

Linguistic Problems, Technical Knowledge Problems, and Socio- Cultural Knowledge Problems the Foreign Nurses Face in the National Examination in Japan

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Study 1: Empirical study on foreign candidates' performances in different test conditions

Research questions

1. How do Indonesian candidates perform on the test in three conditions,
 - (1) the time extended,
 - (2) the phonological readings attached, and
 - (3) the L1 translation?
2. How do they compare with L1 nurses and L1 college students?

Method

Participants:

- 28 Indonesian-speaking L2 Japanese candidates (nurses from Indonesia; less than 1.5 years in Japan)
- Control groups (L1 speakers of Japanese, 10 nurses & 10 college students)

Materials:

A nursing test (10 general questions & 3 situation questions) in three versions (A, B, and C)

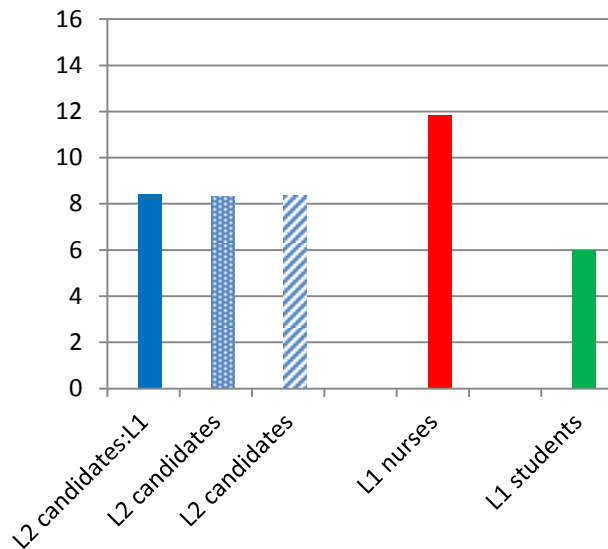
Areas: anatomy ▪ disease ▪ fundamentals of nursing ▪ adult nursing ▪ psychiatric and mental health nursing

Test conditions:

- L2 candidates took three test versions each in one of the conditions: the time extended (30 min), the phonological readings attached (20 min), and the L1 translation (20 min).
- Control groups took the three versions in the original condition (the time not extended; 20 min)

Results

1. Total scores by test condition (16pts. Mx)



★ L2 candidates did not perform sig. differently between conditions.

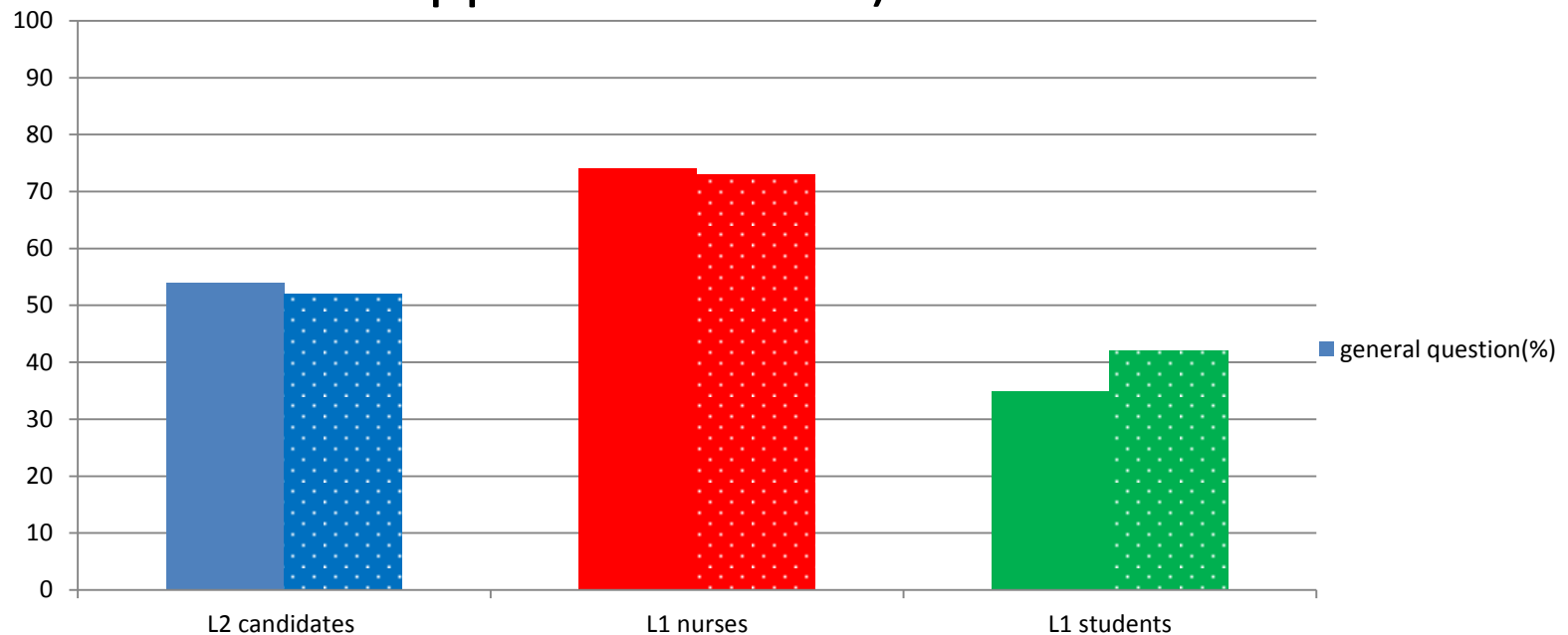
★ Moderate reliable correlations were found between conditions.

