

Genki Textbook Analysis for a Mexican University Context: Realities and Challenges Faced by both Teachers and Students

Análisis del libro de texto Genki para un contexto universitario mexicano: realidades y retos enfrentados por maestros y estudiantes por igual

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Abstract

This project was written out of the necessity that CELEX students had regarding their Japanese textbooks (The Genki Series) being written in English, and how such a situation happens in a Mexican university context. The following situations were analyzed: the state of the Genki book used in the CELEX programs of the University of Guadalajara, the students' English knowledge status needed to work with the material, and what CELEX teachers should consider when adapting, re-purposing, and/or replacing this textbook in their classes. These issues were tackled through a qualitative kind of research as both a case study and a need analysis evaluation (from which an online survey was applied to know the students' opinions in certain topics). The results were mixed among the students concerning their personal language competence perception, feelings towards having a Japanese textbook in English, as well as opinions concerning teachers' material development complementing the book's contents.

Keywords: Cross-linguistic influence, Japanese Language Teaching, English as a Lingua Franca, Language Textbook Analysis, Language Program Needs Analysis

Resumen

Este proyecto fue escrito basado en la necesidad que los estudiantes tenían de tener la versión en inglés de sus libros de texto de japonés (la serie de libros Genki), y cómo dicha situación ocurre en un contexto universitario mexicano. Las siguientes situaciones fueron analizadas: el estado del libro Genki usado en los programas de CELEX de la Universidad de Guadalajara, el estado del conocimiento necesario del inglés de los estudiantes para trabajar con el material, así como qué deberían hacer los profesores de CELEX al adaptar, readaptar, y/o sustituir este libro de texto en sus clases. Estas situaciones fueron trabajadas por medio de la investigación cualitativa como un caso de estudio y se hizo una evaluación de análisis de necesidades (los estudiantes resolvieron un cuestionario en línea para saber su opinión acerca de ciertas cuestiones). Las respuestas de los estudiantes con respecto a sus percepciones de sus competencias lingüísticas, de su libro de texto en inglés, así como sus opiniones relativas al desarrollo de material para el contenido del libro por parte de los maestros, fueron mixtas.

Palabras clave: influencia interlingüística, enseñanza del idioma japonés, inglés como lengua franca, análisis de libros de texto de idiomas, análisis de necesidades de programas de lenguas.

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Disclaimer: It is worth mentioning that the entirety of this project is written in English due to the ease of approach this project would have when read and consulted by other researchers and/or teachers with a future issue of similar proportions.

Introduction

As a Japanese Language learner, I can personally recall the humble beginnings towards approaching and studying the language when one could only find most of the best study materials in English. At the start of this century (back when the author was 14 or 15), one got interested in the language as many other teenagers that age: through anime and manga. Back then, it was a bit difficult to find the proper resources presented in Spanish.

Like any student thrilled on the prospect of learning a third language, I got into a Japanese school to learn the language and the culture better: one can always find more interesting and thorough information when reviewing new vocabulary items, grammatical structures, kanji mnemonics, as well as the input and output skills to develop in a second language in a formal learning setting. On top of that, activities that help students develop language awareness and proper usage in a classroom environment are always preferable by students over self-study (this, based on the author's personal recollection of students). All of this, connected with the comparison and analysis between two, three, or even more than four languages, always has a degree of influence (a positive or negative one) in students, which has led the author and many of his friends to develop a sense of bilingual (and even trilingual) competence from which learning, face-to-face interaction, and knowledge acquisition have improved his state and the state of others.

The author can attest that there is always a degree of influence (in the most basic understanding of it) that allows a student to approach a third language (in the author's case, Japanese) through the usage of English, as we have read above. However, why does such influence exist? Is this skill, or set of skills, a reflection of our dormant instinct that pushes us to acquire information that it is presented in English (a language considered by many as the "lingua franca" for knowledge transmission)? Is this a reflection of the soft-pedagogy education we have received in our public schools, so much so that reading competence helps us circumnavigate what a text is telling us without understanding it fully? Those questions reflect my inner doubt and

perception related to his process of learning a third language that shaped me on becoming an English Language teacher, as well as my self-identification as a Japanese Language learner.

Independently from my experiences learning the language, one can look at University of Guadalajara's Center for Social Sciences and Humanities (known as CUCSH for its Spanish acronym) and more specifically at its Department of Pacific Studies; then realize that such situation is a reality for it. The Department of Pacific Studies has the responsibility of providing classes and events that help to strengthen Japan's cultural and social paradigms in the state of Jalisco, whether it is creating a sole division related to Japanese studies in economy, social influence, as well as the linguistic influence both the country and language have had on many students throughout the UdeG campuses. The Department of Pacific Studies has faced the challenge of providing Japanese Language classes with experienced and seasoned teachers on the language. However, the situation that they currently face strikes the writer in a very familiar way: teaching a third language to students (in this case, Japanese) through the usage of second-language-designed textbooks (being the second language English): The Department uses the Genki textbook, 2nd edition, to provide its classes to all kinds of students eager enough to engage into studying this language. Such a situation brings up certain aspects to consider when teaching a "second" language (Japanese as a foreign language, also abbreviated JFL) to a monolingual population (Spanish speakers) by having material in a third language, students may or may not be familiar with (English).

Based on such a situation, this project has been developed in order to analyze the following considerations: first, assessment and implementation of the role of the aforementioned JFL book used in a Mexican University context. How this book bases its design, which seems to go for a more communicative approach of teaching the language: certain characteristics will be further analyzed on the book that will provide the point of analysis of how the book can be properly used and adapted by JFL teachers on their everyday class endeavors, as well as the state of the university students unraveling their own abilities concerning English Language understanding and implementation. second, the reality surrounding university students from CUCSH and other university centers from University of Guadalajara, as to how English is an important part of their lives and as the key instrument for them to unravel their general understanding of the book's language: such perspective will be explained from two key foci, the first will be from the perspective of

English as a “Lingua Franca” (this, understood as the key language meant to distribute information all around the world), and second taking off from the concept of Cross-linguistic Influence, which by Kazzazi (2011) defines as “... a cover term for the kind of ‘mixed’ speech that may occur when the different languages a speaker knows influence each other”, as well as how this concept can evolve into a more practical term for teachers and students to apply in the student’s learning process. Since the Genki textbook is written in English and thought to teach Japanese as a second language, the dilemma here is presented in the fact that knowledge of a third language (English) can trigger the aforementioned phenomena when learning Japanese. Although not necessarily counterproductive, this can cause things such as confusion, trilingual transliteration, lack of personalization towards the target second language, as well as a probable loss of interest from the students in the worst-case scenario (Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner, 2003, p. 45). These perspectives will be assessed, not in a fatalistic point of view, but keeping in mind that such discouragement can be triggered onto the language groups. And number 3 being the state of any given Japanese language teacher (whether we talk about a Japanese or a Mexican one) that might encounter a problem in having a text that hasn’t been translated into any target language they could encounter in a non-English-speaking country: as many FL (acronym to refer to Foreign Language) teachers understand, it is the fact that if teachers have enough time availability and disposition to repurpose certain parts of the book, they must decide swiftly how to proceed with it for the sake of their groups (Harmer, 2007, p. 143). It might be understood by FL teachers that every students’ group is very different from what it is expected to be.

Based on all of those points mentioned, having materials that use a bilingual focus to get meaning across such as Genki could generate a problem with the target audience, due to being written in English and Japanese, but not in Spanish. As Montava (2011) explains it (although in a “translatologist” point of view), the study of Japanese faces a challenge for students based on the abysmal difference both Spanish and Japanese have from each other: no typological similarities, different grammatical structures and sentences-building structures akin to what this unique language offers, as well as its three different written language systems (hiragana, katakana, and kanji). Added to that, there is the worry that some (if not all students) might not possess proper English language competence skills for them to withstand the chal-

lenge of obtaining core language competency practice on the target language (Japanese), let alone on a third language they might experience trouble with.

