hand, while these were not definite deterrents, students indicated their lack of knowledge of what critical thinking is.

#### **4.3 Overall Summary**

The qualitative data shows that all the participants of the study were mostly engaging and answered the questions. Though they have given their views, some were a bit more fluid in their answers. The information gathered from the questionnaires was broken down into three sections; (1) demographics, (2) self-studying, communicative skills and activities and support services provided by the University and (3) the relationship between critical thinking and beliefs, race and gender. The results were reflected in graphs showing the relationship between different variables. Relationships were captured to show communicative skills and activities and support services and critical thinking, and beliefs, race and gender suggested by students in their school life. In addition, the information gathered also showed that various viewpoints were provided on how beliefs, race and gender influenced the critical thinking of Japanese students of English.

## **Chapter 5: Discussions and Conclusions**

### **5.0 Introduction**

The key focus of Chapter Five is to integrate findings from the Mixed Methods study design to investigate the influence of belief systems, gender and race on the development of critical thinking in Japanese students of English. To explore the research's main topic, this study proposed sub-research questions as follows:

1. What are critical thinking skills according to the perceptions of Japanese students of English?
2. What are the perceptions of critical thinking skills according to the perception of teachers of English?
3. What teaching approaches are used to develop critical thinking in Japanese students of English?
4. How are belief systems, race and gender influencing the teaching of critical thinking skills in Japanese students of English?

### **5.1 Discussion on the Main Findings of the Study**

Results from this Mixed Methods Research with an embedded convergent design indicates that the respondents in this study have some knowledge of the meaning of critical thinking and had no or very little knowledge of the skills of critical thinking development. Results also show that these respondents did not see race and gender issues affecting the development of critical thinking. Finally, results indicate that there is some level of positive reaction towards improving critical thinking skills.

#### ***5.1.1. Understanding Critical Thinking Skills***

In general, the results from both the qualitative and quantitative findings showed that the theme of understanding critical thinking was either understood or not understood by participants, which points to what Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) purported about the complexity of teaching. Freeman and Anderson note that teaching critical thinking skills in



the second language (L2) presents its own set of challenges that both teachers and students find difficult to comprehend. Moreover, like Freeman and Anderson (2011), Okada (2017) noted similar views in a study done in 2017. Respondents of the qualitative study, the teachers mostly demonstrated their understanding of critical thinking skills by outlining classroom activities while the respondents of the quantitative study simply did not understand the terms critical thinking skills. These findings suggested that teachers need to nurture students by teaching them how to think deeply and independently as echoed by The Nikkei (2015) and Okada (2017). Furthermore, with this new set of results from this study, it was evident that a better understanding or expression of critical thinking skills developments needs to be learned by students and explained by teachers.

### ***5.1.2 Critical Thinking in the Classroom***

As identified in chapter two of the literature review, Elder and Paul (2010) note the importance of learning critically. They also note that for learning to occur, students should learn critically at every educational. Furthermore, Jacobs and Farrell (2001) concurred as they suggest that learning should be to gain knowledge towards improving a society. Although the findings showed views on what it meant for students to think critically, the findings mostly revealed that “activities help in information and active learning” to promote “critical thinking with increased engagement” to achieve favourable results. Elder and Paul (2010) highlight similar views as they purport that it is the process of analysing and assessing thinking with a view to improving critical thinking skills.

To further discuss the sub-theme of critical thinking in the classroom, the findings revealed that the respondents focused on a “learner-centred approach” in their classes. This approach is what Bloom (1956) suggests as a pertinent way of facilitating learners to improve critical thinking skills, and these questions should be geared towards different levels. For instance, as noted in the literature review Bloom’s taxonomy of evaluation, synthesis, and

analysis are higher-order thinking surrounding questions of how or why to encourage the process. Lower order thinking of application, comprehension, and knowledge surrounds questions of when, where and what. Materials designed to teach higher-order thinking skills should be structured and utilized differently. Furthermore, like Larsen-Freeman and Anderson's (2011) views suggesting that teaching is social and mental, respondents from the study would appear to have implied the same. Thus, the inclusion of different activities geared towards improving critical thinking in the classroom.

### ***5.1.3 Teaching Approach***

As the theme of understanding critical thinking skills are highlighted, respondents also indicated teaching approaches used to show the inclusion of critical thinking skills in class. However, though the respondents did not specifically provided information to suggest that they know what those critical thinking skills were, their implementation of teaching activities, ideas, and exercises aided pedagogical insights.

The respondents' processes speak to what Gatbonton (2000) noted as pedagogical practices among the language teacher compared to teachers of other subjects. Even though such teaching ideas are essential (Gatbonton, 2000), they open the gate to these questions: How do teaching instructions and/or methods lead to critical thinking skill development? What or who facilitates this process? Given Gatbonton's (2000) questions, the findings showed that respondents did not adequately answer them but mostly articulated the tangibles they used. These tangibles include student worksheets, booklets, and other classroom activities. In general, mostly worksheets and classroom activities were suggested by respondents, who emphasised the learner or student-centred approach used, which I love to guide their language students.

#### ***5.1.4 Definition/Explanation of Critical Thinking and Students' Inability to Think***

##### ***Critically***

The sub-themes of definition or explanation of critical thinking, and student inability to think critically, phrases such as “writing involves much critical thinking,” “possibly critical thinking is probably abstracted,” “communication,” and “being able to interact with others involves critical thinking” and “knowledge of culture, creative thinking and everything” was part of their responses. These responses suggested that the respondents understood that language learning involves critical thinking, including developing critical thinking skills. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) also suggest that language learning is behavioural, physical, experimental, cultural, and personal. Thus, points to an overarching viewpoint by Larsen-Freeman and Anderson and the respondents that language teaching is complex, and it presents challenges as well.

The attempt to define or explain critical thinking skills only came from two respondents but is vital in relation to the literature review. This importance connects with how Long (2004), in the literature review, notes that social and political structures influence critical thinking skills. The findings noted that 1 female respondent's alignment with Long (2004) highlights that the political situation in the United States of America influences critical thinking. However, though this view was about the United States of America and not Japan, it represented a practical assumption of including social and political structures affecting how people think (Long, 2004).

Based on the sub-theme, students' inability to think critically, a respondent from the findings outlined that regardless of language proficiency, Japanese or English, Japanese students “... just don't have those discussions skills”, which would appear to support the reasons behind the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's (MEXT). This introduction of the course of study was to propel thinking skills from an early

age Okada (2015). In addition, Okada (2017) notes that at the university level one of the reasons for the students not expressing opinions is that teachers do not allow enough time for students to express opinions. However, the findings from this study showed the opposite as teachers noted that they have given students the chance to express themselves through speaking and writing.

### ***5.1.5 Belief Systems***

**5.1.5.1 Socialisation and Teacher Perception.** The question of how do societies create their belief systems? Or what influences belief systems were posed in the literature review. Collins, Benson, Grand, Lazyan and Weeks (2012) and other noted theorists with a focus on self and identity theory were used to answer those questions. A key revelation from the literature review about these questions was that the social and cultural stratospheres postulate the social-cultural environment, which entails factors such as traditions, perceptions, and norms of individuals and groups. Like the literature review, traditions, perceptions, and norms of individuals and groups were revealed as influencing factors. However, though they are influencing factors in the Japanese society, key findings one respondent explained the “Argumentative Socratic” to show that Japanese, Korean and Chinese graduate students in the United States quickly adapt to that system because they understand the expectations there. This view concurs with what Vygotsky (1978) notes as being societal norms where people can reflect upon themselves by taking themselves as objects to evaluate, take account and plan accordingly to bring about future changes.

