

Data Analysis of Shoin Kids English Participants from 2015 to 2017

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Data Analysis of Shoin Kids English Participants from 2015 to 2017

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Shoin Kids English is a series of English language classes for kindergarten and elementary school students, offered by Shoin English Language Teaching Center and Osaka Shoin Women's University Department of English as an International Language. This paper reports the results of a data analysis of Shoin Kids English participants for the past three years. It also presents the results of their parents' response to a question related to the advertising of these classes. The aim of this analysis is to help decide in which way to develop and advertise the program in the coming years.

Introduction

Shoin Kids English, a series of English language classes for children, was started in 2013 as a part of Osaka Shoin Women's University's open lectures program, under the joint auspices of Shoin English Language Teaching Center (hereafter ELTC) and Osaka Shoin Women's University Department of English as an International Language (hereafter EIL). Since university open lectures are usually aimed at adults, in 2014 Shoin Kids English became an independent program, with ELTC responsible for the administrative and EIL for the educational aspect (content and instruction) of the lessons (Yamaoka, 2016).

The aim of the Shoin Kids English program is to contribute to the society by helping children acquire some basic knowledge of the English language, and to help promote the name of Shoin Educational Foundation in the surrounding prefectures (Yamaoka, 2016).

Shoin Kids English Classes Administration

For the first two years, participants were divided into 3 classes based on their age: A (kindergarten), B (1st and 2nd grade of elementary school) and C (3rd to 6th grade of elementary school). The program was divided into two semesters, spring (May-July) and fall (November-February), each consisting of ten 60-minute lessons. Due to parents' complaints of the break between the spring and fall semester being too long and due to the rising number of participants, it was decided that some organizational changes were needed.

From 2015, participants were divided into 4 classes (A, B, B+ and C) based on their age and English language experience: A (kindergarten), B (elementary school, beginner), B+ (elementary school, more than 1 year of experience) and C (elementary school, more than 2 years of experience). The program was still divided into two semesters: first (May-July) and second (September-March), but the number of lessons in the second semester was increased to 16. In 2016, the names of the classes were changed to A, B, C and D.

To ensure a quality learning environment, A and B classes were usually split into two groups that were taught by two different teachers.

Data Analysis of Participants from 2015 to 2017

To get an understanding of how the composition of participants might change in the coming years, administrative data about the participants for the past 3 years (2015-2017) was analyzed. The results are displayed in figures 1-5. The number of students is given as the total number of students who have participated in the lessons for a given year (this includes some students who only participated for one semester). In Figure 3, class names from 2015 (A, B, B+ and C) have been changed to match those from 2016 onwards (A, B, C and D).

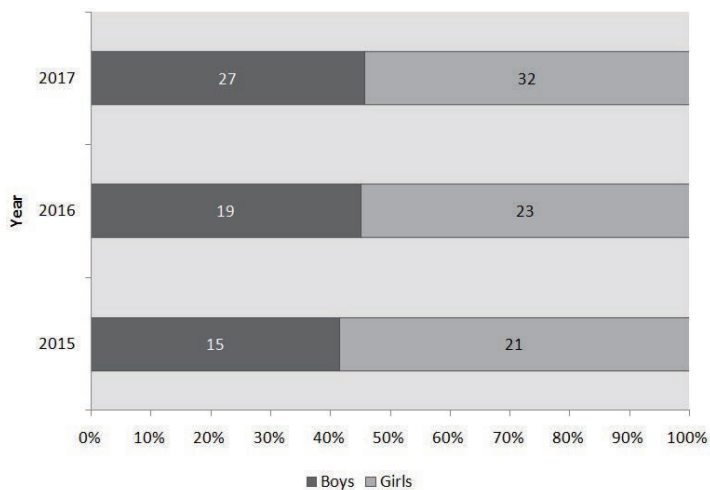


Figure 1. Student gender ratio, boys : girls.