This is why the following questions are hypothesized for this research study are the following:

1. What is the reasoning behind having a book like Genki in a Mexican university environment? How flexible is Genki, in terms of its languages being a factor that could alter students' overall experience with it for the sake of learning Japanese with it?
2. How can it be understood that having a textbook written in English can generate different ways to reach a language goal through a third language skill? Can that be achieved? How and why can that happen?
3. How can a teacher be empowered to work with the book's contents to adapt it to her/his students' real needs and objectives? Should extra and/or complimentary material be a must when working with this particular kind of textbook?
4. And should Genki have a version in Spanish for the Latin American/ Spanish market?

This project will be taught and developed as a case study, due to its particular nature. Quoting Nunan, a case study is ideal when studying a unit of occurrence in a language classroom. He defines in his book that particular stances of situations can be considered, analyzed, and evaluated in-depth and most likely pursue a general understanding of such an occurrence: "case studies involve the researcher's long-term involvement in the research context, as well as detailed data collection about the person and entity being investigated" (Nunan, 2009, pp. 8-9). Since this project will be executed from the perspective of both a seasoned Japanese student that sympathizes with the situation in hand (learning Japanese [L3] through a English-written textbook [L2] that has a strong influence on the mother tongue of the students, Spanish [L1]) and with the direct involvement of the CELEX students and general overseeing of the Department of Studies of Mexico and the Pacific Rim, it is vital to point out that these inputs could potentially provide a framework from which both the CELEX students, the Department's teachers, and all kinds of Japanese as a foreign language teachers and students around the world could identify if such phenomenon occurs on their setting.

Literature Review

Textbook analysis

To start, we should go back to the first questions established above: What is the reasoning behind having a book like Genki in a Mexican university environment? How flexible is Genki, in terms of its languages being a factor that could alter students' overall experience with it for the sake of learning Japanese with it? Such questions hypothesized the further analysis of having a book such as Genki in a Mexican university environment. We need to first start defining what kind of Textbook Genki is. Taken from the Japan Times webpage (Genki's editorial webpage), they define it as a book that "...comprehensively develops elementary Japanese language skills with a well-balanced approach to the four major language skill areas—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. After completing Genki, students can immediately start studying at the intermediate level" (Genki, 2018). It is also emphasized that "...since the book's goal is important to define what the book looks forward to achieving on institutions and Japanese groups alike, it is important to retrieve other kind of information towards understanding how the book works" (Genki, 2018).

Taken from Hudson (2001) analysis of this textbook series, she states that the book series: "... Is well organized, full of useful exercises, and enjoyable, with many cleverly effective illustrations, all contributing to promote users' proficiency. It is crafted so that students will progress with sustained interest, and teachers, both experienced and new, will find it easy to use" (p. 190).

Hudson states that, from the teacher's book version, the program offers the chance to develop the four skills from its approach, form which students can cultivate overall Japanese-language ability (Hudson, 2001, p. 191). Furthermore, she elaborates on the basic array of language items the book series cover: "The set of two volumes (Genki I and II) presents most of the basic structures, from *～です/～ます* to *敬語* (read 'Keigo', known as 'honorific speech') to causative-passive, and 1,100 basic vocabulary items" (Hudson, 2001, p. 191).

In general, Hudson (2001) states that the book series' main strong points are proficiency orientation (related to language used in the book's series), having an obvious emphasis on communicative interactions, which are abundant and varied in type, a contemporary language usage and vocabulary displayed

in the book's activities, as well as its layout design from lesson to lesson. She further comments on the added strength the "Reading" and "Writing" sections represent on every unit the book has, in spite of a lack of cohesion with every unit (Hudson, 2001, pp. 192-193).

As such, she also provides proper feedback on some opportunity areas, related to grammar items and their implementation, as well as English sentences displayed in an awkward way (which, as Hudson states, they help in conveying meaning, but they are not usual sentences that an English person might say). As such, she adds up on certain topics that the Genki II addresses that might be too personal or taboo for some students (Hudson, 2001, p. 193)

She concludes stating the Genki series is: "... not a perfect textbook (series), after all, but no (text)book ever will be, and it is a great book. The ultimate compliment reviewers can pay is to say that they have decided to adopt it at their own schools" (Hudson, 2001, p. 193).

English as a "lingua franca", its presence in Mexico, and Cross-linguistic influence and interaction

Upon consulting how reliable the book ends up being, it is mandatory to address the "elephant in the room" that it has been previously mentioned: How and why having a JFL textbook written in English can generate different ways to reach a language goal through a third language skill: Can that be achieved? How and why can that happen?

For us to properly unravel such dimensions of this text, it is mandatory to explain two terms for these questions to be answered: The first one will be what it is known as "Lingua Franca" is and how such a concept affects Mexican reality concerning English learning. This, consequently, will help us move onto defining the second term: cross-linguistic influence (CLI) and cross-linguistic interaction (CLIN). In turn, these concepts will help us define and understand a proper section of the theoretical framework this project needs to establish about the proper issue university students could face when using Genki in a bilingual context that could generate issues related to properly learn their target language (in this case, Japanese).

English as Lingua Franca and its presence in Mexico

O'Donoghue's work, titled "Sorry: English Language Learning in Mexico" (titled translated by the author, 2015), will help us define important perspectives on the identity university students have developed towards English language. This work will quote different chapters written by different collaborators, but ultimately will be referenced from their main work in each of the sections quoted on the following paragraphs. With that said, Calderón's work titled "Lingua Franca and the Right to Learn" (titled and excerpts translated by the author, from O'Donoghue, defines English as a lingua franca as "... any languages from which, based on specific historical moments, have played a key role in informational and practical exchanges"(...) "...such prestige and spreading of a lingua franca does not reside on its indisputable convenience for commercial transactions, but also on its usage as a vehicle to learn and to communicate ideas" (O'Donoghue, 2015, p. 17). From the aforementioned reference, it is important to bring to the attention of the reader that Latin was the go-to example of a lingua franca a couple of centuries ago, due to its relevance and outburst it had in the middle ages. As we understand it from Calderón, a lingua franca is the kind of language, artificially or naturally developed, that helps knowledge and information to spread (Calderon, 2015, p.15). This, in turn, helps us to acquire more and better information that could potentially help us develop better professional and personal skills that could make us better. That alone is a huge tenet most Mexican people have regarding English language learning, given the fact that we are a direct neighbor and an immediate interactional partner of the United States. That said, there is a direct influence of its official language, English, into our own cultural, social, and (most important of all) educational. As Calderón puts it:

... In contrast to what happened in other historical periods, a lingua franca learning is pre-disposed (nowadays, related to English) in the immense majority of young people. At the edge of a school institution (any school institution, really), their world (young people's world) already contains important references to English (language): in sports they have interests in, on the (social) networks they spend their time on, as well as shows and movies they watch (Calderon, 2015, p. 17).

However, based on information retrieved from Heredia & Rubio's work (also collaborators taken from O'Donoghue, titled "English and Social Inequality

in Mexico” (translation and excerpts by the author), it is considered that “... in spite of the relationship we have with one of the most important English-speaking of the world, as well as the multiple connections that brings us closer to the United States, the English language competence level is scarce” (O’Donoghue, 2015, p. 27) From O’Donoghue’s work, it can be understood as a whole that “... English language inclusion on the school system has been, so far and judging from general results, irrelevant and flippant” (O’Donoghue, 2015, p. 9). Mexican people have this idea (that this text has founded in factual information) that public education faces dire problems related to their measurements taken to satisfy the population’s demand to learn English as a mean to improve their life quality: that is normally the usual understanding that most people have related to second language education (and that is WITHOUT going into further detail with the inherent problem of native Mexican languages teaching and learning on the public sector).

Again, from Calderón:

... it normally happens that a more intuitive approach to this language (English) ends up being thwarted by the absence of ludic, creative, and artistic dimensions that naturally attract them (young people) and that, conversely, are absent on the classroom’s specific didactic context. It is a contradiction that, having an astronomical variety of alternatives and starting bases that motivates the language’s learning, we still reaffirm obtuse grammar, memorized lexis, and the non-conversational textual translation. (Calderón, 2015, p. 17).

So far, these arguments will help us establish a common point with the topic below (presented and further expanded on the theoretical framework section) concerning the state of English education in Mexico

Cross-linguistic Influence (CLI) and interaction (CLIN)

We will now proceed to move on to defining the concept of Cross-linguistic influence and cross-linguistic interaction.