Unlike Vygotsky’s (1978) view, Mead (1934) in the literature review focused on the pattern of behaviour within and between individuals. They are different levels of analysis, and this is key to understanding the link between self and society, which is supported by the findings. It was revealed that there is cultural bias in the approach to critical thinking from a

western point of view, which showed the different levels of understanding of critical thinking.

In addition, teachers' perception of students' backgrounds was based on how students respond to critical thinking activities in the classroom. The findings supported the idea that the social environment is a key part of what shapes a person (Mead, 1934). However, the perception of students by teachers is seen in how "...males are pushed more towards things like business or engineering or sciences and hard sciences..." as noted by a respondent. This could be seen as women not being pushed into those areas.

### ***5.1.6 Gender Issues***

**5.1.6.1 Description of Students' Background and Students' Perception.** Based on the findings, the description of students' background and students' perceptions was seen as influences on development through the gender lenses. The findings showed a mix of responses capturing the respondents' intense feelings. The education of women is seen as providing the key to securing intergenerational transfers of knowledge and providing the substance of long-term gender equality and social change. Thus, gender equity in access to health and education occupies a central place in the global policy discourse on human and social development (Danili & Reid, 2004).

Although the literature review notes that traditional occupations for women once were perceived to include secretaries, housewives, teachers, waitresses and nurses while men were defined as police officers, construction workers, truck drivers, chief executive officers (CEOs) or factory workers. This perception seemed to be still held as findings showed that two respondents responded by suggesting that there are more females than males in each of the English Departments in the study. The respondents suggested that "In the Department of Global Studies [new department], the females outnumber the males, but not to the extent that

they do in the British and American Studies department. It used to be about 70% females and 30% males. In our new department, there are more males, 40- 60% female.” Thus, while in the literature review it is noted that changes in family makeup and media portrayal of traditional occupational choices allow children to be more exposed to many different career choices that are less defined by gender (Ellis, 2000), this study showed otherwise.

As patriarchy focuses on how males and females co-exist in society, its points of view go as far back as 1792 when Wollstonecraft an English advocate of women's rights rallied around creating awareness for women. “I’ve been in Japan 40 years teaching all those years. So, when I first arrived, females were demurer and reticent to express themselves in classroom situations. As time goes by, “women are the communicators and the men have been, you know, in the literature and in my experience are kind of like one of the kids, one of the grownup kids in many ways.” This view connects with the complexity of patriarchy (Walby, 1990).

## **5.2 Discussion on the Main Findings of the Quantitative Study**

Results from the quantitative study indicated that Japanese students of English utilise various self-studying and communicative skills support, but still did not understand what critical thinking means. In addition, the study also showed that students in different English studies departments used a combination of strategies that could help students learn.

### ***5.2.1 Self-studying, Communicative Skills and Activities, and Support***

To respond to the research problem, it was necessary to determine the effect of the respondents’ tendency to value either (1) self-studying, (2) communicative skills or (3) support provided on the relative importance they attributed to (a) learning strategies utilise by respondents, (b) belief of respondents, (c) language skills to develop by respondents, (d)

studying hours by respondents, (e) academic workload per term by respondents and (f) support services used by respondents.

The level of agreement between the respondents' perceptions about the relative importance of construction and the percentage of all six categories above revealed the differences in the quantitative findings. First, determining the percentages of self-studying, communicative skills and activities, and support addressed was the intended goal. To further explain the three core categories above, the study discusses them as follows:

### ***5.2.2 Self-studying***

The study showed that self-studying exhibited the learning strategies students use to learn. 8.59 per cent of respondents chose extra classes as a learning strategy, 80.30 per cent as doing in-class activities, 35.86 per cent chose homework, 11.11 per cent as extra-curricular activities, and 47.98 per cent chose outside-of-class activities, and 2.02 per cent fell within other. The combination of in-class activities and homework supported the theory by Farrington et al. (2012) that delving further and going beneath the surface of individual-level skills aid learning in how students interact within their educational context regarding attitudes, motivation and performance.

Results from the study also indicated that the respondents utilise the learning strategy as defined by Rosen et al. (2010), in which students participate in class activities designed to enhance cognitive tasks. Rosen et al. (2010) suggest that specific strategies can assist students with recalling information, monitoring their understanding of content, detecting when they are confused, and self-correcting errors in thought processes, which according to the findings, further support this perspective as respondents vocalised their desires. It also became more apparent that Zigler and Berman's (1983) view on the importance of critical thinking skills are vital but also very distinctive in how they are weighted. Therefore, it can be assumed

from the finding that students see these self-studying techniques or learning strategies as effective “academic behaviours” to maximise their learning” (Rosen et al., 2010).

### ***5.2.3 Communicative Skills and Activities***

Nekkei (2015) suggests that to nurture students to be successful in the twenty-first century, it is crucial and urgent for university teachers to teach students to think deeply and independently. In addition, this nurturing of students, according to The Central Council for Education (2012), emphasises its necessity through academic skills such as thinking critically and expressing opinions in higher education. However, the survey results did not support these points of view. When asked what skills the respondents believe they needed to develop, 90.91 per cent thought that communication is the language skill they need to build, 32.32 per cent chose problem-solving, 40.40 per cent chose creativity, and 15.15 per cent chose critical thinking, and 2.2 per cent is other. It was shown that critical thinking is less than 18 per cent while communication and others are higher, suggested that the respondents either were unaware or did not know what critical thinking was. However, those respondents indicated that they believe that in-class activities and instructions contributed to developing their English skills. This shows the juxtaposition between critical thinking skills by itself and communication skills as the assumption that students expressing opinions (The Central Council for Education, 2012) is a part of communication.

### ***5.2.4 Support***

Mead (1934) notes that behaviour patterns arise from how people interact in social settings. As they interact in a society, the mind develops from those interactions where it absorbs different symbols that form behaviour patterns. These behaviour patterns can manifest in a society's way of life (Mead, 1934). This manifestation is seen in what Ono (2018) describes as long working hours and other work-life patterns being absorbed into



Japanese society. Ono also argues that the true causes of long working hours lie not in the "observable" barriers such as public policy and law but rather are embedded in "unobservable" or "unmeasurable" attributes such as social norms and work conventions. The results support their claims, like Mead's (1934) and Ono's (2018) theories. Although 37.88 per cent saw their workload or schoolwork as heavy, which was almost half, about 57 per cent just thought it was manageable, which points to the influence of social norms and work conventions on how students' function and learn.

Based on the results, though the workload is considered reasonably heavy for students, the structural mechanism of schools and classrooms (Farrington et al., 2012) is in place to aid students. Six of the 12 services listed by the respondents were considered most beneficial. These include computing facilities, library services, self-access communication, multimedia services, clubs and societies and banking services.

### ***5.2.5 The Relationship Between Critical Thinking and Beliefs, Race and Gender***

According to a 2014 report by the National Institute for Education Policy Research in Japan, a survey found that 63.4% of 1,649 Japanese university students from 200 different academic departments never or seldom expressed opinions in class, and 71.9% responded that the current situation in their classes was appropriate. When the respondents were asked about their understating of critical thinking, 19 references were made towards them being able to define it somewhat correctly or explaining how critical thinking affected learning, 12 references were made towards not being able to define, 12 references towards defining incorrectly, 9 do not know, eight did not specify. Still, they explained how it affected learning, and three can define but did not explain how it affected education. It was evident that many respondents or students either did not understand critical thinking or what the skills mean.