★ L2 candidates performed sig. more poorly than L1 nurses and sig. better than L1 college students.

2. Percentage score by type of question

general questions (=test of technical knowledge)

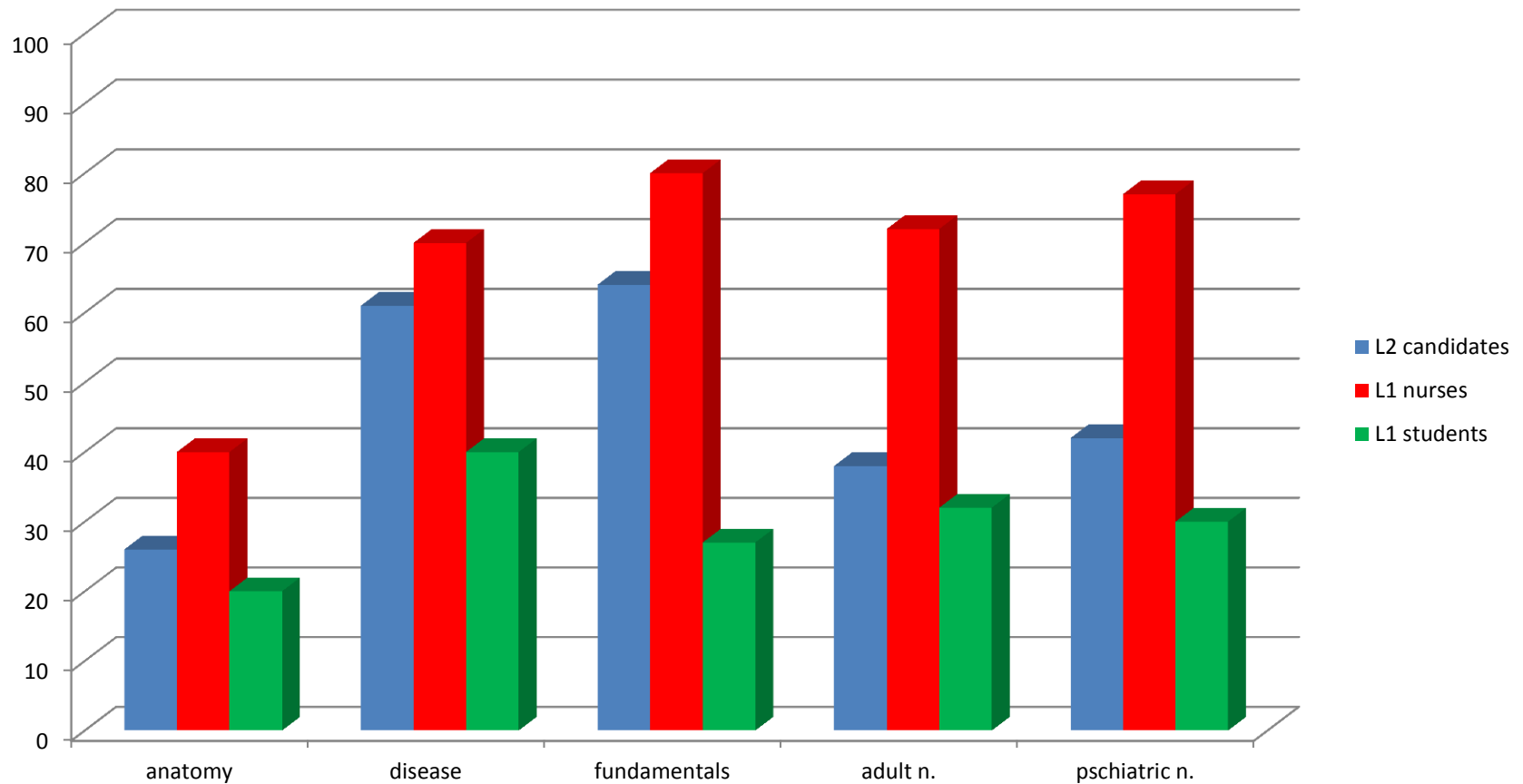
situation questions (=test of technical knowledge + application skills)