Cross-linguistic interaction (CLI)

Since there are too many articles from where we can take bases from to define what cross-linguistic influence is (from now on referred as CLI), how it works, and the kind of literature we could retrieve a more qualitative answer from,

we will focus on defining what CLI is, the kinds of perspectives and the more concrete and explicit information we can retrieve from literature to further strengthen the perception Mexican university students that could possibly identify themselves with, as well as giving examples from where CLI can appear and for students to identify such phenomenon to their own advantage.

To begin with its definition, CLI is defined by Kazzazi as

... a cover term for the kind of 'mixed' speech that may occur when the different languages a speaker knows influence each other (...) this phenomenon is well known in second-language acquisition (SLA) and has been receiving growing attention in third language acquisition in bilingual first language acquisition, as well as in early trilingualism" (Kazzazi, 2011, p. 64).

Even though the first part of the definition provided above acknowledges spoken production, it could be understood that such output ability (spoken production) is a reflection of the language understanding of itself. To further consolidate such ideas, let us go to Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner, definition of what CLI is:

(It is) the common term used for "phenomena such as (language) 'transfer', 'interference', 'avoidance', 'borrowing', and L2-related aspects of language loss. This concept is predominantly related to studies of second language acquisition (henceforth SLA). Obviously, cross-linguistic aspects also form an important part of the topics discussed in studies of third language acquisition (henceforth called TLA) and trilingualism. But in contrast to SLA and bilingualism, where we have two systems influencing each other and where over the years it has been made clear that we should note a bidirectional relationship of a multifaceted nature, in TLA we have two more relationships to investigate, that is the influence of L 1 on L 2, L 1 on L 3, L 2 on L 3 and L3 on L 1 (Cenoz *et al.*, 2003, p. 45)

Even though such definition does not acknowledge any of the four language skills directly, it will be brought up (for the sake of this project) that Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner acknowledge on the way he conducted his research project on South Tyrol University that such skills were oral and written production (Cenoz, *et al.*, 2003, p. 50). As a further complement, we will also define some terminology used in the paragraph above in order to help the reader of this project: L1 is considered the mother tongue, as well as having L2 (a second language competence) and a L3 (a third language competence). Also, Cenoz *et al.* talk about trilingualism (the state of being able to comprehend, think,

and communicate in three different languages) and TLA (the whole process of learning a third language when having foundations of a L2, or second language competence). The later term, TLA, will be the term we will pay the most attention to, and that will go hand to hand when talking about CLIN on this project.

Further expanding on Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner work, they discuss the importance of considering the basic foundations of a L1 and a L2 on acquiring a L3: without going into extensive detail, they argue that other authors have established discussion parameters related to L3 acquisition through L1 and L2 competences "(Cenoz *et al.*, 2003, pp. 46-47). Such parameters led Cenoz and his team to establish a dynamic model of multilingualism (that "...is not concerned with languages as systems (L1, L2, L3), but as language systems (LS1, LS2, LS3) forming part of the psycholinguistic system of the multilingual speaker" (Cenoz *et al.*, 2003, p. 48). Hence, Cenoz *et al* define a more robust term from which this project will derive when explaining the possible phenomenon occurring in students: Cross-linguistic Interaction.

Cross-linguistic Interaction (CLIN)

Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner, define CLIN as the interaction of two or more language systems, to put it briefly. To further elaborate on such a definition, Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner, also state that CLIN:

... can be taken to include not only transfer and interference but also code-switching and borrowing phenomena and is thus reserved as an umbrella term for all the existing transfer phenomena. (...) CLIN is also intended to cover another set of phenomena such as non-predictable dynamic effects which determine the development of the systems themselves and are particularly observable in multilingualism (Cenoz *et al.*, 2003, p. 49).

Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner, lead our attention on the fact that when three languages interact in a learner's mind (and now acknowledging ALL of the language skills and competencies that a learner can possess), these three languages become pillars of the language system the learner can put to work when effectively implementing metalinguistic awareness and metacognitive strategies that can be developed and implemented in the third language acquisition process (Cenoz *et al.*, 2003, p. 49). Such assumptions can be further proven by quoting Montava (2007) on her work titled "Some Problems for

Spanish-Speaking Students in the Study of Japanese Language as L2". On it, Montava mentions plenty of situational issues arisen from the experiences of Spanish-speaking learners of Japanese. As the author can (and some of the readers may) testify, some of the issues are of understanding and building up connections with familiar elements the students have on their L1, such as phonics regarding the Japanese alphabet, its written practice, general grammatical structures, as well as sentence header structuring (Montava, 2007). Yet, some of these problems are the ones that, based on Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner, definition, can be potentially worked and improved with the pollination of elements of a second language influencing a third language acquisition. Thus, reinforcing what Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner, suggested in regards to CLIN. Such issues that can be potentially improved upon on the Japanese language acquisition process through English and Spanish implementation could be vocabulary, in which Montava, states that

...Japanese lexis and its limited relationship with Spanish is another dire difficulty Spanish-speaking learners of Japanese face. Japanese lexis comes from many sources from which the language has borrowed words from other languages (traditionally, from Chinese, Ainu, and Korean languages, and in recent times from English and other European languages). Yet, although words from English might be more familiar to the Spanish-speaking student, most of the vocabulary has no direct relationship with the mother tongue (Spanish). (Montava, 2007, p. 6, translation by the author).

Material development and textbook content adaptation

As we have seen with the first two major questionings this project has, we have seen three aspects that are worth setting up once more: first, the Genki textbook ends up being a reliable source for Japanese teachers in a university context (albeit in a foreign one). Second, how we can understand the manner in which English is perceived as a second language in Mexico, and third, how the phenomenon known as CLIN can (or cannot) fortify students' overall experience learning a L3 through the usage of L1 & L2 resources (assuming that they could have any degree of competence on the language, that is). We will discuss these points in detail once we have covered the last two questions that bring attention to the project's overall structure: How a teacher can be empowered to work with the book's contents in order to adapt it to her/his students' real needs and objectives: should extra and/or complimentary ma-

material be a must when working with this particular kind of textbook? And if there should be a Spanish version of this book for the Latin American market.

As we have established above, students can develop a sense of cross-linguistic interaction between the material and the previous knowledge they have regarding their L1 or L2 as both references to excel in the task of language learning and practice. We won't be able to get into the matter of how teachers, Japanese and/or Mexicans, could develop such competence at the same level as the students could since that can be considered a whole different project to tackle. However, what could happen if we face truly basic and/or scarce knowledge of the L2 (English, to this extent) that could potentially make the learning and practice processes more difficult for the students? How well prepared a CEJA teacher has to be in order to face such situations to encounter in a Japanese as a foreign language classroom, and more specifically, with a book such as Genki that does not have a Spanish version ready for Latin American audiences? The following theoretical pondering on this section is based on the author's experience with Japanese teachers having a degree of ability reading and understanding English grammar, the same way a Mexican JL teacher (or student) could also grasp such information (further referring to the CLI & CLIN section, above).

As a language teacher, the author would bring out McDonough and Shaw (2012) on their work titled "Materials and Methods in ELT. Being aware of the environment this author comes from (English Language Teaching), however, we need to understand that language teaching can differentiate in approaches, content, and target public:

Our professional activities as language teachers are not carried out in a vacuum; and planning a successful language program involves much more than mere decisions about the content and presentation of teaching materials. Although we work in specific situations with specific groups of learners, according to a specified set of aims, our work can be described along a number of shared and generalizable dimensions. These dimensions are the characteristics of learners, the range of factors in the teaching situation itself, and the syllabus types available to us as a profession. The differences lie in the relative importance of these factors and the choices that are made (McDonough & Shaw, 2012, pp. 15-16).