In Japan, gender equality in education, at least in the meaning of securing equal opportunity for accessing each level of schooling is achieved. Still, sometimes there is an uneven distribution of female students in some faculties and departments in the universities, for example, in education, literature, nursing, pharmacy and domestic science (Global Gender Gap Report, 2020). Furthermore, the Global Gender Gap Index drastically declined from 80 to 110 out of 149 countries. This decline took place over twelve years on two of the four variables, economic participation and opportunity and political empowerment, while the others, educational attainment and health and survival, had little effect. However, as the results are examined, they supported the claim of a low impact on education attainment as most revealed that the race and gender of the teacher had very little if not nothing to do with their ability to learn in a critical manner and by extension in school.

### **5.3 Implications**

Teachers and students need to work together to create a more communicative classroom. There must be the need to recognise each other's intentions and perspectives. As respondents from the interview revealed their teaching approaches, and to them seemed effective, students simply participating in class is not always an effective way of knowing how students learn or whether they are effective communicators. In addition, as highlighted in the literature review by Bloom (1946) and Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), where they have suggested that developing higher and lower-order critical thinking skills are important to learning, teachers need to spend a bit more time knowing about these skills.

In situations where English development is the focal point, students must engage in speaking and listening without reluctance. The students should become aware that even one word or a short sentence is the start of transmission. Asking questions about the instructions, clarifying meanings, and seeking help are not troubles in an English language context but

potential communication triggers. Without realising this, the students would remain silent, compromise their needs, and wonder why they could not speak well.

As the corporation between both educators and learners is essential, they should know that learners should be responsible for their comments without relying on someone else to speak for them. Though asking teachers to clarify what they mean can be difficult for non-native English speakers, it does not need to be perfectly done. This is a chance for students to show teachers that they are in tune with the class and are willing to explore any topic.

Another critical point is that rather than questioning the teacher, non-native English speakers/students tend to blame themselves for their lack of understanding. However, being silent and avoiding trouble does not aid critical skills development. If nobody explicitly draws attention to the source of the breakdown, the students would not be able to understand context-based meanings, like humour or hidden agendas. They garner vocabulary while listening is sometimes not enough for mutual understanding of a deeper kind of thinking because cultural or situational factors, as outlined in the findings, are attached to the language.

It is essential to teach students how to ask questions about their growth and own goals to facilitate their development. Such skills are necessary to improve English fluency and participate in an intercultural, global society with many different people from various backgrounds. It is an everyday matter that we do not understand what someone said. These breakdowns in communication can occur because of our different other expectations and how to face issues or convey our feelings. Simply trying to put a cheerful face on communicative trouble spots, acting as if no problems have occurred, would not improve our mutual understanding.

On the other hand, teachers should also become aware of what is happening in their classroom, whether it is trying to understand the cultural context of Japan more thoroughly or

figure out if there is somewhat of some intersectionality of belief systems, gender and race (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins & Bilge, 2016) at play. Simply judging students as silent and passive may lead teachers to misinterpret the classroom context and make it challenging to bridge any gap.

#### **5.4 Usefulness of Study to Participants**

As it was determined, teachers did not know what critical thinking skills were (Bloom, 1956) and students did not understand what critical thinking or critical thinking skills were. This research is instrumental in revealing these skills. In addition, not knowing what these critical thinking skills seemed to have hindered their development in Japanese students of English though teachers have done activities targeted at a deeper kind of thinking.

Although the findings of this study may be unique to this context, this research seemed to have positively impacted both teachers and students. Teachers who were part of the interview had to reflect on their teaching styles teachers. This kind of reflection allowed them to engage in a question-and-answer session. Furthermore, this research has taught the students keywords like critical thinking and critical thinking skills that, as noted in the findings, they did not understand. Learning critical thinking and critical thinking skills could propel practitioners to ask questions when assumptions suggest otherwise.

#### **5.5 Significance of this Study**

The significance of this research study lies in what affects the development of critical thinking skills and its pedagogical understanding to teachers. It is vital for teachers to gain a better understanding of the pedagogy of critical thinking and critical thinking skills to assist their students learn and develop them. As the findings identified the gaps in teachers' and students' understanding of critical thinking and critical thinking, the hope is that this research will help close some of these gaps. More importantly, the study also identified respondents'

vague understanding of critical thinking skills. At the same time, there is limited belief that race and gender issues affect the development of critical thinking skills.

If professional development programmes, designers, policymakers, and decision-makers are to improve critical thinking and, by extension, critical thinking skills for students, learning considerations learning about these skills should be at the forefront of everyone's minds. While the respondents have a limited belief of race and gender issues affecting critical thinking skills development, it is important to note that these factors should still be examined. As such, it is further posited by this study's researcher that policy and decision-makers, who are within this university, can leverage on the development of syllabi and worksheets and lesson plans to bring about greater learning for students. In the aspect of knowledge creation, contribution and distribution, many studies have investigated how teachers can be motivated to engage with further professional development.

## **5.6 Personal and Professional Relevance**

The attainment of an education has always been the focus of the researcher's entire life. The researcher was taught that having an education, particularly a "good" one, will empower, motivate and provide knowledge propelling beyond borders. Therefore, the researcher believes in her contribution to education.

Personally, as a practitioner in the field of language education, this study has challenged the researcher emotionally and professionally to stay on task, be open-minded and objective in the process. However, this research has given the researcher a profound understanding, not only in gaining knowledge from the participants' perspectives, but also as a classroom teacher to an active practitioner researcher.

The researcher learned that there were findings and literature suggesting that critical thinking skills in language learning (Bloom, 1956) is paramount in assisting English language practitioners to improve lessons and syllabi. This study has allowed the researcher to learn

about research designs and data management. It has also taught the researcher how to present findings and follow the facts.

Professionally, the researcher's current duties allow collaboration among teachers to improve the English language programmes at this institution. Based on those duties, it was a desire to design lessons, but also aid staff and the well-being of students. Therefore, as universities face transformative forces (McCaffery, 2010), this research provides a natural collaboration between the knowledge gained and its dissemination to my colleagues. While the findings showed students' lack of understanding of those critical thinking skills and teachers' identification of those skills to students, it was evident that creating an awareness is vital for critical thinking oriented EFL classes. This result is useful for the researcher as within the classroom, the researcher could proactively integrate the critical thinking skills steps (Bloom, 1956; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011) language lesson plans. This intentional integration may be utilised in diverse methods and promotes the development of critical thinking (Bloom, 1956; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

## **5.7 Recommendations**

As an advocate of critical thinking skills development, Bloom (2009) notes the importance of continuous learning and providing knowledge for others. As such, given the significance of this research as highlighted above, this study is recommending to three vital groups, this university and others, teachers and students ways to aid critical thinking skills development.

McNiff and Whitehead (2005) note the importance of legitimacy in any research. They suggest that doing research known to a community of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers fosters legitimacy. Thus, for universities like this one under study can gain invaluable insights into what teachers are doing in their classes and aid them. Moreover,

acceptance in the public sphere could provide a gateway to creating space for more research on critical thinking skills development for Japanese students of English. This research will be beneficial based on the merits of its validity and usefulness to the context and others locally and internationally. Even though students are unaware of critical thinking skills and what they mean, the recommendation is for teachers to note or mention these skills just like any other language skill students are aware of. This recognition should be done forcefully.

