The 2012 Pan-SIG Proceedings

Literacy: SIGnals of Emergence

LITERACY
SIGNALS OF EMERGENCE

The 11th Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference

June 16-17, 2012 - Hiroshima, Japan

Edited & Published by JALT Pan-SIG

Proceedings Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Robert Chartrand

Kurume University

Editors

Sam Crofts (*Meijo University*)

Gavin Brooks (*Kwansei Gakuin University*)

Layout and Design by

Gavin Brooks

Message from the editors:

The 11th Annual Pan-SIG Conference was held at Hiroshima University on June 16 and 17, 2012. The theme of the conference was, Literacy: SIGnals of Emergence, and was a collaborative effort from 22 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) within JALT (Japan Association for Language Teaching). The conference was highly successful as more than 200 participants attended over 130 presentations with a variety of topics and interests from a wide spectrum in the field language teaching.

The 2012 Pan-SIG Proceedings is a representative effort from the conference in Hiroshima as 30 papers were accepted for publication in this year's volume. The quantity and quality of presentations and published papers from the conference is increasing year by year and shows the professional determination of talented individuals who shared their thoughts and insights of teaching languages. We are honored and proud to have been a part of this process.

We would like to thank all of the contributors for submitting their papers for this publication. We are also very grateful for the readers of the papers who suggested changes to the authors and contributed to the high quality of this volume. The success of these proceedings is a cumulative effort from a large number of individuals. We hope that you will enjoy reading the papers in these proceedings and that you can gain some insight for your professional development.

Robert Chartrand
Sam Crofts
Gavin Brooks
February 10th, 2013

Message from the Conference Chair:

These proceedings are a microcosm of the diverse topics which were covered during the 2012 Pan-SIG Conference held at Hiroshima University in mid-June. Readers will find a vast array of interesting and informative articles in these pages on different aspects of language education and teaching methodology. When I look at the table of contents, I can see that there are many articles relevant to my teaching and research interests; I know that readers will discover the same.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Keiso Tatsukawa at Hiroshima University for allowing us to use their facilities and make this conference happen. We could not have done it without his support and generosity. Although the venue was not near a major train station or airport, we were fortunate to have over 200 delegates make their way to attend from all over Japan.

I would also like to thank Dr. Robert Chartrand for stepping in as chief editor of the proceedings. He has done a tremendous job of assembling submissions from the conference presenters and coordinating the work done by the members of the editorial advisory board. As a result of this hard work I am sure that you will find some new and fresh perspectives on literacy in language education.

Naomi Fujishima
2012 Pan-SIG Conference Chair

The 2012 Pan-SIG Proceedings

Editorial Advisory Board

ISBN 978-4-901352-40-6

The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings

Literacy: SIGnals of Emergence

Hiroshima, Japan

JALT Central Office

Urban Edge Bldg 5F, 1-37-9 Taito, Taito-ku, Tokyo 110-0016, Japan

http://jalt.org/

http://www.pansig.org/

Table of Contents

Which Reading Tasks Help Non-English Majors Understand Academic English Readings?

Mutahar Al-Murtadha
Kanazawa Institute of Technology
murtadha77@yahoo.com

Research on second language learning has emphasized the role of the learner in the learning/teaching processes (Allwright, 1984; Bada & Okan, 2000; Block, 1994, 1996; Brown, 2001; Noora, 2008; Nunan, 1988; Rifkin, 2000; Wright, 1990).This study investigates the most effective activities (PowerPoint presentations, content-based conversations, vocabulary and comprehension worksheets, textbook exercises, listening exercises, group work, pair work, or portfolios) that help non-English majors understand academic readings, based on what students themselves think. These activities were used to teach 320 engineering students at Kanazawa Institute of Technology. After finishing the course, students were asked to rate the most effective activities. Results indicated that students considered traditional activities such as worksheets and textbook exercises to be more effective than any other communicative activities. Such results have implications for teachers, materials writers, and syllabus designers.

第二言語習得における研究は学習または指導過程において学習者の役割を強調してきた。(Allwright, 1984; Bada & Okan, 2000; Block, 1994, 1996; Brown, 2001; Noora, 2008; Nunan, 1988; Rifkin, 2000; Wright, 1990)本稿は、英語専攻ではない学生が大学で英語のリーディングをする際に、その読解を助ける最も効果的な活動（パワーポイントでの発表、会話、語彙と読解のワークシート、教科書の練習問題、聴解問題、グループワーク、ペアワーク、ポートフォリオ）は何かを調査するものである。これらの活動は金沢工業大学の工学専攻である320名の学生を教えるために使用された。本コースが終了した時点で、学生にどの活動が最も効果的であったかについて調査した。結果、学生はコミュニケーションを要する活動よりも、ワークシートや教科書の練習問題のほうを好んだ。これらの結果は教師、教材作成者、またシラバスをデザインする人たちにとって重要な何かを意味するものである。

Keywords: reading tasks, non-English majors, effective classroom activities, learning process

Introduction

Foreign language learning is a slow and time-consuming process which requires both teachers and students to work together in most cases. In a learner-centered approach, learners' skills, beliefs, needs, preferences, and assumptions are given due attention. Research on second language learning has emphasized the role of the learner in the learning/teaching processes (Brown, 2001; Noora, 2008; Nunan, 1988; Wright, 1990). Recently researchers

Al-Murtadha, M. (2013). Which reading tasks help non-English majors understand academic English readings? In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 1-12). Hiroshima: JALT.

and educators have focused on learners' learning styles and preferences. Learners' learning preferences are very important "to the success or failure of any student's efforts to learn a foreign language" (Rifkin, 2000, p. 394). Noora (2008) asserts that "both learner skills and assumptions" (p. 33) should be taken into consideration. Nunan (1988) claims that the "truly learner centered" (p. 177) curriculum is the one that takes into consideration the learners' beliefs and preferences.

Unfortunately, however, "Many teachers seem to find it difficult to accept their learners as people with a positive contribution to make to the instructional process (Allwright, 1984, p. 167)." Although many language teachers and educators realize the need for understanding learners' learning styles, beliefs, and preferences, they do not usually ask about their learners' preferences, needs, or assumptions when planning education programs or classroom activities (Bada & Okan, 2000). Perhaps some teachers and educators think that learners might not be able to provide effective or appropriate feedback about effective classroom activities and practices (Bada & Okan, 2000).

Yet, research indicates that learners are aware of the classroom activities that help them learn the language effectively (Block, 1994, 1996; Noora, 2008). Breen (as cited in Block, 1996) claimed that learners could tell which classroom activities helped them understand the foreign language. Cray and Currie (as cited in Noora, 2008, p. 34) suggest that "teachers do not have to act on behalf of their learners' but with their learners." Two Australian studies revealed that learners preferred traditional learning styles to new communicative approaches (Nunan, 1989). Bada and Okan (2000) argues that there are still some learners who prefer the grammar-translation method to communicative activities.

The present study was conducted to investigate the most effective reading activities based on what non-English major university students at Kanazawa Institute of Technology think so that teachers can have better ideas about students' preferences and learning styles.

Research Question

The present study aims at answering the following question:

Which reading tasks do non-English major university students consider to be the most helpful in helping them understand academic reading texts?

Context of the Study

The majority of EFL students in Asia are Non-English majors. The present study was conducted at Kanazawa Institute of Technology (KIT) in Japan. Students have to finish about eight English credits to graduate. Students have to study a reading textbook, but teachers are expected to include most of the language skills when teaching the textbook content. Students covered 14 units of the textbook during the semester and were quizzed on each of them for grading purposes. The problem is that they have to read academic reading texts while some of them have near-beginning English language skills and communicative abilities. As a response to this problem, many classroom activities and techniques have been adopted by the researcher to help students understand academic readings. However, the researcher does not know which of these classroom activities and techniques are the most effective from the students' points of views. The present study investigates the most effective classroom activities used at KIT, based on what engineering students themselves think.

Subjects

A total of 320 sophomore students in different majors at KIT participated in the study. All the participants were the researcher's students for one semester. They attended two class sessions a week (each 45 minutes).

Instrument

The data for this study was collected through distributing a 3-point Likert Scale survey (Appendix A) at the end of the Fall Semester prepared by the researcher. Students were asked to rate the most effective activities (PowerPoint presentations, content-based conversations, vocabulary and comprehension worksheets, textbook exercises, listening exercises, group work, pair work, and portfolios) that helped them understand the content of academic readings (Appendix B). The survey was composed in both English and Japanese to make sure students understood the items. The survey was distributed during the last class and after students received their final grades. Students were not asked to write their names or any personal information. All 320 students answered the survey.

Results and Discussions

Students were asked to state the activities that most effectively helped them understand the content of academic readings. The study used a holistic scoring (Likert Scale): Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, and Disagree. Table 1 shows the results.

As Table 1 shows, a significant number of students' responses indicated that students considered worksheets and textbook exercises to be more effective than any other activities. The majority of students (81%) thought that worksheets and textbook exercises helped them most to understand the content of academic readings. 15% of the students neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 4% of the students disagreed that worksheets and textbook exercises helped them understand the content of academic readings. It is possible that students preferred worksheets and textbook exercises because they have access to them after class, and therefore they can study them at home at any time, whereas many of the other activities did not consist of take home material. It is probable that students focus on activities that can help them gain good scores in the quizzes they regularly take. Since English is a required course at KIT, it is expected that many students have to take this course without a real desire to learn English or improve their communication skills. Therefore, it is possible that students tend to prefer any activity that can help them pass the course. It is also possible that students prefer worksheets because the worksheets used in this study contained English-Japanese translation questions. Some students might think that translation into the mother tongue is more effective than any other activities.