Without overgeneralizing the point established here, we can mainly state that language teachers (as McDonough and Shaw point out) tend to take most of the responsibility of how they work with and plan the content the book

established to cover with the students. We understand that language school programs' coordinators and/or overseers work with textbooks that could fulfill the necessities a language program can offer to the students' population. Yet, it is a difficult task to find a proper textbook that might satisfy the requirements any given language school program could establish for students to acquire the knowledge, aims, and objectives they would like to achieve and put into work for their own realities. Going back to McDonough and Shaw, they further comment on the fact that any given context that provides the general framework a language school program could unravel itself (in lieu of a language policy they ought to fulfill in a university program, or the demand of a group of people on learning a language that is seen differently on their interests' perception), the students' needs, goals, and objectives are the ones that should be considered first and foremost, as well as the environment from where they learn and they acquire knowledge from the target language they sought on developing (McDonough & Shaw, 2012, p. 5).

It is not set in stone that teachers are the ones responsible for how to adapt the content as the only alternative the book has to be successful—we won't be addressing matters of practice communities, different language teaching approaches to be implemented, as well as teachers' view on how the book is implemented on this project—. However, a key characteristic to be brought into the analysis will be reflective teaching and material adaptation on this section of this project. Harmer states in his chapter devoted to “using course books (Harmer, 2007, pp. 146-155) that:

...if teachers have the time or inclination to amend parts of a course book, (because the texts or activities don't seem appropriate for a particular group of students or a particular lesson, or because they want to tailor the material to match their own particular style) they have to decide what to do next (Harmer, 2007, p. 146).

In the same chapter, Harmer provides examples on how to add towards a section of the book, how to adapt it towards a more relatable and manageable piece of work for students, as well as considering replacing (or toning down) some sections of the book that might be of a more challenging difficulty for the them (Harmer, 2007, pp. 147-152). Harmer offers these three action plans for teachers to execute when the book presents some challenges when working with it and of the students to feel a closer contextualization of the

book's topics. Not only that, he also offers a comprehensive debate of justifying having course books and using them in their entirety, as well as not relying on them completely; such debate Harmer establishes is based on the precept that good course books offer a proper compendium of activities that could help productive and receptive skills in the target language, as well as workbooks and self-practice sections and audios to complement them. The danger here is that, ultimately, teachers can become complacent of what the book offers them (as well as the opposite: not having enough time to adapt all of the content from the book to the language classes), thus not exploring a more personalized identity to develop personalized classroom activities as well as suitable resources to complement the book's content (Harmer, 2007, p. 152).

Theoretical Background

After presenting the substantial theory behind the questions previously established at the beginning of this project, we will proceed onto defining the assumptions from which we will establish the evaluating criteria for both this project and its need analysis questionnaire:

Point 1: Genki textbook analysis and English as a lingua franca

Re-contextualizing from the original questions these two topics come from, we will describe how this information connects to the reality CELEX students face in their classes, as well as addressing the pervasive issue this project tackles.

Re-taking elements from our literature review, we go back to Hudson's comments reflecting on the reality one can see on the CELEX classes the Department of Studies of Mexico and the Pacific Rim has when working with a textbook such as Genki. Taken from Tofugu, a website dedicated to Japanese Language learning and Japanese lifestyle of American and Japanese-American influence, the following excerpts are taken to define the book's overall structure:

Genki was revised and updated into a second edition in 2011. (...). Shortly after its release, it became a popular choice for Japanese university classes across North America. It's gained quite the following and remains a popular choice even for those in the self-learning community. Countless students and teachers swear by it (Richey, 2015).

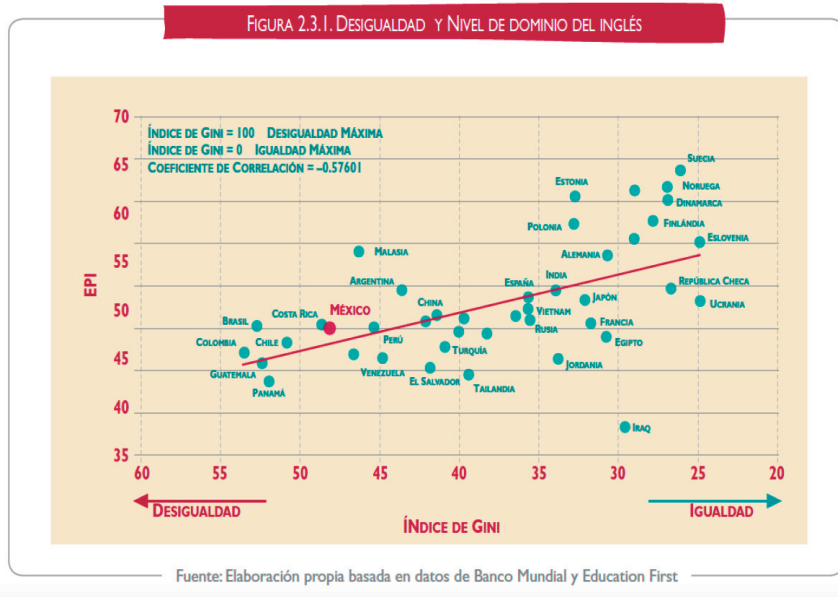
Adding such comments from such sources helps us to place our reality in the CELEX classes better: the book series is thought to be a very helpful way for students to start learning the language, as it is later commented in the same section that both grammar and conversation sections are where the book is more focused. Overall, taken from both Hudson and the webpage analysis (which was the most thoroughly complete that could be found in regards to this book), the textbook gets high praise for its design, structure, as well as its scope and sequencing of language elements.

This brief assessment of the Genki textbook will help us move on to understand how English is viewed and understood as a lingua franca in a Mexican university context.

Going back to the last paragraph presented on the second point of the literature review (English as a lingua franca) will help us out as a figurative “springboard” in order to situate ourselves in the reality of some university students: based on the comments made by O’Donoughe (2015) on this matter, we could surmise that university students might have limited experience and expertise with the English language. This, consequently, could lead to some troublesome scenarios when learning a third language and having a textbook that is written for an audience with both similar and different perspectives and development that could be anticipated from (specifying the American universities context mentioned above).

To further expand a proper framework from which we will try to define Mexican university students’ status as English users, we will go back to Heredia & Rubio’s work related to social inequality in Mexico (2015). In this article, Heredia & Rubio quote three results from evaluative comparisons from Education First to analyze the position from which Mexico can position itself in contrast to other countries in the world:

Figure 1
Inequality and English competency levels



Source: Heredia & Rubio, 2015, translation by the author.

Such a graph points out that “... Mexico is placed slightly above of the regression line, which indicates a general level of English (knowledge) a bit more elevated than the one that should be expected given its high levels of social inequality” (p. 28, translation from the author). Such reference is brought to further reinforce the perspective this project wants to set related to the fact that university students could come from a more privileged context or from a context with well-funded stimuli that might have helped them to develop their professional and personal lives in university.

Going back to the point given above, such a situation could lead to a troublesome climate that the teachers might (or might have) face(d) with their students. Yet, this does not mean that CEJA teachers had not come up with solutions to this issue, as thorough and properly as they could: direct translations of lexical items, handouts providing grammatical rules, conversational activities adapted from the book’s suggested activities, and so on. This point will be addressed in further detail in the last section of this project, “materials

adaptation”, but for now, we will address an interesting by-product of what adapting the material with properly translated supplements could cause on the students’ mind: the stimulation of cross-linguistic abilities the students could possess and/or generate.

Point 2: cross-linguistic influence and interaction

Going back to the literature review explained on this topic, we can understand that there is a huge advantage to what Cenoz *et al.* (2003) propose on his CLIN model: borrowing phenomena. As previously explained, such a phenomenon helps students to obtain and implement lexical elements to get their meaning across. Such a phenomenon can be well-spotted by teachers and students alike when we find words in the categories of 外来語 (*garaigo*, borrowed words from foreign origin) and even 和製英語 (*wasei-eigo*, Japanese word constructed of elements from one or more English terms).

Such elements previously discussed here are taken from personal experience of the author of this project learning Japanese as L3, and such intuition will help us identify how and why Cenoz *et al.*’s perspective towards CLIN can be actually a beneficial way to fortify L3 study and acquisition. This, in turn, will be mentioned and further expanded on the study section of this project.