There is little control over how people view this research or what they might learn. However, this study is recommended to promote a climate of progress for policymakers to support projects that can enhance students' development and, by extension, the institution.

This research is highly recommended for students to succeed. If the research can lead to helping students become better critical thinkers, there is the opportunity to be better initiators in the classroom and nation-building. Therefore, based solely on the findings, the researcher thought it would be essential to recommend the following to assist the University in implementing and improving support services and teaching approaches that will no doubt aid students significantly.

1. An accessor orientation program geared towards equipping students academically and psychologically provides greater flexibility over study requirements, particularly assignments.
2. Make the University calendar more flexible to give students a more excellent choice over the subjects they sit in each semester. This will allow students to sit courses based on their schedule and not the rigid schedule of the University, thereby reducing their workload.
3. Provide additional support systems and extend the opening hours of existing facilities to cater to the needs of all students. In addition, support systems that

should be provided include exit points and the beginning of more classrooms to facilitate students studying for examinations.

4. Improve Library facilities in areas such as opening hours, availability of books and photocopying service provided.
5. Training staff members (customer service representatives) in dealing with students who are the customers of the University. This will help to provide students with consistent information and help the University to deliver a better service.
6. Reduce the inconsistencies and disparities related to the delivery of the syllabi, coursework material and classroom activities. This will eliminate some students' difficulties in preparing coursework assignments while aiding critical thinking skills development.

## **5.8 Conclusions**

As society places demands on higher education institutions (HEIs), tremendous pressure is placed on them to be successful in all aspects of their processes. More HEIs find that they must work simultaneously in making changes in their institution to complete.

Learning was insightful in more ways than one. Through the semi-structured interviews with teachers and surveys with students from the institution, there was a deeper understanding of the development of critical thinking skills. Even though the process was difficult, I could interview teachers who teach with various levels of students, elementary, intermediate and advance.

Based on the study's qualitative findings, the researcher discovered that respondents used various methods to teach and bring about a favourable outcome. Some respondents do not understand critical thinking skills and what it means to develop them. Though they used a combination of strategies in the classroom, more can be done.



The quantitative findings discovered that although the respondents had a heavy workload, support services were utilised to help them cope. Whilst the coping strategies used by the respondents impacted their ability to be successful, and these strategies seemed essential to the respondents, the evidence of the value was apparent and supported by the data gathered. Furthermore, though skills are being developed, for example, communication, problem-solving and creativity, most cannot calibrate the meaning of critical thinking or critical thinking skills.

Overall, while it was recognised that critical thinking skills development is integral to success, library services, University Book Store, and other services have aided in improving the performance of students.

The researcher ultimately would like to make changes to how teachers design their English classes and syllabi. This change might not be easy due to elements like students' English levels and teachers' willingness to improve them (as was highlighted in few of the interviews), but this could be the opportunity for more advanced changes in classes.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

Dear Lisa Cross		
I am pleased to inform you that the EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC) has approved your application for ethical approval for your study. Details and conditions of the approval can be found below.		
Sub-Committee:		EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC)
Review type:		Expedited
PI:		
School:		HLC
Title:		A Case Study of How Belief Systems, Gender and Race Influence the Development of Critical Thinking in Japanese Students of English
First Reviewer:		Dr. Lucilla Crosta
Second Reviewer:		Dr. Greg Hickman
Other members of the Committee		Dr. Marco Ferreira, Dr. Ewan Dow, Dr. Mariya Yukhymenko,
Date of Approval:		10/04/2019
The application was APPROVED subject to the following conditions:		
Conditions		
1	Mandatory	M: All serious adverse events must be reported to the VPREC within 24 hours of their occurrence, via the EdD Thesis Primary Supervisor.

This approval applies for the duration of the research. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study as specified in the application form, the Sub-Committee should be notified. If it is proposed to make an amendment to the research, you should notify the Sub-Committee by following the Notice of Amendment procedure outlined at

<http://www.liv.ac.uk/media/livacuk/researchethics/notice%20of%20amendment.doc>.

Where your research includes elements that are not conducted in the UK, approval to proceed is further conditional upon a thorough risk assessment of the site and local permission to carry out the research, including, where such a body exists, local research ethics committee approval. No documentation of local permission is required (a) if the researcher will simply be asking organizations to distribute research invitations on the researcher's behalf, or (b) if the researcher is using only public means to identify/contact participants. When medical, educational, or business records are analysed or used to identify potential research participants, the site needs to explicitly approve access to data for research purposes (even if the researcher normally has access to that data to perform his or her job).

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**Please note that the approval to proceed depends also on research proposal approval.**

Kind regards,

Lucilla Crosta

Chair, EdD. VPREC



## Appendix B



December 25, 2018

### Letter of Approval

To Whom It May Concern,

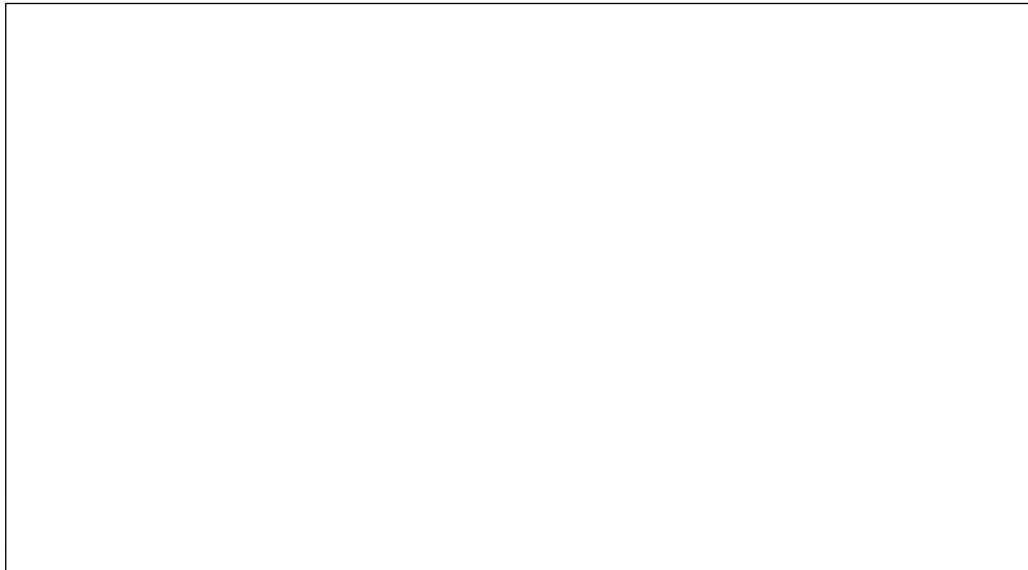
This letter is to confirm that Lisa Cross has my permission to engage in her doctoral research project here at .

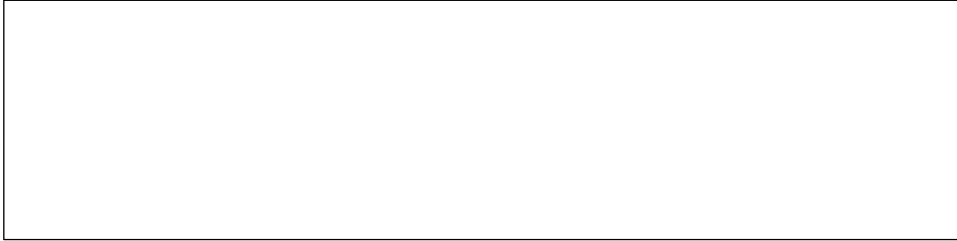
I have read her proposal and would be delighted to have her do this research here at . As part of her project, she has full permission to do her research of "How Belief Systems, Race and Gender Influence the Development of Critical Thinking in Japanese Students of English."