In addition to worksheets and textbook exercises, a significant number of students thought that PowerPoint presentations were effective. 76% of the students believed that PowerPoint presentations helped them to understand academic readings, 19% of the students neither agreed nor disagreed and

Table 1
Most effective activities based on what students think

	Did the following activities help you understand the content of the reading texts you studied this semester?	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
1	PowerPoint presentations	76%	19%	5%
2	Conversations	69%	26%	5%
3	Worksheets	81%	15%	4%
4	Textbook exercises	81%	15%	4%
5	Listening exercises	68%	27%	5%
6	Group work	69%	21%	10%
7	Pair work	66%	23%	11%
8	Portfolios	57%	30%	13%

only 5% of the students disagreed that power point presentations helped them understand academic readings. Probably a significant number of students believed that PowerPoint presentations were also effective because they can listen to the information presented by the teacher and, at the same time, look at and read the content on the slides. It is also probable that pictures and short summaries in the Power Point presentations helped students to understand the content. Many students have poor listening skills, so it is probable that they prefer any written activity that can help them to follow their teacher's explanation. It might be a good idea to use Power Point presentations that can supplement the textbook with pictures and ideas to help students understand the content.

For the third most useful item, 69% of the students in the study thought that the conversations helped them understand the content of academic readings, 26% neither agreed nor disagreed and only 5% of them disagreed. Since only 5% of the students thought that conversations were ineffective, it is recommended to use such conversations in non-English major classes to help students understand the content of the readings and at the same time to improve their pronunciation and daily spoken expressions. Also 69% of the students in the study thought that group work helped them understand the content of academic readings, 21% neither agreed nor disagreed and 10% disagreed that group work helped them understand the readings.

68% of the students stated that listening exercises helped them understand the readings while 27% neither agreed nor disagreed, and only 5% of the students disagreed. It seems that most students realize the importance of listening exercises. The listening questions used in the class focused on the content of the readings. However, many students do not seem to have good listening skills. Probably this is why such a large percentage (27%) neither agreed nor disagreed that it was valuable. Students seem to realize the importance and usefulness of listening exercises, but they just could not understand them due to their poor listening skills. It is recommended that teachers create listening exercises that are related to the content of the readings to expose students to the target language and at the same time help them to understand the content of the readings.

66% of the students agreed that pair work helped them understand the content of academic readings, 23% of the students neither agreed nor disagreed, and 11% disagreed. In the pair work activities, students had to talk to their partners in English while, in group work activities, students could use Japanese to prepare their group presentations. In the group work activities, students did not have to speak to their partners as each student in the group was finally responsible for presenting only one small part of the whole presentation. It is probable that students feel more comfortable working in groups than working in pairs. It might be a good idea to increase group work in non-English major classes, but while encouraging students to use the target language while discussing their ideas.

Finally, 57% of the students thought that portfolios were effective, 30% of the students neither agreed nor disagreed, and 13% of the students disagreed. In these activities, students were asked to find readings from the Internet that are related to the textbook readings and answer five questions about those outside readings. It is possible that many students could not find appropriate related readings from the Internet and consequently read articles unrelated to the content of the textbook. Also, students seemed to have difficulty using search engines in a foreign language. Many students reported that it was difficult for them to find outside readings that were related to the content of the textbook.

Conclusion

Some previous research has indicated that some foreign language learners still prefer the traditional teaching methods to new communicative approaches (Bada & Okan, 2000; Nunan, 1989). This study investigated the learning/teaching styles and methods that non-English major university students at the university level in Japan prefer. Results of this study support previous results found by Nunan (1989) and Bada and Okan (2000). Non-English major university students at KIT considered the traditional methods to be more effective than communicative activities. Such results have implications for teachers and materials writers at schools in Japan. It is a good idea to combine both traditional and new teaching methods.

References

Allwright, R. L. (1984). The importance of interaction in classroom language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, *5*, 156-171.

Bada, E. & Okan, Z. (2000). Students' language learning preferences. *TESL-EJ*, *4*(3), 1-15 Retrieved July 2nd, 2012, from http://writing.berkeley.edu/TESLEJ/ej15/a1.html

Block, D. (1994). A day in the life of a class: Teacher/learner perceptions of task purpose in conflict. *System*, *22*, 473-486.

Block, D. (1996). A window on the classroom: Classroom events viewed from different angles. In K. M. Bailey & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Voices from the language classroom: qualitative research in second language education* (pp. 168-194). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (2nd edition). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Addison Wesley Longman.

Noora, A. (2008). Iranian Undergraduates Non-English Majors' Language Learning Preferences. GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies, *8*(2), 33-44.

Nunan, D. (1988). *The learner-centered curriculum*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (1989). Hidden agendas: The role of the learner in programme implementation. In R. K. Johnson (Ed.), *The second language curriculum* (pp. 176-186). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Rifkin, B. (2000). Revisiting beliefs about foreign language learning. *Foreign Language Annals*, *33*(4), 394-409.

Wright, T. (1990). Understanding classroom role relationships. In J. C. Richards & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Second language teacher education* (pp. 82-97). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Author's Biography:

Mutahar Al-Murtadha is an English instructor at Kanazawa Institute of Technology. He started teaching at Kanazawa Institute of Technology in 2009 after he received his master's degree in TESOL from Saint Michael's College in the USA. He was awarded a Fulbright scholarship in 2007. Before that he taught English in Yemen for more than seven years

---

Appendix A: Survey

Class & Number: ________________

Dear Student:

I would like to know which activities helped you most to understand the content of academic readings this semester. Please answer the following questionnaire about the activities used in English V. The answers to this questionnaire will not affect your grade for this course at all. Your participation can help the teacher improve future teaching activities and make the class more interesting and useful for future students. Please only write your class and number. Thanks for your cooperation!

Question: Did the following activities help you understand the content of the reading texts you studied this semester? (以下のアクティビティーは教科書内の文章の内容を理解するのにとても役に立った。)

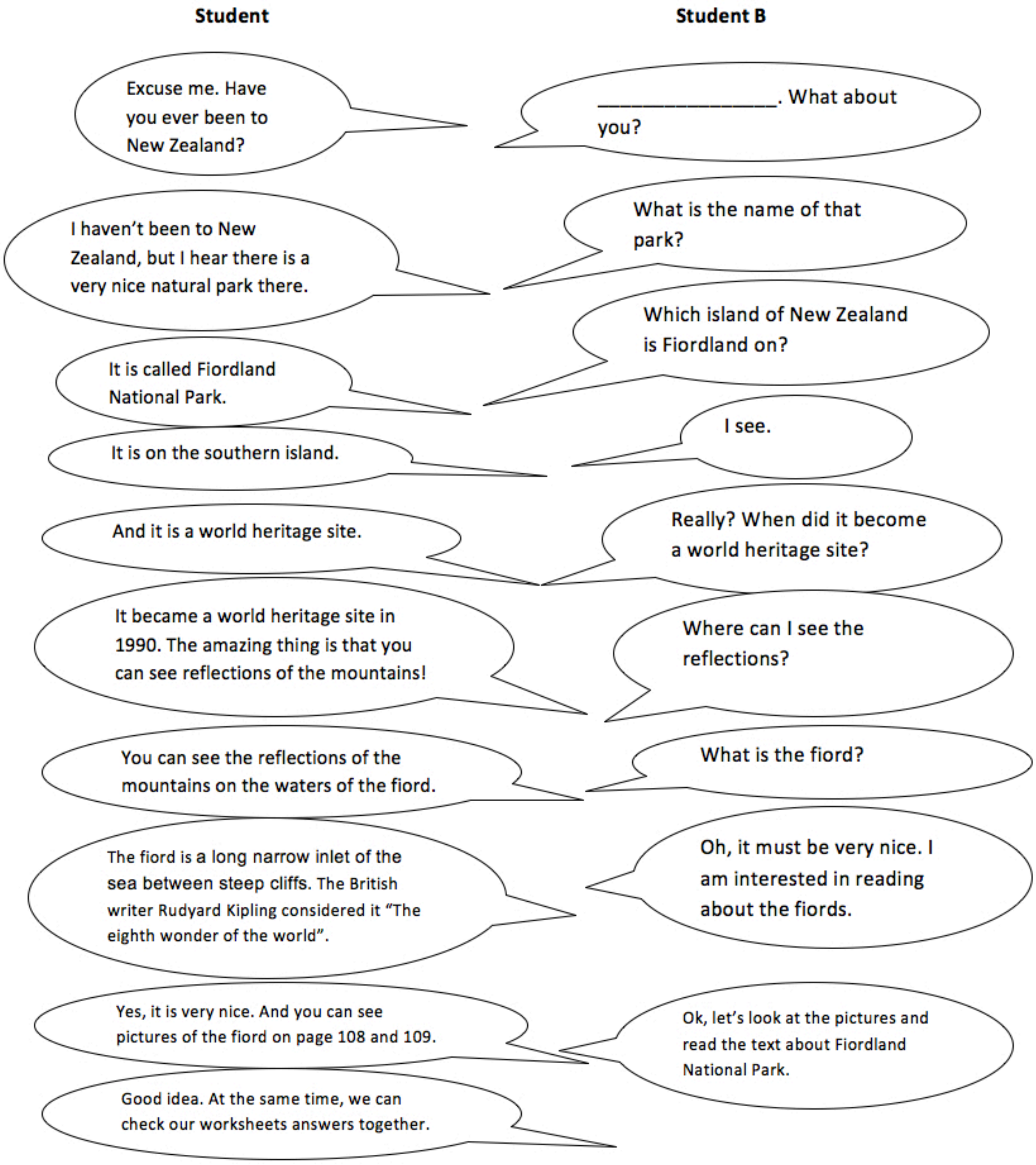
		Agree 同意する	Neither agree nor disagree どちらともいえない	Disagree 同意しない
1	PowerPoint presentations パワーポイントプレセンテーション	76%	19%	5%
2	Conversations カンバセーション	69%	26%	5%
3	Worksheets ワークシート	81%	15%	4%
4	Textbook exercises テクストブック　エクセサイズ	81%	15%	4%
5	Listening exercises prepared by the teacher 先生によって準備されたリスニング　エクセサイズ	68%	27%	5%
6	Group work グループワーク	69%	21%	10%
7	Pair work ペアワーク	66%	23%	11%
8	Portfolios ポートフォリオ	57%	30%	13%