Point 3: material development and textbook content adaptation

Bringing all of the previous theories together alongside the practical reality of the Genki book, we ought to remember that the issue with Genki lies in its secondary instructional language: English. Teachers from CEJA, just as many other Japanese teachers, understand that books are not perfect, but they offer a solid and reliable framework for students to rely upon. It is up to the Japanese teachers to implement “action proposals”, as Harmer (2007) states, in order to “... look at the possibilities the course book offers and then decide between the options for course book use” (...) “however good a course book is, it only really comes to life when it is used by students and teachers” (p. 153). Establishing more concrete parameters to CEJA teachers and students, considering that the Genki book is written to a target audience of English speakers, cross-linguistic interaction is key to developing material that could help complement vocabulary lists that students could study, researching vocabulary cues and flashcards teachers can use and either bring

together to compare alongside both languages (as we have established that such framework could be helpful related to 外来語 and 和製英語 words. Furthermore, having a third option of language structure comparison such as Japanese-English-Spanish grammatical rules could be an overlooked tool than students can use when contrasting target-language grammatical rules and structuring conditions. Again, the possibilities of using English as a means of improving their language competences through the target language (Japanese) have been hypothesized long enough for every reader to make up their own judgment by themselves, with the arguments presented here. Since the whole structure of this project is from a qualitative viewpoint, the theory has been laid upon this project for readers, students and teachers alike can draw their own conclusions behind the original issue and the different chains of thoughts brought up to debate and assess the situation CEJA teachers face with their books.

Study

In order for this research project to hold its theoretical arguments true, it had to include opinions from the very students this project pursues to analyze. In order to do that, such a population was composed of Japanese language classes the CELEX program offers on both CUCSH and the University Center of Lagos de Moreno (called CULagos), on behalf of the Department of Japanese of the Department of Studies of Mexico and the Pacific Rim. An online survey was created for students to express their opinions and perspective towards their realities as university students from CUCSH and CULagos: where they come from, the B.A. programs they study, their opinion related to English as a second language and experience with it, their interest and commitments towards Japanese and other languages, their perspectives towards English as a language that could help them improve their third language acquisition experience, as well as their opinions on their classes development and teaching aspects they would like to be considered by their teachers.

It is important to notice in that last note above that, because of time constraints, the author could not hold obtain opinions from the teachers, as they and him were personally busy working and finishing up their language course: unfortunately, the nature of the hectic lives of the teachers was the main impediment this aspect of this research was not explored, even though the title of this very project mentions it. Still, the “material development”

section was kept in order for teachers to read and to consider when planning classes, developing activities and real-life material in their classes.

Out of all the expected participants, 43 students answered the questions and provided a better insight into both the literature research and theoretical framework sections that were created for the sake of this project. These students, as it has been previously mentioned, work with the Genki book in the CELEX program. It is also important to point out the difference between CEJA and CELEX: CELEX is the language program the Department of Modern Languages from CUCSH, and their Japanese language division is overseen by teachers from CEJA. The clarifying point sought to present here is that CEJA nowadays works with different books than Genki, and that for the sake of this project, students using Genki were needed to prove the arguments and hypotheses this project established at the beginning of it.

Research Methodology

This project is based on the naturalistic inquiry of research. Going more specifically into the kind of research this project is based on, it is worth noting that this project aligns itself with the qualitative research perception Nunan (2009) comments, based on the fact that qualitative research "... is concerned with capturing the qualities and attributes of the phenomena being investigated rather than with measuring or counting" (p. 7). Even when Nunan helps to define the kind of research this project will be, it is worth mentioning that, opposite to naturalistic inquiry there is the psychometric tradition of research: he further expands on these two poles, stating that: "both the psychometric tradition and the naturalistic inquiry tradition represent different families, or cultures, of empirical research (...) meaning research based on the collection and analysis of data (...) language classroom research has employed a range of procedures to address research questions and test hypothesis (Nunan, pp. 9-11)".

Due to the nature of the information obtained to test out the hypotheses laid out on the questions this project sought to answer, we will focus more on having the tag of qualitative research for this project, as Nunan suggests that interpretative analysis of data falls in to the category of naturalistic research (2009, p. 11).

In order to clarify such a point, it is important to notice that Nunan's definitions also help us identify this research project as a case study, given that "...in a case study, we can investigate a particular class or a program or

a school (...) a case study is often characterized as being an in-depth analysis of one particular exemplary of the thing we wish to understand” (p. 8). For that matter, as we have established in the literature review section, we sought to understand how English is viewed regarding its presence as a second language, students could be predisposed to learn and understand or not, and how the book’s languages can affect the way the students work on their Japanese Language acquisition process. This, of course, is critical in order for us to understand this particular happening, and to seek some better students work orientation in the CELEX Japanese classes.

Data collection

A questionnaire was created based on Brown (1997) arguments for language programs surveys and questionnaires: “A questionnaire is any written instrument that presents participants with a series of questions or statements to which they should react either by selecting from existing possibilities or writing out their answers. Questionnaires are particularly efficient for gathering information on a large scale” (p. 4).

Based on Brown’s comment on questionnaires, it was thought to be the best option to present questions and statements from which students could pour down their perspectives and opinions that we needed to work with and to prove our research arguments stated above. Furthermore, he comments on the reasons why a questionnaire should be provided to students of a language program: he states that questionnaires:

...are most commonly used in language education for curriculum development and for research. Language programs provide a service to students who want to learn the language in question. If the program is interested in what these clients think, then some form of curriculum analysis and research will probably be desirable because the best way to find out what people are thinking about any aspect of a language program is to ask them (p. 4).

A Google Forms questionnaire was created, in which its deliverance resembles Brown’s group-administered questionnaire, but with the advantage of having digital access to the students’ emails, time availability, and better logistics to fill out such questionnaire. The way the questionnaire was created was to fulfill an aspect that this project thought important to address in students: needs analysis. Brown further comments on this aspect, stating that:

... needs analysis in language programs is often thought of as the study of the language forms students will need to use in the target language when they actually try to communicate. The focus is usually on the learners, and their needs are most often stated as linguistic needs. In fact, focusing on the learners in a needs analysis seems reasonable. After all, they are the clients; and the needs of the clients should be met. (...) Needs analysis should probably focus on the language needs of students, but must recognize that students also have other needs, called "situational needs". Situational needs include all of the learners needs as human beings. (...) Since needs analysis relies on input from a variety of different groups about the students' linguistic and situational needs, survey projects (referring to questionnaires) may prove particularly useful. In fact, in gathering information from the various groups of people involved, survey interviews and questionnaires may become inevitable (Brown, p. 5).

On having a questionnaire that addresses situational needs for the students, and backing such questionnaire with both the literature reviewed and the theoretical frameworks based from the former at the beginning of this project, we will present the results the students provided in this questionnaire, as well as the overall percentage of information obtained from this students' sample pool that will help us prove our hypotheses to be founded or unfounded, based on their opinions.

Data Analysis

Section 1: Initial background

Starting with the information given by the students, a general background summary will be provided in this section.

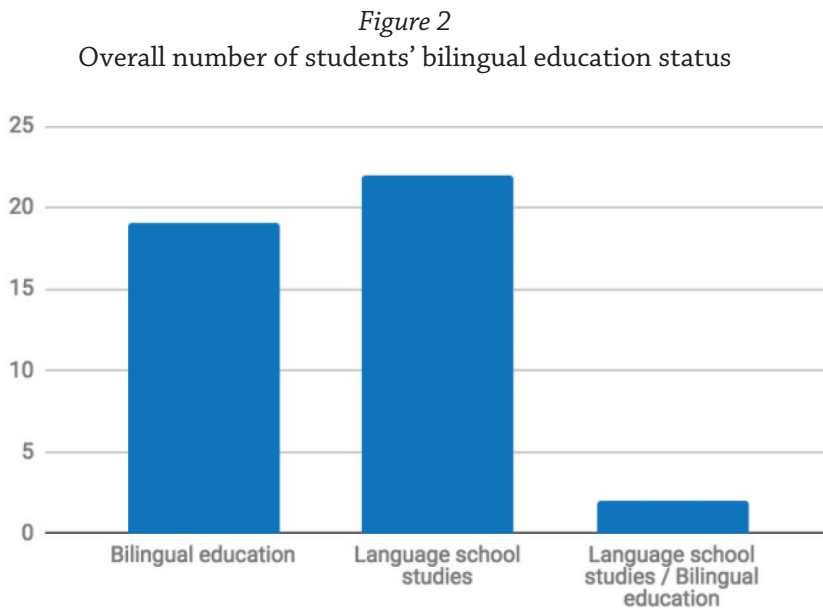
Out of the 43 students who took this survey, 30 were female participants and 13 of them were male, with an age range from 18 to 27. These 43 participants are primarily from the state of Jalisco, with two students coming from different states of the country and two of them being raised in the United States then brought back to their family hometown. 35 of these participants are university students all throughout the UdeG universities network, six of them belong to the high school sector (not knowing whether they study at UdeG high schools or not), a technician (or technical bachelor, as it was understood) and a student with either incomplete studies or on-hold. Most

of these university students are enrolled in humanities B.A. programs, with five students studying criminology and two students studying engineering.