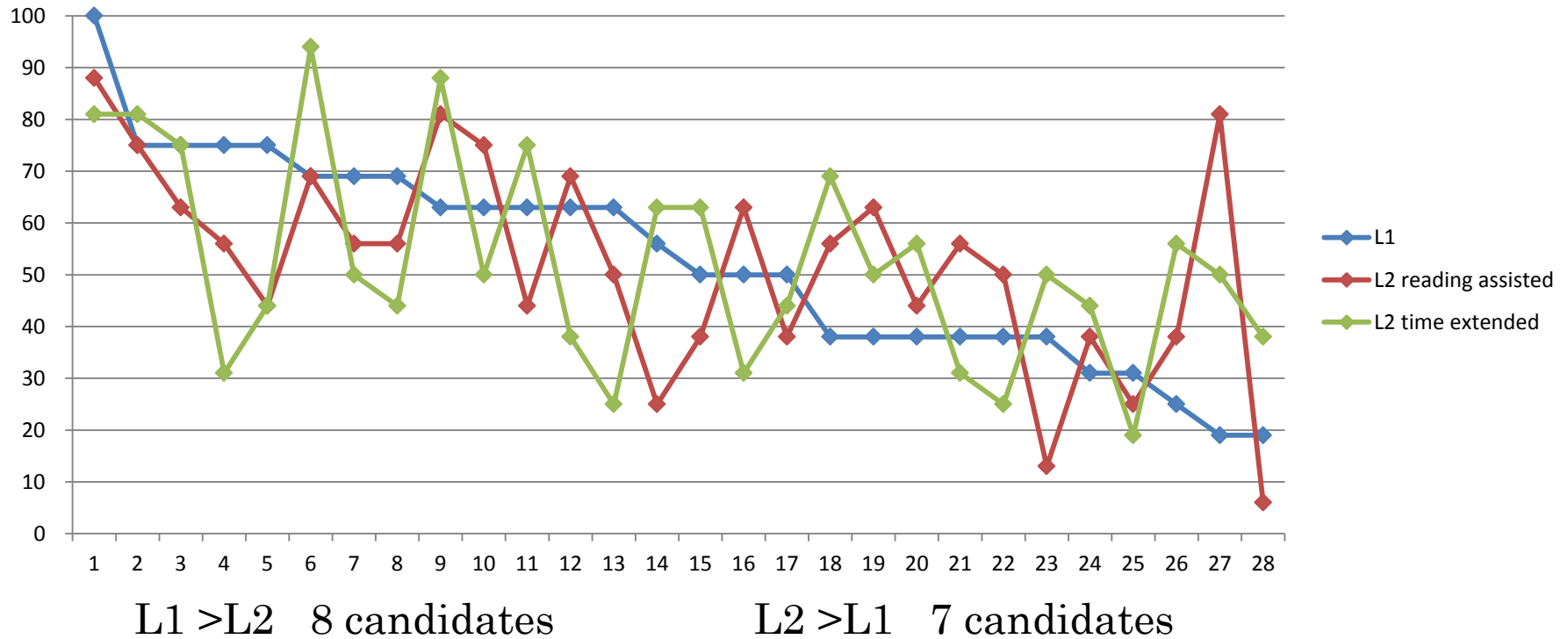
On general questions, L2 candidates did better than L1 college students. However, on situation questions, L2 candidates did not do better than L1 college students.

3. Percentage scores by area of knowledge

(general questions only)



4. L2 candidates' individual percentage scores by test condition



Discussion & Conclusion

1. L2 candidates seemed to have problems in both linguistic knowledge and content knowledge.
2. Regarding type of questions they had trouble with situation questions which require text comprehension and application of technical knowledge to the specific situation described.
3. There were large individual differences in both linguistic and content knowledge among L2 candidates.

Study 2: Descriptive study on influential factors for foreign candidates' test performances

(1) A report from the two successful candidates

They said that they were successful in the 2011 exam because of:

- strong support from the institution and colleagues,
- their own efforts, and
- use of learning and test taking strategies.

(2) A report from a teacher who led two candidates* to their success in the 2011 exam
(* different from those in (1))

He said that some teaching/learning strategies and test taking strategies were effective for foreign candidates:

- intra-word analysis or breakdown of words
- paraphrasing, restating by using simple expressions
- vocabulary building
- supplying socio-cultural knowledge unique to Japan

(3) A report from two Japanese nurses in the US on the comparison of nursing exams between Japan and the US

key differences	Japan	U.S.
What's measured	knowledge (rote memory effective)	knowledge + application ability
Test materials -Language -Medium -Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ low frequency vocabulary▪ paper and pencil▪ time-fixed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ general vocabulary▪ computerized▪ self-paced
Test opportunities	once a year	anytime

(4) A summary of the 2011 recommendation of test-format revision and the results of the 2011 exam

Key points in the 2011 recommendation:

1. use of plain clear language
2. Use of phonological reading assistance for low frequency kanji characters
3. breakup of complex words
4. Use of explicit subject, verb and object words
5. fewer use of negative expressions
6. Use of English for names of diseases and foreign persons

Results

- The percentage of successful foreign candidates (i.e., those who passed the national nursing examination) soared from 1.2% to 14.3% (in 2011) after the revised format was introduced.
However, the figure is still low, compared with the success rate of L1 candidates (92%).

⇒=> Further accommodations (e.g.,
phonological assistance to Kanji characters,
English assistance to technical terms, and
more testing time and opportunities) may be
needed.

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