Appendix B: Activities

Sample Power Point Presentation

Review 3: Content-Based Conversation

Practice with your partner



Worksheets

Name: ______________________ Class & Number: _________

English V: Unit 1 B

Read page 16 and give the Japanese meaning of the following words:

English	Japanese	English	Japanese
Island		Extended	
Remarkable		Cattle	
Immigration		pigs	
Contribution		goats	
Inhabit		Sheep	
Rodent		Contrasting	
Chilli		layered	
Shellfish		Imported	
yams		Assumption	
Corn		Base	
Aspects		Chopped	
Influenced		Onions	
Invaded		garlic	
Mixed		Oregano	
Create		Cilantro	

Read the texts on pages 16-17 and answer the following questions:

1. What is a cuisine?

   ____

2. What is Puerto Rico?

   ____

3. Who lived in Puerto Rico before the arrival of Immigrants?

   ____

4. What was the name of Puerto Rico before the arrival of immigrants?

   ____

5. Give three examples of the Taino food?

   ____

6. Who were brought to Puerto Rico as slaves?

   ____

7. Has Taino cooking styles remained unchanged from ancient times until today?

   ____

8. How did the Spanish extend food choices?

   ____

9. What did the Africans add to the island's food?

   ____

10. Is all the food In Puerto Rico spicy?

   ____

Group Work

Instructions:

- Complete the sentences in the box about the unit you studied.
- Each group is responsible for presenting their information to class.
- Try to speak as loudly and clearly as possible.

Sample Card

Class: ________ Group ______________

Hello everyone:

- **Today we will talk about unit _______ This unit was about ____**
- **Before we read this unit, we didn't know that _______________**
- **After reading this unit we learned that ____________________**
- **The surprising thing in this unit was ______________________**
- **We still need to know about _____________________________**

Pair work

A: Which animals do you think are the most intelligent?

B: I think the most intelligent animals are……

I think _______is more intelligent than_______

Look at the photo and ask your partner

A: What's the man's job?

B: I think he is _______

A:Where is the man from?

B:I think he's from _______.

Portfolios

Instructions:

- Find readings in English that have some connection with five of the units from the textbook.

- Read the readings. Then answer these questions in English:
  1. What is the main idea of the reading?
  2. What is the most surprising thing in the reading? Why?
  3. Which sentence or paragraph you did not understand?
  4. What else do you want to know about the topic?

- Use your own words to answer the questions except question 3.

- Do not use online translation software.

Japanese University Students' Awareness of Hedging Devices in Academic Writing

John Bankier
Soka University
johnbankier@yahoo.co.uk

In academic and non-academic literacy, hedging expressions such as “it may be” or “it appears that” can represent the writer’s confidence in a statement and provide polite deference (Hyland, 2000). Misinterpreting and misusing hedges can significantly affect how meaning is expressed and understood, yet few textbooks focus on hedging. Research by Hyland (2000) showed that non-native speakers of English do not make use of hedges to determine the writer’s certainty. This paper describes a pilot study conducted to determine whether Japanese university students make use of hedging expressions in answering test questions, and whether their ratings of the strength of hedges correspond to those of native speakers.

アカデミック、もしくはアカデミックではない読み書きにおいて、『おそらく～であろう』、または、『～のように見える』というような言葉を濁す表現は、書　き手の意見の提示において、自信や思いやりを持った敬意を表すことが可能である（Hyland，　2000）。言葉を濁す表現の誤解や御用は意味の表現や理解に著しい影響があるにも関わらず、ごくわずかな教科書のみ、そのような表現を集中的に取り扱っ　ている。Hyland　(2000)の研究では、第一言語が広東語の英語話者は、確実さの度合いを判断するときに、言葉を濁す表現を活用していないという結果が出ている。この論　文は、日本の大学生がテストに回答するときに言葉を濁す表現を使用するかという事と、彼らの使用する言葉を濁す表現の度合いに対する評価がネイティブスピーカーと一致しているかどうかを調べた予備研究である。

Keywords: Hedge, hedging, rating, academic, writing, pragmatics, noticing, politeness, Japanese, native speaker, NS, NNS

Introduction

An important aspect of literacy in both academic and much non-academic discourse is understanding and using hedging expressions such as “it may be” or “it appears that.” Hedges can precisely represent the writer’s confidence in a statement and provide polite deference (Hyland, 2000). The study described in this paper was conducted to determine if Japanese and English native speakers understand and rate hedges differently.

Bankier, J. (2013). Japanese university students’ awareness of hedging devices in academic writing: A pilot study. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 13-21). Hiroshima: JALT.

Hedging in Academic Writing

Hedging is generally defined as the expression of “tentativeness and possibility” (Hyland, 1996, p. 1). A statement such as “This was a bad idea” can be softened to “This may have been a bad idea.”

Hedging is used as a means to save face. Hedging can also be used to show caution about statements that may not be true. This could take the form of "The results of the study appear to show…." Hedges are also polypragmatic (Hyland, 1996), which means that particular forms are not linked to particular functions.

Low's (1996) think-aloud study showed that we pay less attention to hedging expressions as compared to boosters (such as "definitely" or "clearly demonstrates") in questionnaire items. Hyland's (2000) study showed that Cantonese L1 speakers from Hong Kong noticed and were aware of boosting expressions in written English, but there was "strong evidence … [to show that] efforts of academic writers to weaken their commitment and withhold certainty from their propositions may go unnoticed by L2 readers" (p. 19). The students either ignored hedges or attributed an "inappropriate degree of certainty" to them.

In contrast, Šeškauskienė (2008) showed that learners in Lithuania were able to use hedging expressions. She analyzed a corpus of works by Lithuanian non native speakers (NNS) and compared it to that of English native speakers (NS). Her conclusion was that advanced NNS were fully able to use hedging expressions. She also concluded that even works by less proficient Lithuanian NNS used hedges frequently.

Japanese Learners and Hedging

According to Taguchi (2009), Japanese speakers "[make] use of indirect expressions possible through a variety of syntactic and lexical features including … hedging" (p. 250). However, a study by Shirato and Stapleton (2007) compared a corpus of Japanese NNS spoken English with a corpus of NS speech and demonstrated that Japanese learners underuse hedging expressions.

Research Question

Do Japanese students make use of hedges to understand written discourse, and do their ratings of the strength of hedges correspond with those of native speakers?

Methodology

Participants and Instructional Context

The study took place at a university in Tokyo and consisted of two groups. The first group included 31 Japanese first-year students enrolled in intensive English for Academic Purposes classes taught by the author. Two classes of a similar level participated: 19 first year economics majors in the spring term (TOEFL ITP 423-450) and 12 first year economics majors in the fall term (ITP 450-487). Students were not given direct instructions on hedging. The second group comprised 11 native speakers of English, all university teachers of a variety of nationalities.

Design

A similar format to Hyland's (2000) study was used. A short essay-style passage of 432 words on a familiar topic was created, including a large number of hedges (see Appendix). It was checked against the British National Corpus vocabulary frequency list (www.lextutor.ca/vp/bnc); 98.94% of tokens were within the 1000 most frequent words, and 97.89% within the first 2000, judged sufficient for comprehension. The passage was accompanied by true or false questions designed to assess whether the reader was able to infer meaning from hedges. Participants were instructed to focus on the opinion of the writer.

In the second part of the study, participants were asked to rate 10 sentences from the text in terms of how certain they though the writer was. They were allowed to look back and read the text again to see the sentences in context.

Results

In Part One of the study (Figures 1 and 2) the English native speakers and Japanese university students performed differently. NS correctly answered all questions on average, yet the NNS answered two of the six incorrectly.