Section 2: English education and self-assessed competence levels

Almost every single participant labels the necessity of knowing English as something “basic”, “crucial”, “highly valued”, and “frequently used”. Out of the 43 students surveyed on this questionnaire, 37 of them unanimously said that English is an important language for their current lifestyle (that being university students, in their majority). Some of the students provide further reasons for this section: “English is a language that helps integrate world communities converging in the same place”, says a student. Some students share their views on English as a lingua franca: meaning that the language is used as a tool for global communication and as a common denominator for scientific propagation (as the author can testify as true).

Based on the amount of years these students have been studying/had contact with the language, we will show the following graph:

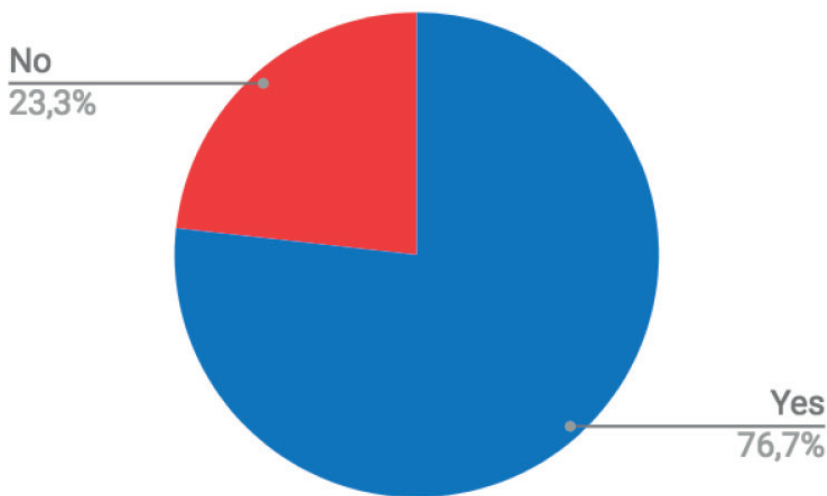


Source: Author’s elaboration.

From the 43 students, 19 of them are labeled in “Bilingual education”. This broad term is used to agglutinate these students who have studied/have had contact with the language for more than nine years. Of these students, 22 are labeled “Language school studies”, based on the amount of years they said they have been exposed to the language (from less than one up to six years). The last category was created based on the point of transition that some of these students could be: from six to seven years of exposure/education in English, these two students could represent a transition from both labels. These labels were used based on the general nature of the information given by the students, and it is worth pointing out that (whether these students had had the change to study in language schools, develop their skills by language immersion, or just have their basic education in English at public/private schools) the following graph is the ones that matter the most for this project than this one.

Figure 3

Results obtained from “Do you consider that such amount of time has been productively (learning English) on your behalf?”



Source: Author's elaboration.

Looking at this question specifically, we see that more than three quarters of the student's state that their exposure towards English has been fruitful. Their reasons vary, starting off with six students stating that they have spent a considerable amount of years living in the U.S. (ranging from one to 15 years): it could be assumed that these students have been exposed to both a bilingual setting and bilingual education. Giving other comments based on students answers are that "studying the language was always to improve" (whether this students refers to oneself or as a student "in general" is on her/his mind to figure out)", "because the language will help me in the future", "learning a language is never a waste of time", "because my knowledge back then allowed me to read partially in English", "because I have had the chance to use it in my current context: hence I could practice it constantly and improve it", among others positive comments

Some of these comments reflect the positive value these students have given to their English language experiences. Furthermore, they exemplify the hypothesis given in the "English as a Lingua Franca" section of this project, from which it was theorized that university students could come from a more privileged context (in most cases) or from a context with well-funded stimuli (those students who might have motivated themselves or by their parents on pursuing a better stage of their English knowledge and competence of the language) that might have helped them to develop their professional and personal lives in university.

Now focusing our attention towards the negative comments, there were some comments based on the amount of time the students have not been able to dedicate themselves towards English learning and practice: "I haven't dedicated (a fair amount of) time", "I have only dedicated a productive year-and-a-half to it", "there are some aspects of the language I have not been able to master (*sic*), or aspects that I need more practice with", among others. The one that stands out from the rest was the following: "the way I was taught was pretty precarious". Unfortunately, we don't have enough information to pinpoint if this student refers to public or private education, or the time invested in language schools. This offers us a somehow relatable opinion on what we discussed in the "English as Lingua Franca" section of this project, yet again: having a textbook that it is written for an audience with this kind of profile and ideas towards a second (or third) language can generate both problems and conflicts inside of this student's mind.

To conclude with the information gathered by the students, some results will be presented based on the students' personal assessment on their English language abilities represented by CEFR level standards for the reader to picture the way these students see their language abilities (figure 4):

Figure 4

Results obtained from students' personal assessment of competency levels



Source: Author's elaboration.

Analyzing these results, we end up having a perception of a somehow English-competent CELEX student profile, with their clear exceptions. Providing a progressive conclusion to this fact, we have that the students can deal with the fact that the Genki book is written in a second or third language that they are somehow familiarized with: such theory is being confirmed that the students' educational background has provided them with certain abilities could potentially help them get the meaning across the Genki book. Still, we need to evaluate their disposition towards their cross-linguistic interactivity (mentioned below, in section 4 of this part of this project).

Section 3: Students' language learning expectations and Japanese learning profile

In this section, all of our 43 students sampled showed a complete (and partial) interest in learning another language, which demonstrates how eager students could be in increasing their language knowledge and exercise their linguistic skills: some of the students comment on their knowledge and previous study experiences in Japanese, of course, but also in French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Hebrew, and surprisingly, Mexican Sign Language. Concerning their future language interests, some of the students talk about retaking their former language studies, as well as starting new languages, such as Russian, Hindi, Korean, and yes, English in particular cases. Stating some of the reasons students would like to study these languages vary from internationalization, professional and personal skills improvement, traveling, cultural exchange, linguistic curiosity, becoming a polyglot, and so on.

Moving on to the reasons why students decided to study Japanese, we found that some of the students (among the many reasons they provided) felt motivated towards Japanese culture, traveling to the country, educational and cultural exchange, the challenge and novelty of studying a language not known to the students, and so on: it is worth noting that a student stated that the rise of Japanese companies in the "Bajío" area of Mexico (composed of states such as Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, and Queretaro) is a key influence for her/him. This takes us to reflect on the awareness Japanese students and teachers have regarding the Japanese community in Mexico as a major influential factor and the sociocultural drive for these students.