We have every expectation that all data generated and the individual participants will be treated with the utmost respect and that no data will be shared unless it has been anonymized in accordance with relevant guidelines of our and your universities.

We are pleased that this research is being carried out at  and that it may lead to benefits for the organization, as well as for individuals working here.

Best regards,





To the University of Liverpool Ethics Review Panel,

Kyoto, 14.12.2018

Letter of Approval

This letter is to confirm that Lisa Cross has my permission to engage in her doctoral research project in the Department of Global Studies,  . I have read her proposal and would be delighted to have her do this research here.

We have every expectation that all data generated, and the individual participants, will be treated with the utmost respect, and that no data will be shared unless it has been anonymized in accordance with relevant guidelines of our and your university.

We are pleased that this research is being carried out in our department, and that it may lead to benefits for our organization, as well as the individuals working here.

Best regards,



## Appendix C



### Authorisation Letter

I, Lisa Cross, am enrolled in the Doctor of Education (EdD) Programme at the University of Liverpool in partnership with Laureate Education.

I entered the programme in order to develop doctoral-level depth of knowledge and research skills across areas in higher education such as higher education management, innovative approaches to educational leadership, decision making, as well as ethics, social responsibility, and social change. As an EdD student I am required, as part of this programme, to undertake research projects during the taught modules. These projects provide an opportunity for me to reflect on critical issues that I encounter in the context of my work, apply my scholarly learning to these issues, and, in the end, develop as an agent of positive change in our organisation.

In the context of my research in the EdD programme, I hereby request authorisation to access organisational data, facility use, and use of personnel time for research purposes relevant to my required assignments. This includes permission to access documents from the archives of the organisation which are not necessarily in the public domain and which I may normally have access to when performing the responsibilities of my job. This also includes authorisation to conduct an interview with an employee of the organisation about the organisation's policies, programmes, and practices. I also request permission to provide my personal reflections on the collected data. I have included with this letter a Participant Information Sheet, which outlines in greater detail the nature of the current research project I am required to complete for the EdD programme.

I appreciate the opportunity to engage in research involving my organisation. Please contact me and/or the Research Participant Advocate at the University of Liverpool with any question or concerns you may have.

**My contact details are:**

Lisa Cross



Tel: +81-075-321-0712

Email: [lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk)

**The contact details of the Research Participant Advocate at the University of Liverpool are:**

001-612-312-1210 (USA number)

Email address [liverpoolethics@ohcampus.com](mailto:liverpoolethics@ohcampus.com)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Cross".


.....  
Lisa Cross-EdD student

**Title of Research Project:** A Case Study of How Belief Systems, Race and Gender Influence the Development of Critical Thinking in Japanese Students of English

**Researcher:** Lisa Cross

**Please  
initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the Participant Information Sheet dated 20-05-2019 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I hereby grant permission to the researcher for all relevant data access, facility use, and use of personnel time for research purposes.
3. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information provided and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.
4. I understand that information on the organisation will be anonymised, will be maintained as proprietary information, and will be kept in confidentiality. Additionally, I understand that no results of the research will be made publically available without my specific approval.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Person taking consent	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Participant Name	Date	Signature
Lisa Cross	20-05-2019	
_____	_____	_____
Researcher	Date	Signature

## Appendix D



### Participant Information Sheet (PIS):

#### Interview

**Research study:** A Case Study of How Belief Systems, Race and Gender Influence the Development of Critical Thinking in Japanese Students of English

You are being invited to participate in the above research study. This information sheet will help you understand why the research is being done and why you are invited to be involved as a participant. You can ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take some time to decide whether or not you would like to be involved. You can also discuss with your supervisors or colleagues at the institution to decide any personal implications of participating in this research. Also, the university's counselling services is available during and after the interviews if needed. It is important to obtain clearance from the organization to participate in this study. Please read the following carefully.

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

This research is part of my thesis research studies at the University of Liverpool Education Doctoral (EdD) Programme. The aim of this research is to look at the connection between belief systems, race and gender and the extent to which these connection influences the development of critical thinking skills in Japanese university students who are in English Studies Courses. Critical thinking skills development among Japanese English Language learners is important not only language learning but also life skills.

#### **Why have I been invited to take part?**

The purpose of this research is to look at how belief systems, race, gender influence the development of critical thinking skills in Japanese Students of English in university students. To be more specific, the research will investigate how belief systems, race and gender impact critical thinking skills in your students. Therefore, I am inviting you to take part in this research to get your feedback in teaching students in the English language courses. Also, I believe that your being an experienced English teacher and one with an interest in professional learning will make your participation in my research especially important to helping with the development of students' learning.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

No, it is up to you to decide. We will describe the study and go through the information sheet, which we will give to you. You are free to withdraw at any time without explanation and without any disadvantage, should you wish to do so. You can also ask that the data you have provided not to be in the study.

#### **What will happen if I take part?**

If you agree to participate in this interview, you will be agreeing for a semi-structured interview by me the researcher. The interview will be about 40 - 60 minutes long. You can request for the questions beforehand if you wish. The questions will be about how belief systems, race and gender Influence the development of critical thinking in Japanese Students of English. Also, the interviews will take place in a private office at the university booked in advanced by me, the researcher to ensure privacy.

I will be doing an audio recording of the study to help me collect important information from the recorded data. The interviews will take place in an agreed upon professional location by the me (researcher) and the participant at the most convenient time to ensure that your identity is protected. Also, as the researcher, I will be using pseudonyms to anonymize personal data like names and the institution. Therefore, the participant and institutional information will be anonymized, and privacy of the interviewee protected. No results of the study will be made public without specific approval from the organization and the interviewee. However, there are some parts of the data that I might share with my supervisor to ensure its validity. Data will be stored for up to 5 years with adequate password protection to maintain confidentiality.

### **Expenses and/or payments**

There will not be any payments or expenses as you will not pay for anything.

### **Are there any risks in taking part?**

I don't expect any negative effects as a result of participating in the study. However, if you are concerned about ethics, race and gender issues, you can discuss the implications with your supervisors. Also, if you feel uncomfortable you can decide not to participate in any part of the interviews. If you do not wish to take part or prefer not to answer any one of the questions, you can do so at any time. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without any negative results.

### **Are there any benefits in taking part?**

There are potential benefits to be a part of this research as it can be seen as a way to continuously learn and provide knowledge for yourself and others. The hope is that this research will offer both students and teachers great insights from its findings. In other words, the research can lead to helping students becoming better critical thinkers as there is the opportunity for being better initiators not only in the classroom but also towards nation building.

### **What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?**

If you should be unhappy with any aspect, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let me know by contacting me at following email address: [lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk) or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Deborah Outhwaite [Deborah.Outhwaite@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:Deborah.Outhwaite@online.liverpool.ac.uk) and we will try to help as best as we can. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint with which you feel you cannot come to us, then you should contact the Research Participant Advocate at [liverpooethics@liverpool-online.com](mailto:liverpooethics@liverpool-online.com). When contacting the Research Participant Advocate, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make. Please keep a copy of this PIS form for any future reference.