In Part Two, NS and NNS were again different. As Figure 3 shows, the Japanese students tended to rate

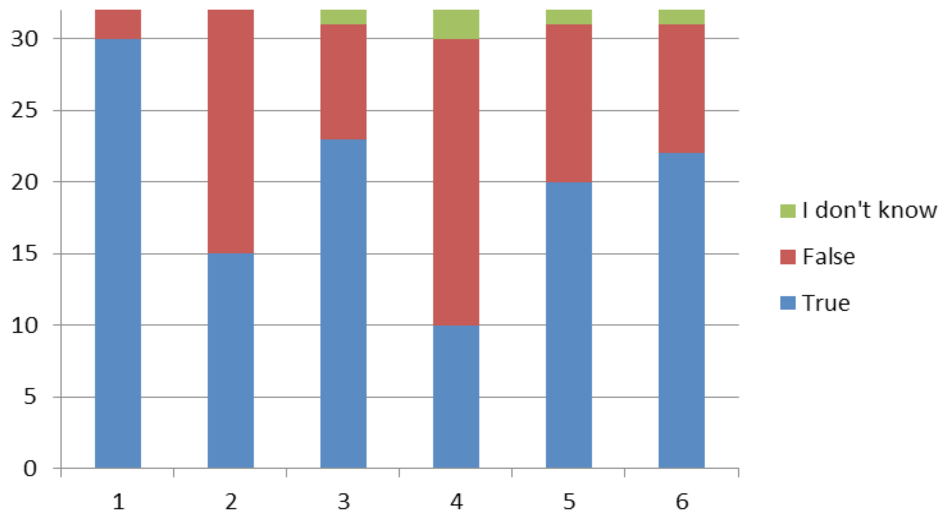


Figure 1. Part One of the study: Japanese students' answers to true or false questions

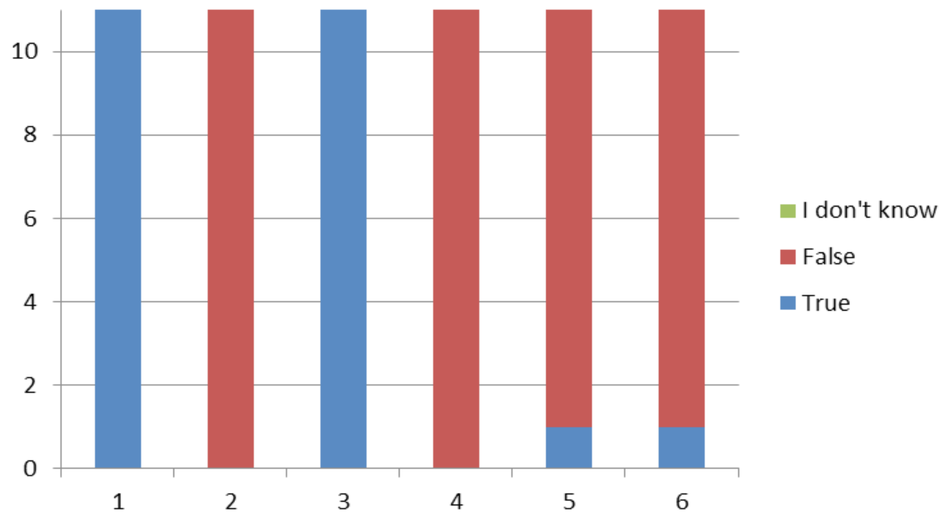


Figure 2. Part One of the study: English native speakers' answers to true or false questions

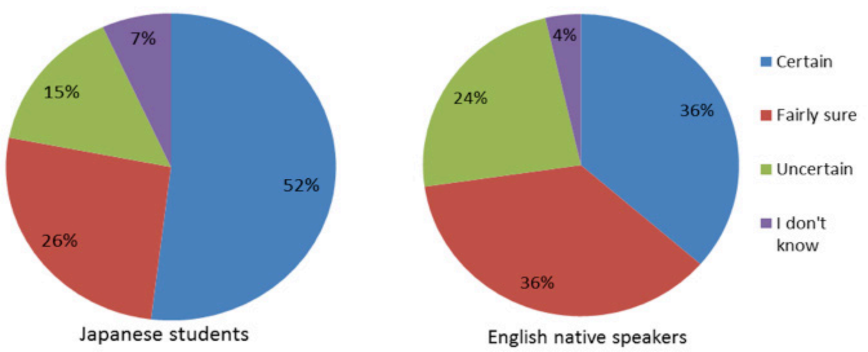


Figure 3. Part Two of the study: Japanese students' and English native speakers' overall rating of sentences in terms of how certain they thought the writer was

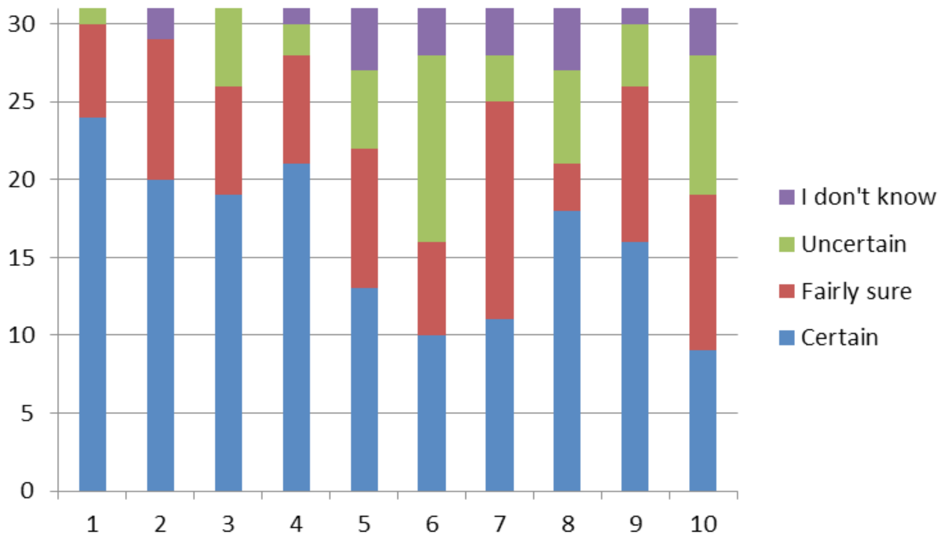


FIGURE 4. Part Two of the study: Japanese students' ratings of sentences in terms of how certain they thought the writer was

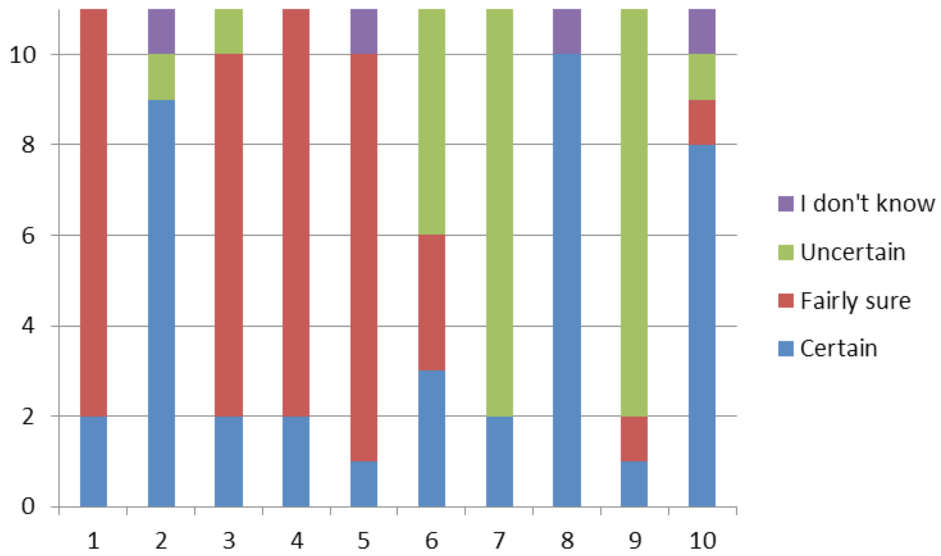


FIGURE 5. Part Two of the study: Native speaker ratings of sentences in terms of how certain they thought the writer was

sentences as *certain* (52% of responses). In contrast, the native speakers rated 36% of the sentences as certain. A similar pattern is also seen in the ratings of *fairly sure* and *uncertain*.

Responses to individual questions vary noticeably between NNS and NS (Figures 4 and 5). While the majority of NS chose the same answers, there was much less consistency among the Japanese respondents. Although some sentences were rated similarly on average, many sentences received very different ratings.

Discussion

Although the results demonstrate that NS and NNS responded to the study differently, it is necessary to look at the responses to individual questions to determine if this is likely to be connected to an understanding of hedges.

Two examples of questions Japanese students, on average, answered correctly are:

> **Text**: The factory is likely to have an effect on the local community in several ways.

> **Question**: The writer thinks the factory will affect the local community. T/F (the answer is "true").
>
> **Text**: It is generally necessary for companies to discuss significant plans with local residents, and hear their views.
>
> **Question**: The writer thinks companies should discuss plans with local people. T/F (the answer is "true").

It is not necessary to understand the meaning of the hedges to answer these questions. The hedges can easily be ignored and mentally replaced with a non-hedged form, such as, "The factory will have an effect on the local community in several ways," leading to a correct answer.

The following examples show questions that most NNS answered incorrectly:

> **Text**: Certainly, at least 100 jobs will be created by the factory itself. … There is a possibility that the factory may create more jobs in the future, though this is not yet certain.
>
> **Question**: The writer thinks the factory will create more than 100 jobs in the future. T/F (the answer is "false").
>
> **Text**: It is true that the factory may lead to improvements in roads.
>
> **Question**: The writer thinks the factory will definitely lead to improvements in roads. T/F (the answer is "false").

In these examples, the meaning of the hedges is more central. In the first example, it is necessary to understand how the hedging "there is a possibility that" and "this is not yet certain" modifies the initially strong statement ("at least 100 jobs will be created"). It seems likely that the Japanese learners focused on the first part of the paragraph but did not pay attention to the later hedging. In the second example, students may have been misled by the difference between the expression of hedging ("it is true… may") and boosting "will definitely"). The question requires the reader to understand that these expressions are not synonymous. This suggests that learners were ignoring the hedging expression, or did not understand its meaning.

In Part Two, there was a great deal of variation between NS and NNS ratings of sentences. However, the following sentences were rated similarly by both groups on average:

> A survey which was done of the local area showed increased levels of harmful chemicals in rivers. (Rated as certain by 82% of NS and 64% NNS).
>
> The company may have talked to some local people. (Rated approximately equally as *certain, fairly sure* and *uncertain* by NS and NNS).
>
> In fact, the similar plan in Kanagawa has not led to more jobs being created. (Rated as certain by 91% of NS* and 58% of NNS).
>
> *One NS rater choose "I don't know"

The first and third sentences here do not include hedging expressions. The NS had no trouble in determining that these were certain, though despite the lack of hedging many NNS rated them differently (as *uncertain* or *fairly sure*). This suggests that general comprehension may have been an issue, or that the Japanese students were unclear what "How certain the writer is" (see Appendix) actually meant.