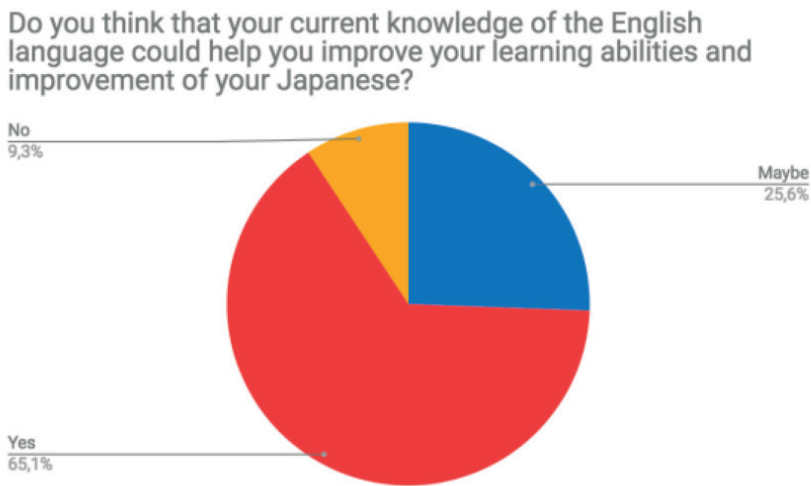
Section 4: CLIN between English and Japanese

Based on the students' answers on this questionnaire, we will present their comments and the hypotheses we have established on this project to see how well these fit into the students' perception of influence and command between these two languages (and considering their mother tongue as the default language they could use, of course).

First question:

Figure 5

Results from the question “Do you think that your current knowledge of the English language could help you improve your learning abilities and improvement of your Japanese?”



Source: Author's elaboration.

On this first question, the students confirm (to an extent) one of the hypotheses we have established at the beginning of the project: are materials written in English helpful for them in the context of their Japanese classes? We have seen from their opinions that almost two-thirds of our sample has said “yes”, while 10 percent of our sample has said “no”, whereas a quarter of our sample has been neutral towards the fact of using such material. In-

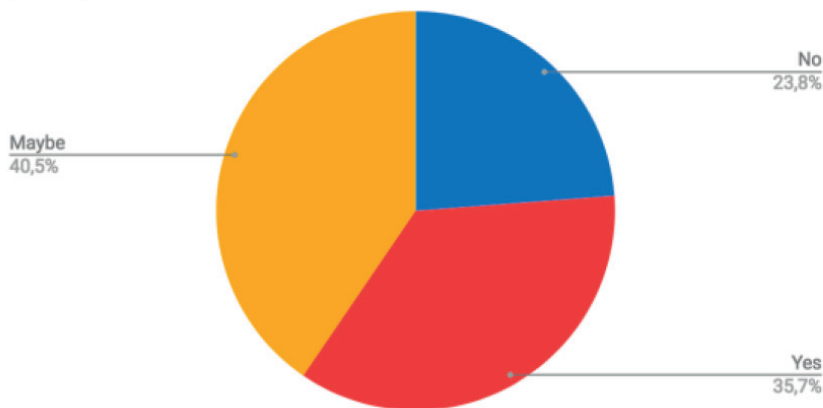
terpreting this data, we found that students with a degree of knowledge of the English language are willing to use their skills in order to help them get the meaning across the language they are currently interested in. Some of the reasons stated by the students who said “yes” are (and this lived to the expectation that was presented at the beginning of this project) the very same reason of having plenty of material online written in English for the improvement of Japanese students and the presence of borrowed words in Japanese from English (confirming what it has been stated above regarding 外来語 and 和製英語). As such, the presence of English-written materials is a factor that is shared by these students and yet they do not see this as a disadvantage. In contrast, some of the comments given in the “no” section, are related to the fact that the translation of concepts from Japanese-English to English-Spanish could be troublesome for them (as well as having the material in a language that they do not fully grasp). This is also reflected by two pretty polarizing answers: “grammar rules in Japanese-English can help me reinforce my knowledge of English while I learn Japanese grammar” and “having to translate from English to Spanish is another task I need to sort out while I am learning a third language”. We can see on such dichotomy that most of the students can actually perceive this situation as an opportunity, but there are other students who remain skeptical towards such fact.

Moving onto the following question:

Figure 6

Results from the question “Do you think that having a book written in English (and using such language as your second language) could help you improve your learning abilities and performance of your Japanese?”

Do you think that having a book written in English (and using such language as your second language) could help you improve your learning abilities and performance of your Japanese?



Source: Author's elaboration

On this question, it was pondered how the students would communicate their feelings towards the Genki book and the language (and populace) that it has been envisioned for. Surprisingly, we see that almost two-thirds of the students have stated their skepticism towards having a book in English as their main textbook in class. The reasons they express concerning the “no” section, are the complexity of using both English and Spanish at the same time, the amount of time invested in translating concepts they could be working in class (such as controlled activities), as well as the difference between English and Spanish as languages. One reason stands out from this section, in which a student questions her/himself in regards to having material that might be suitable for her/his needs. It is also worth noting that some of the students who were hesitant to giving a positive and negative answer stated mainly that the presence of English-written material, phonological and vocabulary similarities between Spanish and English respectively, and the disparity of developing flexibility (in a student's opinion) of practicing both languages and

the deterrent of helping get meaning across (in another student's opinion). Based on such observations, we see that some students are quite hesitant with their CLIN abilities, since some of them have vocalized the fact that English is a language they somehow understand, but that can bring up certain complications when not mastering it to its full potential: they could learn it and review it while they work with it in class, but some of them see such aspect as a bother (this analysis based purely on their comments, of course).

Providing a fundamental point of view from which we could bring both the students arguments presented above and the theory that we have quoted from Cenoz *et al.* (2003), it could be said that the facts that these students, having to perceive these three languages converging in this environment, may cause them a sense of anxiety towards underperformance in the Japanese language class. It is vital then that as JL teachers consider what Cenoz *et al.* (2003) said related to influencing the student's second language in a third language setting. That way, a student can put to work such skills (metalinguistic awareness and metacognitive strategies of these languages), hence exercising their CLIN skills in class by themselves or even by the teacher. Teachers and students alike need to develop mechanisms from where students can exercise these language abilities in this context, and not falling in the emotional trap of limiting themselves into a two-way perspective divided into two processes to execute in class.

For us to reaffirm the argument presented above, we found that those students who favored the motion expressed feelings from which they (sub-consciously) could exercise their CLIN based on the situation they face in their classes.

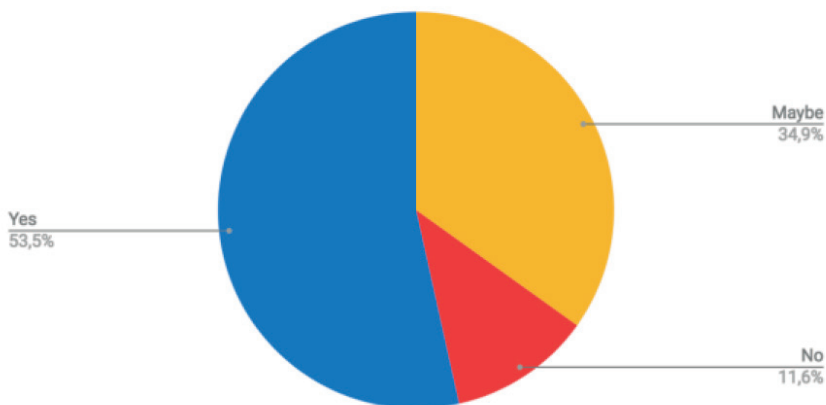
As we have previously stated above, Cenoz *et al.* (2003) comment on the importance of borrowing phenomena (from where students could obtain and implement lexical elements to get meaning across in their third language interactions). Such comments have been found in both the first and this second question of the introduction section. Thus, proving that the availability these students show towards working in this context of an English-written Japanese textbook helps them in improving their second language using learning a third language.

Moving on with our last question:

Figure 7

Results from the question “In your individual study time, do you think that you could combine your second language abilities (English, in this case) to potentialize your Japanese language study experience?”

In your individual study time, do you think that you could combine your second language abilities (English, in this case) to potentialize your Japanese language study experience?



Source: Author's elaboration.