### **Will my participation be kept confidential?**

Yes, your participation will be kept confidential. The data I collect will be used to complete my EdD thesis and for subsequent publications about this research. You will remain anonymous throughout my thesis and in any other publication. Recorded interviews and transcripts will be stored in my password-secured personal computer until the thesis is successfully completed and up to five years. You and the university will receive pseudonyms or codes and no geographical details will be disclosed that could be used to identify you or the university.

However, my thesis supervisors from the University of Liverpool and myself will be the only people who will have access to the collected data. I will, however, anonymize all data before sharing it with my supervisors.

### **What will happen to the results of the study?**

Data will be used to discover findings that will be contained in my thesis to fulfil the requirements of the EdD doctoral programme. A copy of the thesis can be provided if you wish.

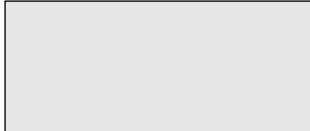
**What will happen if I want to stop taking part?**

You can withdraw from the research at any time and without explanation or negative effects. Data collected up to the period of withdrawal can be used, if you agree. If this should not be the case, then you will need to request that they are destroyed and that no further use can be made of them.

**Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

As the principal researcher, you can contact me any time with any questions you might have:

Lisa Cross



Email:

[lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk)

Phone:

080-6382-3864

## Appendix E



### Participant Information Sheet (PIS):

#### Survey

**Research study:** A Case Study of How Belief Systems, Race and Gender Influence the Development of Critical Thinking in Japanese Students of English

You are being invited to participate in the above research study. This information sheet will help you understand why the research is being done and why you are invited to be involved as a participant. You can ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take some time to decide if you would like to be involved. You can also discuss with the university's counselling services at the institution to decide any personal effects of participating in this research. Please read the following carefully.

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

This research is part of my thesis research studies at the University of Liverpool Education Doctoral (EdD) Programme. The aim of this research is to look at the connection belief systems, race and gender and the extent to which this connection influences the development of critical thinking skills in Japanese university students who are in the English Studies Courses. Critical thinking skills development among Japanese English Language learners is important not only in language learning but also life skills.

#### **Why have I been invited to take part?**

The purpose of this research is to look at how belief systems, race and gender influence the development of critical thinking skills in Japanese Students of English in university students. To be more specific, the research will investigate how belief systems, race and gender impact critical thinking skills of students. Therefore, I am inviting you to take part in this research to get your feedback in the English classes. Also, I believe that as students you could provide useful information to the research, which could help to develop your learning.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

No, it is up to you to decide. We will describe the study and go through the information sheet, which I will give to you. You are free to withdraw at any time without explanation and without any disadvantage, should you wish to do so. You can also ask that the data you have provided not to be in the study.

#### **What will happen if I take part?**

If you agree to be involved in the survey, you will be agreeing to filling out online questions on the website Survey Monkey. Questions will be written in Japanese for your understanding, but you will be asked to write your answers mostly in English, but Japanese will be okay too. These answers are simple as you will be filling in mostly multiple-choice answers or short answers, which could take you about 20 minutes. The questions will be about how belief systems, race and gender influence the development of critical thinking in Japanese Students of English, written by me, the researcher.

Also, as the researcher, I will be using pseudonyms to anonymize personal data like names and the institution. Therefore, the participant and institutional information will not be shown to the public and



your privacy will be protected. No results of the study will be made public without specific approval from the university and you, the participant. However, there are some parts of the data that I might share with my supervisor to ensure its validity. Data will be stored for up to 5 years with password protection to maintain confidentiality.

### **Expenses and/or payments**

There will not be any payments or expenses as you will not pay for anything.

### **Are there any risks in taking part?**

I don't expect any negative effects as a result of participating in this study. However, if you are worried about ethics, race and gender issues, you can discuss the implications with the university's counsellors. Also, if you feel uncomfortable you can decide not to participate in any part of the survey. If you do not wish to take part or prefer not to answer any one of the questions, you can do so at any time. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without any negative results.

### **Are there any benefits in taking part?**

There are potential benefits to be a part of this research as it can be seen as a way to continuously learn and provide knowledge for yourself and others. The hope is that this research will offer both students and teachers great insights into its findings. In other words, the research can lead to helping students becoming better critical thinkers.

### **What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?**

If you should be unhappy with any aspect, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let me know by contacting me at following email address: [lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk) or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Deborah Outhwaite [Deborah.Outhwaite@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:Deborah.Outhwaite@online.liverpool.ac.uk) and we will try to help as best as we can. If you are still unhappy or have a complaint with which you feel you cannot come to us, then you should contact the Research Participant Advocate at [liverpooethics@liverpool-online.com](mailto:liverpooethics@liverpool-online.com). When contacting the Research Participant Advocate, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

### **Will my participation be kept confidential?**

Yes, your participation will be kept confidential. The data I collect will be used to complete my EdD thesis and for subsequent publications about this research. You will remain anonymous throughout my thesis and in any other publication. Your surveys will be stored in my password-secured personal computer until the thesis is successfully completed and up to five years. You and the university will receive pseudonyms or codes and no geographical details will be disclosed that could be used to identify you or the university.

However, my thesis supervisors from the University of Liverpool and myself will be the only people who will have access to the collected data. I will, however, anonymize all data before sharing it with my supervisors.

### **What will happen to the results of the study?**

Data will be used to discover findings that will be contained in my thesis to fulfil the requirements of the education doctoral programme. A copy of the thesis can be provided if you wish.

### **What will happen if I want to stop taking part?**

You can withdraw from the research at any time and without explanation or consequences. Data collected up to the period of withdrawal can be used, if you agree. If this should not be the case, then you will need to request that they are destroyed and that no further use can be made of them.

### **Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

As the principal researcher, you can contact me any time with any questions you might have:

Lisa Cross



Email:

[lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk)

Phone:



## 参加者情報シート(Participant Information Sheet: PIS)

### アンケート

調査研究： 信念体系や人種、ジェンダーが英語を学ぶ日本人学生の批判的思考の発達に  
どのように影響するかについてのケーススタディ

上記の調査研究に参加していただけるかたを募集しております。この情報シートは、研究の目的やアンケートへの参加を依頼している理由をご理解いただくためのものです。読んでもよく解らない場合や、もっと詳しい説明が必要な場合は、ぜひご質問ください。参加するかどうかは、時間をかけ、よく考えて決めてください。また、このアンケートに参加することで個人的にどのような影響がありうるか、大学のカウンセラーに相談し、話し合ってください。以下をよくお読みください。

#### 研究の目的は？

このアンケートは、リバプール大学教育博士課程(EdD)プログラムでの私の研究論文の一環として実施されます。本研究の目的は、社会文化的、非認知的、社会的感情的ファクターの間の関連性と、この関連性が英語を学習するコースを履修している日本の大学生の批判的思考スキルの発達にどの程度影響するかを調べることです。英語を学習する日本人学生にとって、批判的思考力をつけることは、語学学習だけでなくライフスキルにとっても重要なことです。そして、信念体系、人種、ジェンダーはこの重要性を理解するための前提条件を示してくれます。

#### なぜ参加者を募集しているんですか？

本研究の目的は、信念体系、人種、ジェンダーが、英語を学習する日本人学生の批判的思考スキルの発達にどのように影響するかを調べることです。具体的には、社会文化的、非認知的、社会的情緒的ファクターが学生の批判的思考スキルにどのように影響するかを検討します。そこで、みなさんから英語の授業のフィードバックをいただくために参加をお願いしています。また、この研究に役立つ情報を学生の立場から提供できるかもしれず、そうなればご自身の学習にもプラスになることでしよう。