A number of hedged sentences were rated differently:

> The factory is likely to have an effect on the local community in several ways. (Rated as *fairly sure* by 82% of NS and *certain* by 77% of NNS).
>
> This suggests that the factory had caused pollution in rivers. (Rated as *fairly sure* by 73% of NS and *certain* by 61% of NNS).

> It is true that the factory may lead to improvements in roads. (Rated as *uncertain* by 82% of NS; NNS rated it as *certain*, 52%, and *fairly sure,* 32%).

There appears a pattern in NS and NNS ratings; native speakers identified sentences containing expressions such as "is likely to" and "this suggests that" to be weaker in terms of certainty. In contrast, NNS rated these sentences more strongly, suggesting they did not understand or pay attention to the hedging expressions. The third example above shows a similar pattern; the native English-speaking teachers rated it as less certain than the Japanese students. Interestingly, many NNS did identify that the sentence was less strong than the other examples given above, yet their ratings were still *fairly sure*, rather than *uncertain*. That is to say, NNS appeared to rate everything as "one level" more certain than NS.

Conclusion

In terms of the research question, the results of the study appear comparable to those of Hyland (2000) and his study on Hong Kong Chinese learners. The Japanese university students often seemed not to make use of hedges to understand written discourse. They answered true or false questions incorrectly when it was necessary to understand how the hedges modified the meaning of the sentence (hedge for accuracy). However, hedges for politeness, which can be easily ignored, did not impede them. The ratings students gave hedges were certainly different than those of those of native speakers; however, the limitations of the study mean that the reasons for this are not entirely clear.

Firstly, the mistakes or divergent ratings could be due to lack comprehension. Although care was taken to ensure materials were of an appropriate level, some questions were particularly difficult. For instance, Question 5 in Part One required readers to ignore a distractor at the start of the paragraph. If students were unable to comprehend the meaning of the text, understanding isolated sentences would be much harder.

Secondly, native English speaker ratings differed, which suggested that the hedged sentences were unclear. The intention was for all NS to rate sentences similarly, but there was some disagreement between categories. One teacher commented that it was unclear if "certainty" referred to the writer's actual opinion or the hedged opinion he expressed in the text. This illustrates the difficulty of this type of study; hedges are by their nature unclear, so it is not easy to produce a task in which only one rating is possible.

This second issue may have been relevant to the Japanese learners. Although the instructions were explained and discussed in the students' L1, the actual handout was English. It is likely that students were unclear about the meaning of "certain" in Part Two. Part One asked readers to think about the writer's actual opinion, whereas Part Two asked for the strength of *the hedges alone*. Many hedging expressions are used to mask an opinion behind polite language; if learners were ignoring this language, they would not necessarily be incorrect. Instead, they would have been focusing on "the book" rather than "the cover." This would explain why NNS ratings tended to be more certain in Part Two.

Finally, though the study does strongly suggest that Japanese students do not use the same cues as native English speakers, it was unclear what cues were used. "I don't know" was given as an option in Part Two, and students were encouraged to use it, yet few did. This implies that students believed they were able to complete the task. Thus, they must have been determining certainty in some way.

Further research is needed to address the issues raised above. A Think Aloud study may well be necessary in order to determine if learners both understand the task and notice and make use of hedges. This type of task would also help to determine the cues Japanese learners use to determine certainty in written discourse.

References

Hyland, K. (1996). Writing without conviction? Hedging in science research articles. *Applied Linguistics, 17* (4), 433-454.

Hyland, K. (2000). Hedges, boosters and lexical invisibility: Noticing modifiers in academic texts. *Language Awareness, 9* (4), 179-197.

Low, G. (1996). Intensifiers and hedges in questionnaire items and the lexical invisibility hypothesis. *Applied Linguistics, 17* (1), 1-37.

Taguchi, N. (2009). Comprehension of indirect opinions and refusals in L2 Japanese. In N. Taguchi (ed.). *Pragmatic competence*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.

Šeškauskienė, I. (2008). Hedging in ESL: A case study of Lithuanian learners. *Kalbų studijos* [Studies about language], *13*, 71-76. Retrieved from http://www.kalbos.lt/zurnalai/13_numeris/10.pdf

Shirato, J. & Stapleton, P. (2007). Comparing English vocabulary in a spoken learner corpus with a native speaker corpus: Pedagogical implications arising from an empirical study in Japan. *Language Teaching Research, 11*(4), 393-412.

Author's Biography:

John Bankier has taught in Japan for 9 years. His teaching focus is on EAP and content-based adjunct instruction. He is interested in researching writing, motivation, and attitudes and beliefs about language learning in an EFL context. .

Appendix: Materials Used in the Study

Part One

Choose whether the statement is *probably* true or false.

Focus on *the opinion of the writer*.

Read the text once then go back and answer the questions.

Plans for a New Hachioji Factory: A Response

This week it was announced that a new factory will be built in the Hachioji area. The current plan is for the building of the factory to begin in 2012, and be completed by the end of the year. The factory is likely to have an effect on the local community in several ways.

1. The writer thinks the factory will affect the local community. T/F

In terms of the negative effects, one important issue is pollution. A similar factory was built in Kanagawa in 2008. A survey which was done of the local area showed increased levels of harmful chemicals in rivers. In the area around the factory, levels of mercury were 30% higher than normal. Similarly, levels of acids were 50% higher than normal. This suggests that the factory had caused pollution in rivers. Therefore, the factory in Hachioji may well cause similar pollution problems.

2. The writer thinks that there is only a small chance the factory caused pollution. T/F

A further problem is in terms of the consultation of local residents. It is generally necessary for companies to discuss significant plans with local residents, and hear their views. Local residents need to agree to the plans. I attempted to find local residents who had talked to the company; however, I could not find any resident who had been consulted. It appears that local residents did not agree to the plan. The company may have talked to some local people, but my research strongly implies they talked to no one.

3. The writer thinks companies should discuss plans with local people. T/F
4. The writer thinks the company talked to some local residents. T/F

One benefit of the factory may be creation of jobs. Certainly, at least 100 jobs will be created by the factory itself. Many supporters of the factory have also claimed that jobs will be created in the area around the factory in the future. There is a possibility that the factory may create more jobs in the future, though this is not yet certain. In fact, the similar plan in Kanagawa has not led to more jobs being created.

5. The writer thinks the factory will create more than 100 jobs in the future. T/F

A second benefit is infrastructure, particularly new roads. Supporters of the factory insist that the company will invest in building better roads in the area around the factory. It is true that the factory may lead to improvements in roads. In particular, if the government requires the company to invest, roads will certainly be built. In the past, this has not always happened, however.

6. The writer thinks the factory will definitely lead to improvements in roads. T/F

While the building of a factory in Hachioji may have benefits such as an improved road network and job creation, there may be some drawbacks. In particular, a similar factory seems to have caused pollution in rivers. Furthermore, local residents may not have been consulted by the company. Currently, I would argue against the construction of this factory until these questions can be answered

Part Two

I want to find out **how certain** you think **the writer is** in these sentences. Mark the sentences. You can look back at the article if you like.

C = the writer is completely certain
F = the writer is fairly sure
U = the writer is uncertain
If *you* don't know, mark 'D'

1. The factory is likely to have an effect on the local community in several ways. ____
2. A survey which was done of the local area showed increased levels of harmful chemicals in rivers. ____
3. This suggests that the factory had caused pollution in rivers. ____
4. It is generally necessary for companies to discuss significant plans with local residents. ____
5. It appears that local residents did not agree to the plan. ____
6. The company may have talked to some local people. ____
7. There is a possibility that the factory may create more jobs in the future, though this is not yet certain. ____
8. In fact, the similar plan in Kanagawa has not led to more jobs being created. ____
9. It is true that the factory may lead to improvements in roads … ____
10. If the government requires the company to invest, roads will certainly be built. ____

How long did you spend on both activities?

__________ minutes

The Extensive Reading Foundation's Online Self-Placement Test

Mark Brierley
Shinshu University
mark2@shinshu-u.ac.jp

Richard Lemmer
Chugoku Junior College
richard@cjc.ac.jp

Kosuke Adachi
Shinshu University
adachi@seclab.shinshu-u.ac.jp

The Extensive Reading Foundation has created the Online Self-Placement Test (ERFOSPT) to find the level of texts at which learners can read fluently. This paper describes the motivation behind developing the test, the guidelines and procedure for making comprehension questions for the test, and the format and features of the test. Initial results from trials of the test are also presented.

国際多読教育学会(Extensive Reading Foundation) は学習者のレベルにあったテキストを見つける為のオンラインで受けられるテスト ERF Online Self-Placement Test(ERFOSPT)を開発した。そこで、本稿では本テストを開発するに至った動機, テストの練習問題を作成する手順及び, テストの構成や特徴について述べる。また、模擬テストの最初の結果も紹介する

Keywords: Extensive Reading, Language Testing, Reading time, Reading speed, Reading comprehension

The Extensive Reading Foundation's Online Self-Placement Test

Students must read in large quantities in order for extensive reading (ER) to be effective. If students read books that are too difficult, they will read slowly and will read fewer words in a given time. If they cannot read quickly, they may also lose interest in the story. It is therefore desirable for students to avoid books above their level, especially in the early stages of ER when, as Dupuy, Tse and Cook stated "for the most part, students have only been exposed to intensive reading of short excerpts or passages in their ESL classes and tend to believe that this is the only way to read in a second language" (1996: 10). It may also be argued that students reading books that are too easy will not experience sufficient new language to make the activity an efficient learning experience.