On this question, it was sought to state the importance of study time investment in language students. Furthermore, the importance of studying using the second language was important in order for the students to realize, based on their previous comments, how they were considering using English as a way to practice their CLIN skills between languages, as well as English as a means of developing and/or reinforcing their abilities in such language. We see that, in contrast with the second question, more than half the students consider using English as an instructional language for their study sessions, whereas almost half of the other participants either were against the idea or were not fully convinced of it. This reflects a better response from the second question, yet there are some comments ahead that we need to reflect upon on this section: on those two categories (“no” and “maybe”), some of the answer the students provided answers such as “I could get stressed out over the fact that I would be translating most of the time”, “it might get confusing at times”, and “knowing English is not going to help me learning Japanese

entirely, but at least some of the words”; those students who said “no” gave comments mostly connected towards showing no interest in English entirely and translating from one language to another as a bother for them. It could be said that the negative results from the second and third questions make us understand that a language-translation approach sounds like too much hassle for the students who are not competent enough in or that they particularly don’t give relevance to English. As controversial as it sounds, some of the individuals might display a somehow exhausted view on English learning, due to multiple factors that could have or could be happening to them. This, in contrast to our arguments given on the second question, reflects that neither CLIN nor CLI skills are considered on behalf of these students. Hence, those kinds of attitudes could hinder the development of a more open-minded student who is willing to learn more language through their mother tongue and other languages s(he) could get his/her hands on. It is worth noting that, in the “maybe” section, two students said “I don’t know”: that could be interpreted as a kind of “inaction” attitude they have yet to define a position to see if that could be something that might interest them and/or a sense of exhaustion regarding English learning and their language competences on this language.

Regardless of that, focusing on the other half of the population comments that “practicing English through Japanese seems handy while I study and review both languages”, “having to contrast vocabulary and grammar in two languages I’m learning helps me potentialize both”, and “having better array of resources that help me understanding Japanese better, even if it is English, is always an option for me”. These arguments give validation to the section we have established above, favoring a better outlook towards learning and practicing more than two languages when facing the fact that some material might be oriented towards English (in an attempt to make them more accessible to get, based in our previous comments of having English as a lingua franca).

Section 4: Language learning and practice expectations in class and material development suggestions from the students

In this last section of data analysis, we found that the three categories students agree more on practicing in their classes are the four skills, grammar and vocabulary, and socio-cultural understanding and assimilation of the

Japanese language. In this last section of data analysis, we found that the three categories students agree more on practicing in their classes are the four skills, grammar and vocabulary, and socio-cultural understanding and assimilation of the Japanese language. These aspects are important to bear in mind because (going back to what McDonough & Shaw (2013) and Harmer (2007) stated in the “Materials development” section) we need to always keep in mind that “...planning a successful language program (*sic*) involves much more than mere decisions about the content and presentation of teaching materials” (McDonough & Shaw, pp. 15-16): Connecting this section with Harmer (2007), we could understand that the teacher ought to have a more active role in regards to what the students comment related to the class (as quoted on the aforementioned section of this project’s literature review). It is always important to keep their opinions and necessities in mind when we plan our classes and specifically when complementing our textbooks for the sake of a more skills-integrated and more diversified class.

The last question in this project’s survey was related to recommendations JL teachers could follow related to their needs, based on Brown’s recommendation of surveying students to obtain information that could help improve the overall students’ experience in class (1997). The students’ general consensus showed us plenty of requests the students would like to have in order to complement the Genki book: the ones that stood up were oral production, real-life material implementation in classes, visual and interactive types of activities to do in class, Kanji in-class and after-class practice, as well as a more listening and reading exercises for students (just to name the kinds of recommendations that stood from the students’ questionnaires). These comments, of course, reflect what Hudson (2001) commented related to the Genki book series having reading and writing exercises that sometimes lose connection to the topic each unit has. Furthermore, the sense of having a book as the core foundation of a language program can have its advantages and disadvantages. As it has been discussed earlier, Harmer (2007) urges for teachers to be more connected to their “audience” for them to have a better experience out of the classes they attend. After all, it is worth keeping into consideration that “however good a course book is, it only really comes to life when it is used by students and teachers, and it is they, or the book, who should determine exactly how and when the material is used” (Harmer, p. 153).

Conclusions

Based on the information we have gathered from our questionnaires, its further analysis above, and the way the answers reflect our hypotheses established in both our literature review and theoretical background, we are now able to provide answer to our preliminary questions from which we set to work and answer on this project:

1. What is the reasoning behind having a book like Genki in a Mexican university environment? It is understandable that a book such as Genki, a book that has worked on teaching basic Japanese tenets on American universities, could work in the Mexican university context the CELEX program presents to UdeG students. However, the reasons behind the Department of Studies of Mexico and the Pacific Rim's choice towards this book were not asked by the author due to the pragmatic nature of this research on how working with a JL textbook in English might have certain benefits that students may get from it.
2. How flexible is Genki, in terms of its languages being a factor that could alter students' overall experience with it for the sake of learning Japanese with it? The Genki book is a suitable book that allows the teacher to work with it in a very basic way, due to the way it's laid out and how sequenced is both its content and structure. Going back to the comments on the questionnaire answered by the CELEX students, it is presented that both the students possess a level of understanding towards English as a third language of instruction in their textbooks. However, opinions were mixed concerning the fact that the students should use a book in English when they are learning Japanese as a second language. There was, in the end, a somehow obvious inclination towards favoring the use of a textbook in English in order to work with the three languages any particular student from CELEX might put to work when studying and practicing the language either in class or in their personal study time.
3. How can it be understood that having a textbook written in English can generate different ways to reach a language goal through a third language skill? Can that be achieved? How and why can that happen? Again, from the results we gathered from this project's need analysis survey, it has been seen that this can be both helpful and harmful for the students, mostly if we consider that there could be a latent instinct towards an English language understanding capacity. This statement is brought, of course,

due to the arguments we have established towards the level of presence English has in Mexico and the capacity of the students (theoretical, of course, based just on the opinions and comments given by them), as well as how well they are able to interact, practice, and review their second language through the study of a third language.

4. How are teachers encouraged to work with the book's contents in order to adapt it to their students' real needs and objectives? Should extra and/or complimentary material be a must when working with this particular kind of textbook? Teachers, as common understanding, take the final decision of what it is done in class: of course, certain regulations must be met for the sake of the institution, such as following the book's established curriculum, to use such curriculum framework as a platform to take students to a more feasible and achievable objective that can be achieved (such as the 日本語能力試験 or also known as the Japanese Level Proficiency Test), as well as to establish a proper language production sense in a L2 or L3 concerning input and/or output skills. The issue here could be that a textbook can end up being (as it had been previously established in our "materials development" section) a burden of sorts, rather than a tool: When a JL teacher (not particularly focusing on her/his nationality) follows the book blindly, without complementing and/or enriching it, it can lead to a heavyweight being left on the students' shoulders concerning JL as a third language acquisition process. We won't go into further detail on talking about students' motivation (though it will be brought to attention the following name, Zoltan Dörnyei, for anyone interested in the topic), but it could be stated (basing ourselves on our questionnaire answers explained above) that many Japanese students have a strong motivation regarding Japanese as a L3. The problem could arise if the JL teacher cannot work with the book properly, due to a language interference issue the book might generate or approaching it without a critical lens from which the JL teacher can leave the book sterile when working and executing its content in class. Alas, this questionnaire should have also been given to JL teachers, in order to know their personal insights towards these particular topics, but that can always set precedent for another research project more focused on JL teachers and their expertise, values and beliefs systems to be assessed.
5. Should Genki have a version in Spanish for the Latin American/Spanish market? Yes, it should definitely have a Spanish/Latin American version.

Yet, we have found on the thorough process of analyzing our local setting, the way the Genki textbook is designed and written originally, the ways we could adapt it towards our current necessities, as well as analyzing the positive aspects of what a book written in a third language has (or in the case of the CELEX students, their second language): as such, this book has been established to be a well-designed one and one thought for university students. Furthermore, as any textbook, teachers should always bear in mind that their own CLIN skills should be sharp when approaching a book in similar conditions, for them to be well aware and even better prepared to face the challenges that a book written in a third or even a fourth language, students might be able to understand or not could represent as a professional challenge for these teachers.

Overall, we have hypothesized about the fact of having an English-written Japanese Language textbook that woke up the authors' curiosity on how to handle such issues. Here, we have a vast theoretical framework to establish based on the conditions we have exhausted throughout this project. It is up to the readers interested enough on the theoretical discussion of this issue to see if this work can work as a cornerstone for further needs analysis your institution faces when working with and having similar conditions to face in such language programs.

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