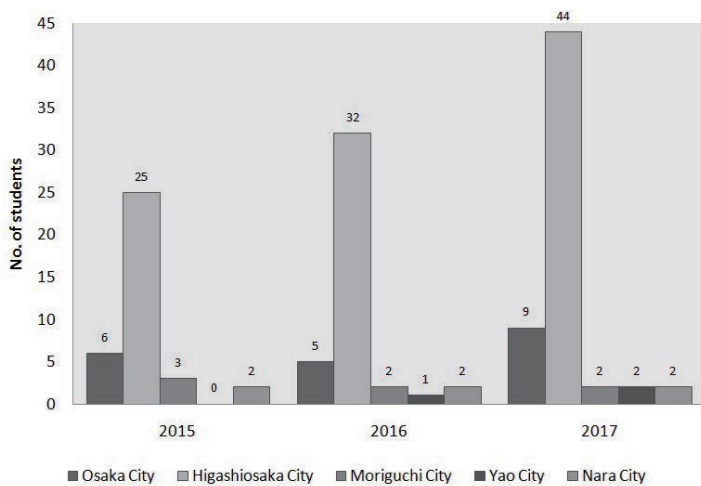


Figure 2. Place of residence.

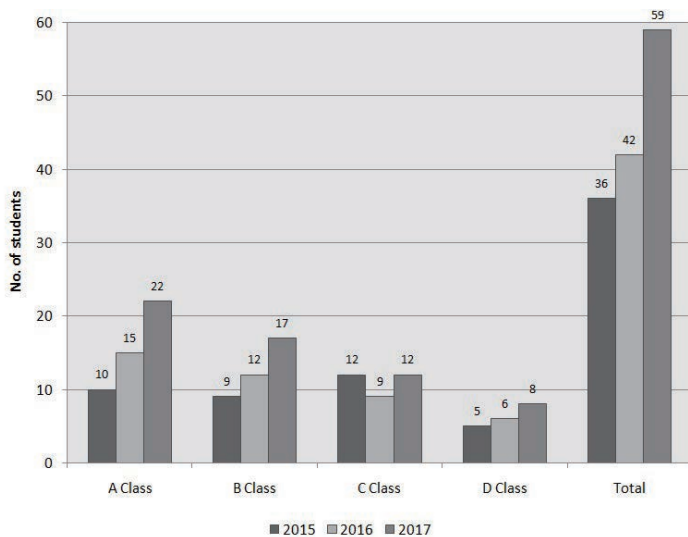


Figure 3. Number of students per class and total number of students.

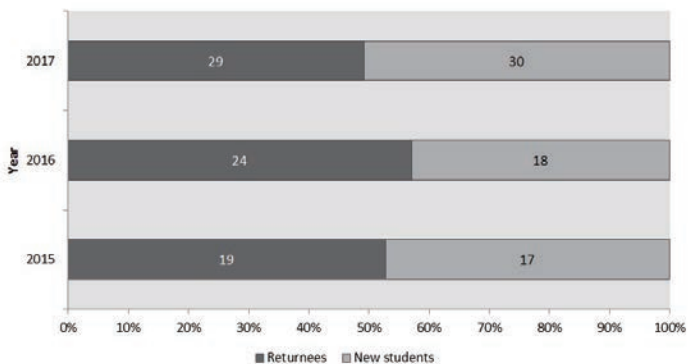


Figure 4. Returnees vs. new students.

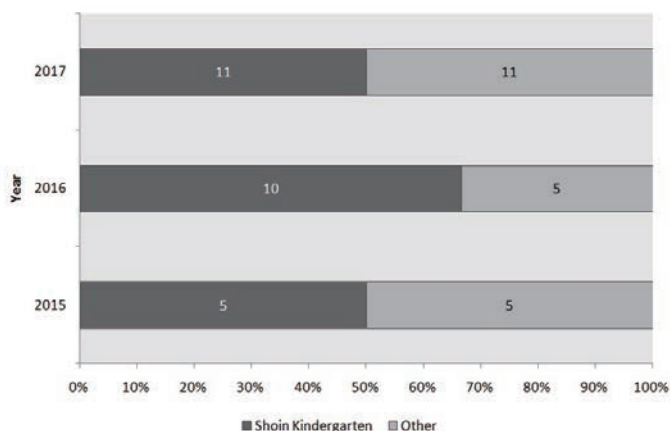


Figure 5. A Class: Shoin kindergarten vs. other kindergartens.