Various tests exist with the aim of finding student reading level. Many publishers have tests on their websites to guide readers to the correct level, but each publisher uses a slightly different scale. The Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading (EPER) also produces a Placement Test and an Extensive Reading Test. The Placement Test is a modified cloze test with short passages from different levels with words missing that must be written by students. The Extensive Reading test consists of much longer passages assembled in a twelve-page booklet with instructions every few

Brierley, M., Lemmer, R., & Adachi, K. (2013). The Extensive Reading Foundation's Online Self-Placement Test. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 22-30). Hiroshima: JALT.

pages to refer to a question sheet. The question sheet contains comprehension questions in true-false, multiple-choice, open and fill-the-gap formats. After several questions, the question sheet instructs the student to go back to the story.

Drawbacks of both EPER tests are that they are commercial, on paper and require writing. Brierley (2007) shows that Japanese students fare much worse on the Placement Test than on the Extensive Reading Test. In order to fill in the correct word on a cloze test, students must write the word, so their productive abilities are being tested as well as their receptive abilities. This is true to an extent with the Extensive Reading Test, where students must write some of the answers to comprehension questions.

The Placement Test includes texts at various levels, and the score will predict the reading level of the student. However, each version of the Extensive Reading Test consists of texts at only two levels, and is unreliable at predicting reading levels above or below these.

While the Extensive Reading Test instructs students to read the passage first, then answer questions later, the paper medium allows students to do the opposite, following normal test-taking strategy for comprehension questions. Another drawback of the paper medium is that teachers must physically mark each paper, taking up precious teacher time as well as risking variation between strict markers who will only allow answers on the answer sheet, and those who generously give students points if they believe they have understood the story, as is written in the instructions for markers.

The ERFOSPT (introduced in Lemmer, Brierley, Reynolds & Waring, 2012, and available in beta here: https://erfospt.ealps.shinshu-u.ac.jp) brings the method of the EPER Extensive Reading Test online, makes it adaptive, and prevents backtracking in order to create a freely available test that quickly finds the student's level and focuses assessment on fluent reading skills.

Comprehension Questions

The true/false format has been chosen for the test because these kinds of questions are cognitively easy for students to answer and logistically easy for test developers to make. As mentioned in our critique of the EPER test, any questions requiring writing are also dependent upon productive skills, and are likely to take more of the student's time. As we are seeking to test the student's fluent reading ability, the student should spend as much time as possible reading relatively long passages, and as little time as possible pondering over questions. Other question formats such as multiple-choice or matching often require the student to consider each option, and go back and forth between components of the item. Once the student understands that these are true/false questions, it should be possible to read the statements and answer the questions quickly.

The function of the comprehension questions is to check whether students have understood the text. To compare the effectiveness of multiple-choice questions with true/false questions, we must look at the probability of the student guessing the correct answer of all the questions. The table below shows these probabilities for four different combinations of number of questions and number of choices, in which a true/false question is a multiple-choice question with two choices.

Table 1
Comparison of performance of multiple-choice question formats

Number of choices	Number of questions	Chance of correctly guessing all	Items to write
5	3	1/125	20
4	3	1/64	16
3	4	1/81	15
2	7	1/128	7

Three five-choice multiple-choice questions perform similarly to seven true/false questions. While there are less than half the number of questions to make, if we consider the difficulty of creating plausibly wrong distractors, and the fact that the choices for true/false questions are already made, the multiple-choice format represents perhaps three times more work on the part of the test developers, which is an important consideration as we expect volunteers to develop new questions on an ongoing basis as texts are added to the test.

Guidelines for Questions

In order for the test to work accurately, we have set these guidelines:

- No difficult lexis. Vocabulary and structures in the true/false statements should be at or below the level of the text, and ideally should be drawn from the text.
- No trick questions.
- No double negatives.
- Explicitly stated or unequivocally implied information only. Especially at lower levels, questions should be limited to information that can be understood from a literal reading of the text.
- Story-based questions. Statements refer to non-trivial information on characters, places, events.
- In order. Questions follow the order of information in the text; this is an established format for comprehension questions and students may be confused if we do not follow it.
- One item per question.
- Discrete questions. Questions should not ask about the same information as other questions, or give away their answers.

In some cases the guidelines are based on Gary Buck's Assessing Listening (2001). Although this is a reading test, a relatively long extensive reading passage followed by questions shares similarities with listening tests where the text cannot be analysed asynchronously.

Procedure for Making Questions

Two people independently write true/false statements on the text, following the guidelines above. A third person selects and edits these for quality and consistency, leaving around ten true/false statements for the test.

Test Development and Analysis

The test is currently working in beta, and can give a rough assessment of reading level. In the short term, test-taker data is being analysed to check for internal consistency between texts, to confirm that the nominal levels of text difficulty correspond with test-takers performance. Also, the test must be calibrated externally, so that results from the ERFOSPT correspond with student performance on other tests, such as EPER, with levels suggested by the MoodleReader module (Robb & Waring, 2012), or with test takers' reports of their actual reading, for example through a questionnaire following the test, or from online systems such as ERS (see Brown, 2012 for an introduction to online systems).

Estimation of Reading Level, Number, Length and Kind of Texts

In order to estimate the reading level of the students, the test makes the following assumptions:

- A given text can be designated a level of difficulty, so that any two texts can be compared, and one can be considered easier than the other.
- A given reader can be said to be able to read at a particular level, and able to fluently read texts easier than that level, and not be able to fluently read texts more difficult.

These assumptions are not true in specific cases: clearly different texts will be easier or more difficult for different students depending on the kind of text and the topic presented; level of text difficulty is somewhat subjective. However, these assumptions are true in general: given a large sample of students, trends will show which texts are easier and which are more difficult. We must therefore seek texts that are exemplars of their level, and will show little variation in perceived level among students. Also students must read as many texts as possible during the test, so that average performance may limit variation. We also want to keep the time of the test to within around 30 minutes.

As we seek to test extensive reading ability, the texts must be extensive. Brown refers to "texts of more than a page" as extensive reading (2004: 189)

Figure 1. ERF online self-placement test login page

although perhaps this is because they do not fit into his other categories. For our purposes, texts must be long enough to allow some story and character development, and to enable several questions to be made. As a result, the first 500 words or so of published graded readers have been chosen.

It may be that some students can read fiction at a higher or lower level than they can read non-fiction, so we have chosen to use only fictional texts to avoid this issue. The test is measuring proficiency in reading fiction; whether this can be generalised to proficiency in reading non-fiction would be a useful area of research.

Algorithm

Based on students' choices in the rough placement, initial reading levels are given. After each text, we are trying to answer the question: could they read it fluently? If the answer is yes, then we raise the reading level. If the answer is no, then we lower the reading level.

This assessment can be based on three variables: reading time (t), impressionistic rating (i) and comprehension score (c). We can easily calculate the reading speed (w / t, where w is the number of words in the text). We can combine the reading time and comprehension into effective reading speed ($c * w / t$), in other words the number of words comprehended per minute. We could also combine the reading speed with the impressionistic rating into affective reading speed ($i * w / t$), the number of words enjoyed per minute.

We can take an arithmetic approach, combining the variables into some number (for example $i * c / t$) to give a score for each text. Alternatively we can take a logical approach, giving each variable a threshold to meet as a criterion, and judging that the student could read the text if all criteria are met. For example, the student must read at 100 wpm or faster, score over 80% on the comprehension questions, and over 60% on the impressionistic questions. If the student reads too slowly, or does not read with high comprehension, or indicates the text was difficult, we assume the student's level is below the level of the text. As test data is collected the algorithm is being adjusted to optimise the test's reliability.

Further information about the technical functioning of the test can be found in Adachi, Brierley and Niimura (2012).

Figure 2. Rough placement, with buttons indicating "I can comfortably read to here"

Format and Features

Initially students input personal data (see Figure 1). The name or student number is a compulsory field, and students must either choose a teacher and educational establishment or input a location. These compulsory fields should allow unique identification of each student so that teachers can confirm the level of their students and test developers can calibrate the test or check its reliability. The system allows teachers to allocate code numbers or nicknames to students, so they may protect their identity. In addition, optional fields ask for a class code, the student's experience studying English and doing ER, and an email address.

The meta-language of the text is currently in Japanese as development and trialling is taking place in Japan. Later versions will feature an English-language interface and interfaces in other languages.

After logging in, students are shown a story broken into short passages, between 20 and 100 words, at increasing levels of difficulty. Students click a button indicating the level at which they can read with ease (see Figure 2). This gives the system's algorithm a starting value for the reading level of the student.

The algorithm chooses a text around the starting value. Texts are around 500 words, at a range of different levels on the ERF graded reader scale. For texts, the first passages of published, fiction graded readers are used. Texts are broken up into pages of 16 lines that will fit onto a computer screen. At the bottom of the first pages are two buttons: one allows students to indicate that the text it too difficult to read smoothly; the other proceeds to the next page (see Figure 3). The time spent on each page is logged and if students press the "next page" button too quickly, they will be prompted to read the page more carefully.

Instead of the "next page" button, the final page of the text has a button "finished reading" (see Figure 4).

After finishing reading the text, the student is given four impressionistic questions to gauge how difficult they thought the text was. Each question has four answers on a cline (see Figure 5).