### **参加しなければなりませんか？**

参加は必須ではありませんし、途中で参加をやめていただいても結構です。理由を説明していただく必要もなければ、不利益を被ることもありません。また、提供したデータを研究に使わないよう要請することも可能です。

### **参加するとどうなりますか？**

アンケートへの参加に同意すると、「Survey Monkey（サーベイモンキー）」というウェブサイトからオンラインで回答することに同意したものと見なされます。質問は日本語です。回答はできるだけ英語で入力していただきたいですが、日本語でも大丈夫です。回答方法は簡単で、質問のほとんどは選択式または短答式です。20分ほどで回答できるはずですが、この研究を実施している私が設問する、信念体系、人種、ジェンダーが、英語を学習する日本人学生の批判的思考スキルの発達にどのように影響するかに関する質問です。

また、研究の実施にあたって、氏名や大学等の個人データは仮名を使って匿名化されます。よって参加者や大学の情報が一般に公開されることはないため、プライバシーは保護されます。大学と参加者本人の明確な許可なく研究結果が公表されることはありません。ただし、データの妥当性を確保するために、データの一部を私の指導教官に見せる可能性はあります。機密性を保持するため、データはパスワードで保護された形で最大5年間保存されます。

### **費用および/または報酬**

参加者が支払う費用や報酬は一切ありません。

### **参加するにあたってのリスクはありますか？**

今回のアンケートに回答することによる悪影響は考えられませんが、倫理、人種、ジェンダー問題に関する懸念があれば、大学のカウンセラーと影響について話し合ってください。また、アンケートに回答する事に抵抗があるなら、参加していただかなくても結構です。回答したくない質問には答える必要はありません。参加は任意で、いつ回答を中止していただいても問題ありません。

### 参加するメリットはありますか？

今回の研究は、継続的に学び、自分自身や他人に知識を提供する手段のひとつとして捉えることもできるため、参加することによる潜在的なメリットはあります。学生も教員も、この調査を通じて研究結果に対する見識を深めることができることを願っております。言い換えれば、今回の研究は学生のみなさんが物事を批判的に考える力を伸ばすのに役立つとも言えます。

### 不満や問題が生じた場合は？

何か不満な点や問題があれば、できる範囲でサポートいたしますので、私

([lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk)) もしくは論文指導教官であるDeborah Outhwaite博士

([Deborah.Outhwaite@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:Deborah.Outhwaite@online.liverpool.ac.uk)) にご連絡ください。また、不満や苦情があっても

私や論文指導教官に直接問い合わせるのは気が進まない場合は、研究参加者のための相談窓口である Research Participant Advocate ([liverpooethics@liverpool-online.com](mailto:liverpooethics@liverpool-online.com)) に連絡してください。Research Participant Advocateに連絡する際は、窓口がどの研究のことかわかるよう、この研究の名前や詳細、関わっている研究者、そして問題の詳細お知らせください。

### 参加は秘密扱いになりますか？

はい、参加していることは秘密扱いとなります。今回収集するデータは、教育博士課程論文の執筆と、その後本研究に関連して出版される文献のために使われます。私の論文でも、他の文献でもデータは匿名扱いとなります。アンケートの回答は、論文が完成するまでと、その後最大5年間、パスワードで保護された私のパソコンに保存されます。参加者と大学には仮名またはコードはお知らせしますが、参加者や大学を特定できるような地理的情報は公表しません。

収集された情報にアクセスできるのは、リバプール大学の論文指導教官と私のみとなりますが、指導教官に閲覧させる際、データはすべて匿名化します。

### 研究結果はどうなりますか？

データは、私の教育博士課程の要件の一つである論文に記載する研究結果を得るために使用します。ご希望であれば、論文のコピーを差し上げます。

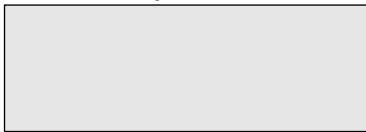
### 途中で参加をやめたい場合は？

いつ参加をやめていただいても構いません。理由を説明していただく必要もありませんし、不利益を被ることもありません。参加を中止するまでに収集したデータは、あなたの同意があれば使用させていただきます。データを使用してほしくない場合は、データを破棄し、今後一切使用しないよう要請する必要があります。

**さらに質問がある場合は、誰に問い合わせればいいですか？**

どんな質問でも、主席研究者である私にいつでもご連絡ください。連絡先は次の通りです。

Lisa Cross (リサ クロス)



Eメール :

[lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk)

電話 :

## Appendix F



### Committee on Research Ethics


#### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**Title of Research Project:** A Case Study of How Belief Systems, Race and Gender Influence the Development of Critical Thinking in Japanese Students of English

**Researcher(s):** Lisa Cross

Please  
initial box

5. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated 20-05-2019 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
6. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
7. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.
8. I agree to take part in the above study.

_____	_____	_____
Participant Name	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Name of Person taking consent	Date	Signature
Lisa Cross	20-05-2019	
_____	_____	_____
Researcher	Date	Signature

**Principal Investigator:**

Name Lisa Cross  
 Work Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk



**Committee on Research Ethics**  
**研究倫理委員会**

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**  
**参加者同意書**

**Title of Research Project:** A Case Study of How Belief Systems, Race and Gender Influence the Development of Critical Thinking in Japanese Students of English  
 研究プロジェクトのタイトル: 信念体系や人種、ジェンダーが英語を学ぶ日本人学生の批判的思考の発達にどのように影響するかについてのケーススタディ

**Researcher(s):** Lisa Cross  
 研究者: リサ クロス

**Please initial box**  
イニシャルを記入

9. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated 20-05-2019 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.  
 1. 私は上記の研究についての2019年5月20日付の情報シートを確かに読み、理解しています。記載された情報を検討し、質問し、それに対し満足な回答を得る機会が与えられました。
10. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.  
 2. 私は、参加が任意であること、そして自分の権利に影響することなく、理由を説明する必要なく、自由に参加を中止できることを理解しています。また、特定の質問に回答したくない場合は、その質問への回答を拒否できます。
11. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.  
 3. 私は、データ保護法に基づき、私が提供する情報へのアクセスをいつでも要求することができ、希望すれば、その情報の破棄を求めることもできることを理解しています。
12. I agree to take part in the above study.  
 4. 私は、上記研究に参加することに同意します。



Participant Name/参加者氏名	Date/日付	Signature/署名
Name of Person taking consent / 同意取得者	Date/日付	Signature/署名
Lisa Cross	20-05-2019	
Researcher/ 研究者	Date/ 日付	Signature/署名

**Principal Investigator:**

主席研究者 :

Name Lisa Cross  
氏名 リサ クロス

Email (E メール)      [lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:lisa.cross@online.liverpool.ac.uk)

## Appendix G

### Primary Research Question

The below method and generic questions will be based on the primary research question of:

*How do belief systems, race and gender influence the development of student critical thinking skills in Japanese Students of English in the English Studies Department at a university in Japan?*

### Interview

Interview Procedure

Facilitator - Lisa Cross (researcher)

Interviews will be taped, typed and a checked by the interviewees

A thematic analysis will be produced from the transcripts

### **Introduction**

Thank you for participating in this interview. You have a right to withdraw if you wish to do so. It should take no longer than 40-60 minutes. This interview will mainly include open-ended questions. These questions are more in-depth but will not be intrusive. The aim of this interview is to explore your thoughts about how critical thinking skills development have influenced your classes at this university. In particular, I would like to find out about your experiences, so there is no right or wrong answer. In fact, I am interested in different perspectives, thus I would anticipate your honest views or opinions because there is always something unique about a person's own experience.