For the past 3 years, a slight majority (54-58%) of the participants have been girls (Figure 1), and most of the participants (70-75%) lived in Higashiosaka City (Figure 2). The number of students has been steadily increasing (Figure 3), with 2016 seeing over 16%, and 2017 seeing over 40% increase from the previous year. The increase is most notable in the lower-level classes (A and B). About half of the students each year were returnees, i.e. they also participated in the program in one of the previous years (Figure 4). In years 2015 and 2017, half of the A class students were from Shoin kindergarten. In 2016, that percentage was even higher, 67% (Figure 5).

Advertising of Shoin Kids English

Shoin Kids English program is promoted through the use of flyers (sent to potential returnees, Shoin kindergarten and public libraries in Higashiosaka City), the ELTC homepage and a free lesson. It also relies on mouth-to-mouth advertising.

At the beginning of each year, parents of participants are asked to fill out a short questionnaire regarding their child's character and previous English learning

experience. On this occasion, they are also asked where they have heard about the Shoin Kids English program (multiple response question). The response rate was 100% in 2015, 93% in 2016 and 88% in 2017. The results are presented in Figure 6.

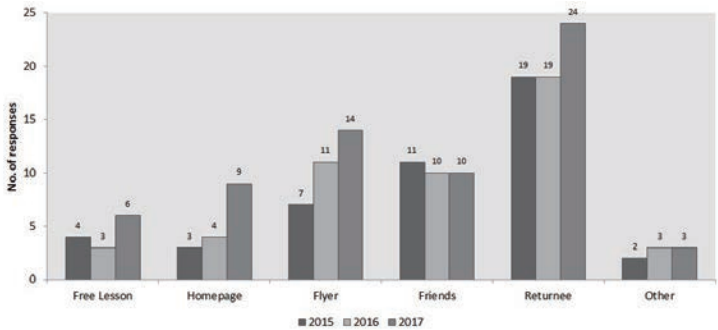


Figure 6. Response: Where did you hear about Shoin Kids English?

The most common response was that they are returnees, followed by the responses that they had seen a flyer or heard about it from friends. The homepage also seems to be becoming a frequent source of information.

Conclusion

By 2020, Japanese elementary school students will be required to take English classes from third grade onward, which might prompt more parents to enroll their children into English language classes from a younger age. This can already be seen from the analysis presented in this paper, as the number of A and B students has seen a high increase in the past 3 years.

With the number of students increasing every year, it is already becoming difficult to manage the classes. In the second semester of 2017, it became necessary to hire a third teacher as otherwise some of the classes would have been too crowded for an effective lesson.

If the trends that became evident from this analysis continue, namely a

high percentage of returnees, a high increase in students in A and B classes, it will become necessary to rethink the way in which the program is organized and advertised. One way would be to strictly enforce the limit of participants per class. At present, only the maximum number of students per group is fixed; if the number of students is higher, a new teacher is hired to meet the demands. Another way could be to limit the amount of advertisement, e.g. only send flyers to returnees and Shoin kindergarten, for a few years. However, since this program also helps to promote Shoin Educational Foundation as a whole (in the past 3 years, 3 participants have enrolled into Shoin Junior High School), limiting the number of participants in any way might not be the best course of action.

References

- Yamaoka, K. (2016). Kids English kyoushitsu no keika to tenbou [Kids English Classes - Progress and Outlook]. *Shoin ELTC Forum*, 5, 55 – 60.