Next, the student is given up to ten comprehension

Webpage Screenshot

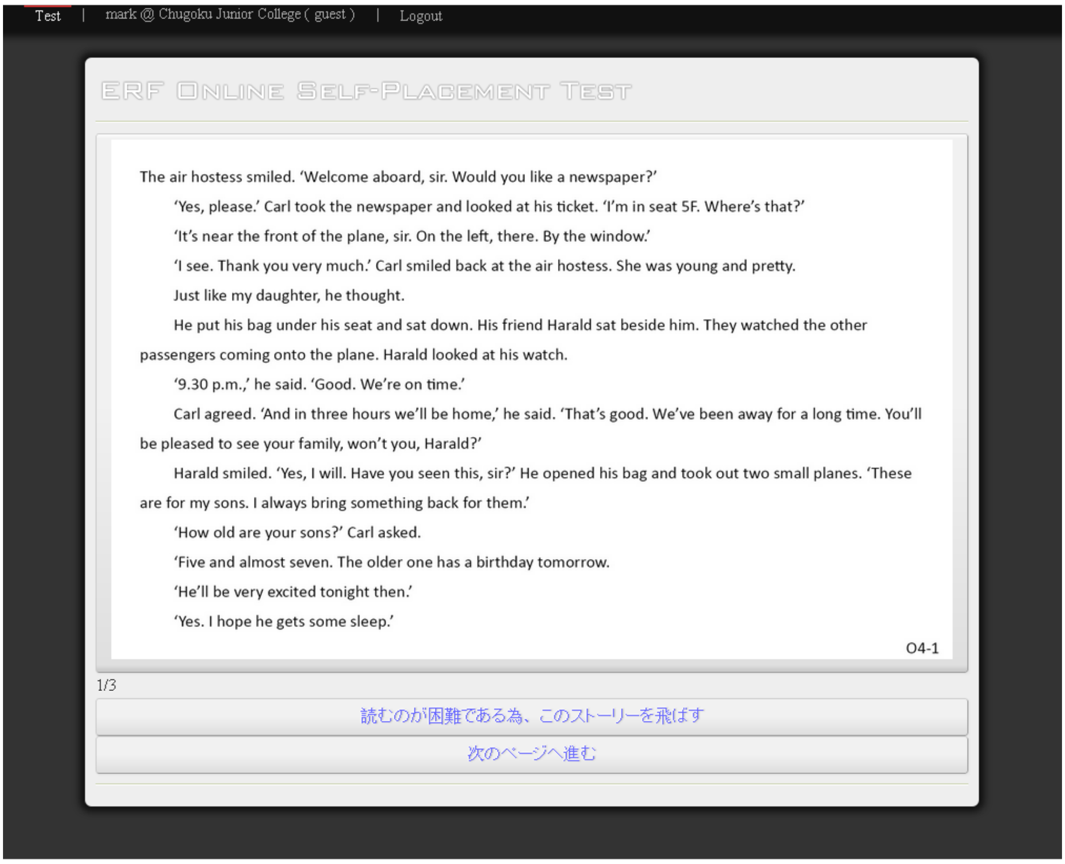


Figure 3. First page of a text, buttons indicating "too difficult" and "next page"

Figure 4. Final page of a text

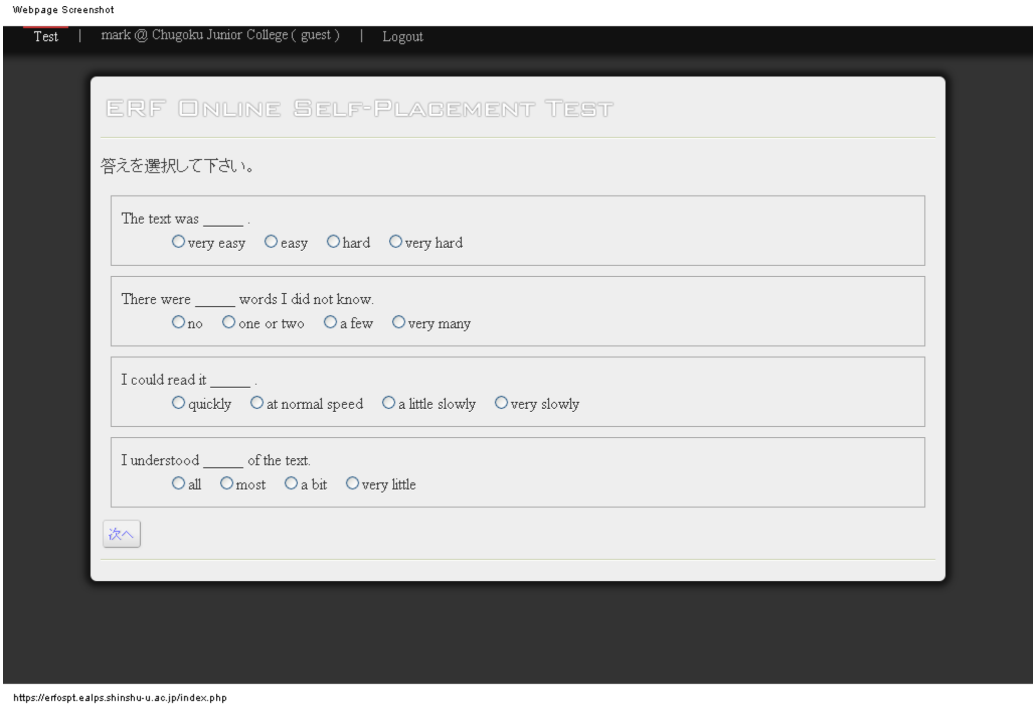


Figure 5. Rough placement, with buttons indicating "I can comfortably read to here"

questions in the form of true/false statements. The student cannot return to the text once the questions are presented (see Figure 6).

Based on the time taken to read, the scores on the impressionistic questions and the scores on the comprehension questions, the student is given another text. Between four and six texts are given in one test session.

In this way, the test "homes in" on student level, as can be seen in Figure 6, which represents texts at 19 different levels, indicated at the left. We estimate the student's level to be within the yellow area, and give a test at the level of the red square. Moving from left to right on the figure, with each subsequent text

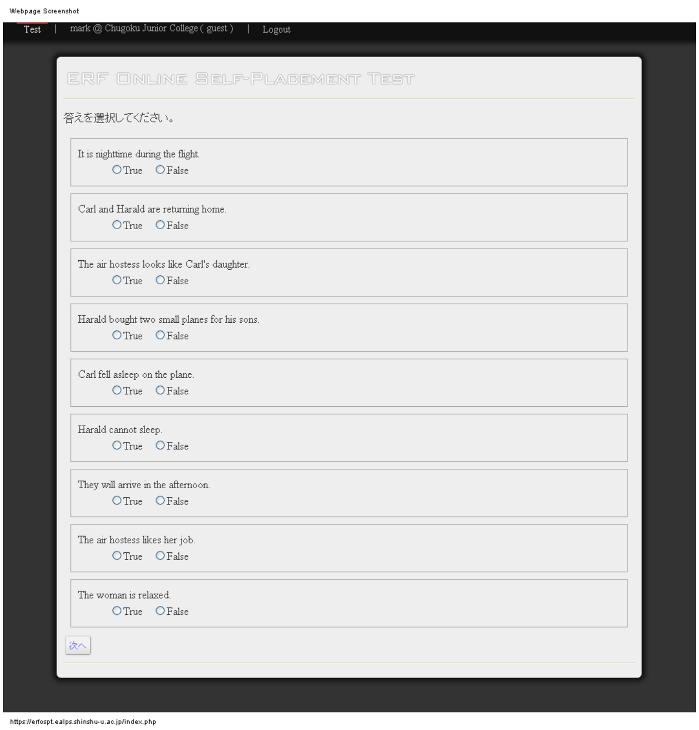


Figure 6. Impressionistic questions

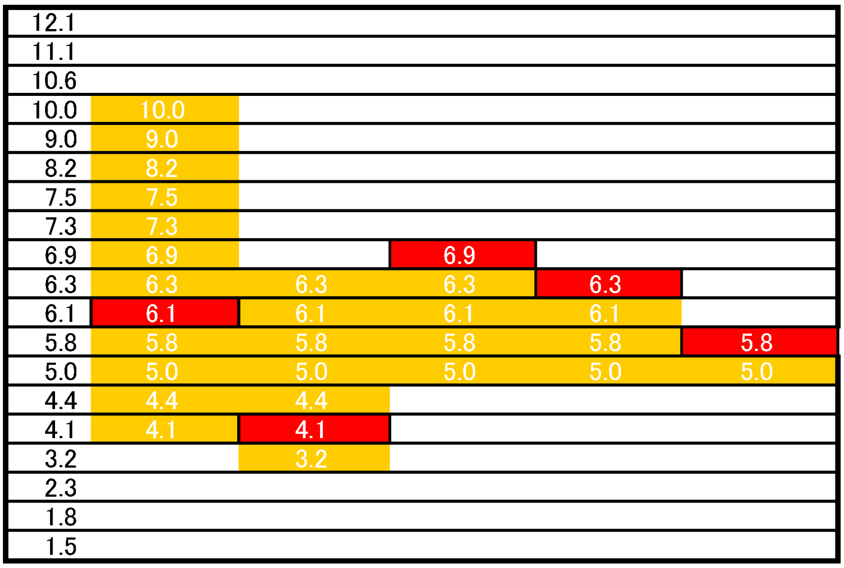


Figure 7. Algorithm homing in on level

the student is given, the estimation becomes more accurate and the yellow area becomes narrower.