### **Interview Format**

My role as the interviewer/researcher is to ask you a number of questions, but sometimes prompt you by asking you to say a bit more on a particular topic. My role is to also keep us on track and to make sure we stick to the topic we want to explore. Therefore, the interview will be conducted by asking you a fairly informal question first as an ice breaker. This will be followed by a range of questions, then I will indicate when I reach the last question. At the end of the interview, I will briefly summarize what was discussed to check if you are in agreement with it. You will be given the opportunity to make changes at this point. The discussion will be recorded, and a transcript produced from the interview. The transcript will be anonymous, referring to you only as participant 1 or 2. Finally, this anonymity means that it is difficult to withdraw you from this process retrospectively.

## **Interview schedule**

This interview will be approximately 40-60 minutes in length and will focus on total of seven main questions in three sections with some sub-questions and follow-ups:

### **A. Background**

### **B. Students' background relating to their belief system, race and gender**

### **C. Approaches to teaching and learning: Critical thinking promotion and development in EFL/ESL classes**

#### **A. Background**

1. How long have been working at this organization?
2. What is your current position at this organization?
3. What course(s) have you taught excluding those that you currently teach?
4. What course(s) do you currently teach?

#### **B. Students' background relating to their belief system, race and gender**

5. How would describe your students?
6. Based on the cultural context of your students, what approach (teacher-centred, or learner-centred) do you take to plan for your class?
  - a. What kind of critical thinking activities do you utilize in your class?
  - b. What kind of materials do you use to aid these activities?
  - c. How do you assess your students? What influences this assessment?

#### **C. Approaches to teaching and learning: Critical thinking promotion and development in EFL/ESL classes**

- d. What language outcomes/objectives do you set for your class?
- e. What language skills are important to your students?
- f. What is your understanding of critical thinking?
- g. Is critical thinking promotion and development a skill set for your students?
  - a. If yes, what approach (teacher-centred, or learner-centred) do you take to plan for your class (lesson plans and activities)? How do you assess it?
  - b. If no, would you consider promoting and developing it in your class? In what ways? How would you assess it?

7. Do you think that critical thinking is important to language learning?
  - a. If yes, how can teachers aid in its promotion and development?
  - b. If no, what should teachers focus on instead?

## Appendix H

### Survey Questionnaire

This questionnaire is being administered to find out ways in which critical thinking skills are understood and developed in your classes at this university. Also, this survey is to get your responses on how your cultural contexts, race and gender influence your critical thinking abilities.

*Please choose the appropriate responses. For some questions, you can choose more than one answers. If you feel uncomfortable about filling out any of the questions, you are free to stop answering them at any time.*

Please answer all questions in English

1. What gender are you?

Male

Female

2. What age group do you fall in?

18-25

26-33

34-41

42 and over

3. Do you think that there are strategies to help you learn?

Yes

No

4. What helps you learn?

Extra classes

In-class activities and instructions

Homework

Club/Extra-curricular activities

Studying outside of class (on your own)

Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

5. Do you think that in-class activities and instructions contribute to your English skills development?



(Please write your answers for questions 12 – 17 in sentence or note form)

12. How does your above chosen support service help with English skills development?
  
13. Overall, how does your above chosen support service help with school life?
  
14. Which support services the University provides that need to be improved?
  
15. Can you define critical thinking? How does this impact your learning of the English language?
  
16. Do you think that the gender of your teacher influences your ability to learn in a critical manner?
  
17. Do you think that the race of your teacher influences your ability to learn in a critical manner?

## アンケート

このアンケートは、日本の大学で英語を学ぶ学生がどのように批判的に考える能力を理解し、身に付けているのかを調査すること、そしてその調査を通して皆さんの文化的背景および・またはジェンダーが批判的に考える能力にいかに関与しているか検討することを目的としています。

当てはまるものすべてに✓をつけください。一部の質問は複数回答可です。もしこのアンケートの質問に回答することに違和感を覚える場合は、どの時点でもアンケートへの回答をやめていただいても結構です。

1. 上記の本アンケートに関する説明を読んで理解し、アンケートに参加いただけるなら、以下の質問に回答してください。

私は上記のアンケートに自主的に参加することに同意します。

はい

いいえ

2. ジェンダー

男性

女性

3. 年齢

18-25 歳

26-33 歳

34-41 歳

42 歳以上

4. 何年生ですか？

1 年生

2 年生

3 年生

4 年生



5. どちらの学科を専攻していますか？

- グローバススタディーズ学科       英米語学科

6. 学習の手助けとなる戦略はあると思いますか？

- はい       いいえ

7. あなたにとって学習の手助けになるものは何ですか？

- 補習  
 授業中のアクティビティや指導  
 宿題  
 クラブ/課外活動  
 授業以外での勉強（自習）  
 その他（具体的に\_\_\_\_\_）

8. 授業でのアクティビティや指導はあなたの英語力を伸ばす一因となっていると思いますか？

- 時々そう思う     たいていそう思う     いつもそう思う     全然そう思わない

9. 次のうちどのスキルを身に付ける必要があると思いますか？

- コミュニケーション  
 問題解決  
 創造力  
 批判的思考  
 その他（具体的に\_\_\_\_\_）

10. 授業以外に週何時間勉強しますか？

- 5時間未満  
 5時間以上～10時間未満  
 10時間以上～15時間未満  
 15時間以上～20時間未満  
 20時間以上

11. 質問7で回答した勉強時間は成果を挙げるのに十分だと思いますか？

- はい       いいえ

12. 100 分の授業時間（講義またはゼミ）英語力を身に付けるのに十分ですか？

- いつも十分だ
- たいてい十分だ
- 場合によっては十分だ

13. 毎学期求められる学習量をどう表現しますか？

- きつい
- こなせる量だ
- 楽だ
- その他（具体的に\_\_\_\_\_）

14. \_\_\_\_\_ で提供されている次の支援サービスのうち、利用しているものはどれですか？

学習支援サービス：

- コンピューター設備
- 図書館
- マルチメディア自習室 MAICO
- キャリアセンター
- 外国語自律学習支援室 NINJA

その他の支援サービス：

- 大学のクラブ/研究会（具体的に\_\_\_\_\_）
- 同窓会
- 保健室/健康サポートセンター
- 大学書店
- インターンシップ
- 学生相談室

**質問 15~20 については、ご自身のできる範囲で英語で回答してください。でも、日本語でも大丈夫です。**

15. 質問 11 で選んだ支援サービスはあなたの英語力を伸ばすのにどのように役立っていますか？

16. 質問 11 で選んだ支援サービスはあなたの大学生活全般にどう役立っていますか？

17. 大学が提供している支援サービスのうち、改善が必要と思われるものはどれですか？

18. あなたは批判的思考を定義できますか？批判的思考はご自身の英語学習にどのような影響を与えていますか？

19. あなたが批判的に学習する能力に、先生のジェンダーが影響すると思いますか？

20. あなたが批判的に学習する能力に、先生の人種が影響すると思いますか？