Initial Results

Preliminary questionnaire responses and analysis of results suggest the test is working. Since its beta launch in September, 2011, the test has been taken 966 times (as of November, 2012). A questionnaire administered to 114 test takers showed that test scores largely corresponded to students' perceived levels, and EPER scores among 64 test takers correlated significantly with their performance on the test ($p = 0.01$). Publication of a larger trial is forthcoming.

Conclusion

The ERFOSPT has been developed to fill the need for a short, online, self-administered ER placement test. It is still in development, and more texts need to be added, more questions need to be made, and data needs to be processed. Anyone willing to join this exciting project should contact the authors.

Acknowledgments

The Extensive Reading Foundation would like to thank the following publishers for allowing us to use their material for the test: Cambridge University Press Readers, Cengage Learning, Macmillan Language House, Oxford University Press and Pearson Longman (Penguin Readers).

In addition we would like to thank those who have helped in the development of the test, and encourage other teachers to join this project, either by administering the test to students, helping in the choosing of new texts and creation of questions, or in the processing and analysis of data.

References

Adachi, K., Brierley, M., & Niimura, M. (2012). Development of the Online Self-Placement Test engine that interactively selects texts for an extensive reading test. *Intelligent Interactive Multimedia: Systems and Services, SIST 14,* 213-222.

Brierley, M. (2007). Extensive Reading levels. *JABAET Journal 11,* 135-144.

Brown, D. (2012). Online support systems for Extensive Reading: Managing the tension between autonomy and institutional education. *The Language Teacher, 36*(2), 11-16.

Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language assessment: principles and classroom practices.* White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.

Buck, G. (2001). *Assessing listening.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Dupuy, B., Tse, L., & Cook, T. (1996). Bringing books into the classroom: First steps in turning college-level ESL students into readers. *TESOL Journal, 5*(4), 10-15.

Lemmer, R., Brierley, M., Reynolds, B., & Waring, R. (2012). Introduction to the Extensive Reading Foundation Online Self-Placement Test. *Extensive Reading World Congress Proceedings, 1,* 23-25.

Robb, T., & Waring, R. (2012). Announcing MoodleReader version 2. *Extensive Reading World Congress Proceedings, 1,* 168-171.

Authors' Biographies:

Mark Brierley is an associate professor of foreign languages at Shinshu University. His interests include Extensive Reading and Low-energy Building.

Richard Lemmer is an associate professor at Chugoku Junior College. His interests include Extensive Reading and Educational Technology.

Kosuke Adachi is a graduate student at Shinshu University. His interests include Extensive Reading and Software Engineering.

Understanding and Improving the Design of Academic Listening Classes

Gavin Brooks
Kwansei Gakuin University
School of Policy Studies
gavin@kwansei.ac.jp

Recently researchers have begun to examine the importance of listening, long neglected in second language research, and its place in second language learning (Lynch, 2012). While many teachers still think listening should be taught by just having their students listen (Suzuki, 2011, p. 1) current research is telling us that this is not true. A good listening course should provide graded listening materials that have been carefully sequenced to allow students to practice level appropriate listening, along with the scaffolding needed to help students to develop the listening strategies that will allow them to succeed. This paper will look at how our views about what makes a good listening course have changed over the past 20 years and examine how these new insights can be used to help develop a successful academic listening class.

本稿では、過去20年における「優れたリスニングクラス」の定義の変移を観察するとともに、新しいアイデアが如何により良いクラスづくりに貢献できるかを考えてみる。第2言語リスニングがどのように教えられるべきかという研究はこれまであまりされてなかったが、最近になり、リスニングの重要性や第2言語学習におけるリスニングの役割が研究されるようになった。ところが未だに、リスニング指導は、ただ録音されたものを生徒に聞かせて行うべきだと考える教師が少なくない。幸いなことに、最近の研究はこれが誤りである事を示唆し、どのようなリスニング教材が生徒のレベルに適しているかを把握したうえで、リスニングストラテジーを上達させる足場(scaffolding)を提供すべきだと結論付けている。

Keywords: Academic Listening, Curriculum Design, Listening Activities

Introduction

Listening has often been the least valued of the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) that make up the majority of English language education (Wilson, 2008). However, over the past 20 years listening has gone from being a neglected skill "… (to) a core course in many language programs" (Richards, 2005, p. 85). Listening is a vital part of learning a second language and research shows that listening is used nearly twice as much as speaking and four to five times as much as reading and writing (Rivers, 1981 as cited in Van Dozer, 1997). Nunan

Brooks, G. (2013). Understanding and improving the design of academic listening classes. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 31-36). Hiroshima: JALT.

(1998) claims that over 50 percent of the time that students spend functioning in a foreign language will be devoted to listening (as cited in Nation & Newton, 2009). Listening is also an important part of how we build our understanding of a second language:

> Some people now believe that learning a language is not just learning to talk, but rather that learning a language is building a map of meaning in the mind. These people believe that talking may indicate that the language was learned, but they do not believe that practice in talking is the best way to build up this "cognitive" map in the mind. To do this, they feel, the best method is to practice meaningful listening (Nord, as cited in Nation & Newton, 2009, p. 38).

Second Language Listening Research

Listening is "the least researched of all four language skills" (Vandergrift, 2006, p. 191). In an important 1994 review of listening comprehension research, Rubin notes that there is still very little empirical research on listening and what we do know exists "either because (it is) suspected on logical grounds to affect listening or because (it is) thought to be relevant based on parallels found in reading research" (Rubin, 1994, p. 199). For example, when Lynch (2011) reviewed the first nine volumes of the Journal of English for Academic Purposes, he found that out of 147 papers only one specifically focused on listening comprehension (Figure 1).

Most researchers in the field seem to accept it as "commonplace that the processes, instruction and assessment of second language listening are less well understood and researched than the other three conventional skills (e.g. Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; LeLoup & Ponteiro, 2007; Vandergrift, 2007)" (Lynch, 2011, p. 79). One reason for this is the nature of listening, the spontaneity involved in speech, the inability of the listener to go back and review what was said, the fact that listening takes place over time and not space so listeners are forced to segment words from the flow of speech on the fly, and the pronunciation features such as elision, assimilation and intrusion make it a difficult skill to research.

Table 1
Topics addressed in the Journal of English for Academic Purposes, volumes 1–9.

General survey/overview	6
Written genres	
Expert writing	49
Novice writing	30
Reading	2
Reading and writing	3
Listening	1
Listening and speaking (dialogue)	8
Speaking/spoken genres	6
Academic literacy	11
Assessment/feedback	5
Critical EAP	7
e-technology	6
Course/materials design	13
Total	147

Figure 1. Articles on Second Language Listening (Lynch, 2011, p. 79)

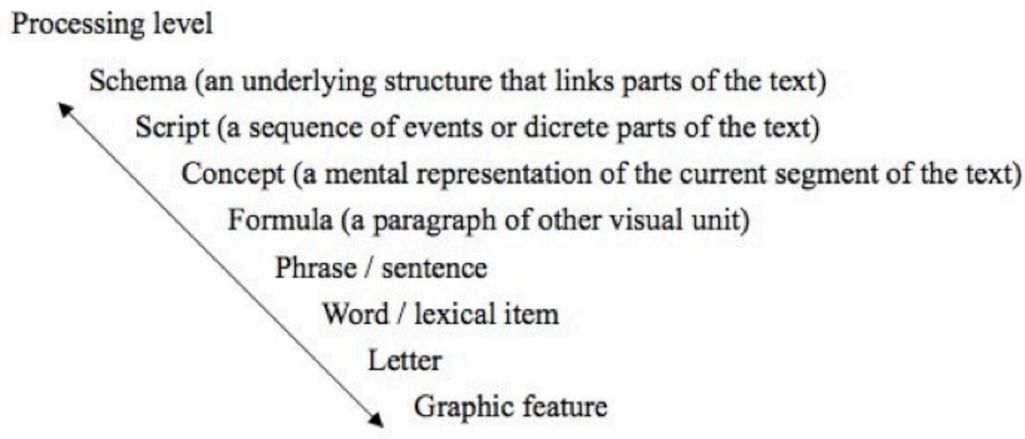


Figure 2. The processing level of L2 skills, (Chan & Teng, 2005, p. 20)

Listening also includes a lot of sub-skills that many teachers take for granted as being crucial for effective listening but that have not been researched (Buck, 2001). However, as our knowledge of what makes an effective listener is increasing, it is important to make use of this knowledge in the classroom, both in our teaching and in the creation of the texts that we use.

Most of our ideas about how we learn to listen in a second language can be broken down into one of three broad categories. A top down approach, a bottom up approach and a combination of these two approaches (see Figure 2 for an explanation of how these approaches overlap). Richards (2005) and Lynch (2004) both note that second language listeners make use a combination of top down and bottom up processing because L2 listening is used to both comprehend the message in what is being said and as a means of assisting language learning.

Top-down listening involves the listeners starting with their prior knowledge on the subject and then trying to match what they are hearing to the content and rhetorical schemata of this prior knowledge (Nation & Newton, 2009). It is important for meaning- centered listening because, in this type of listening, the words, syntax, and expressions used by speakers are seen as carriers of meaning and "once meaning has been identified there is no further need to attend to the form of messages" (Richards, 2005, p. 86). The advantage of this approach is that it allows less skilled listeners to use their existing knowledge of the subject being discussed to compensate for problems of perception (Field, 2004). However, current research shows us that this works best as a short term strategy and, while it will help students to overcome deficiencies in their listening abilities, it does not always help them to become more proficient listeners of English (Wallace, 2012).

On the other side of the spectrum, we find the bottom-up approach. In this approach listeners are encouraged to focus on the smaller parts of a stream of speech, such as the words or the phonemes. Meaning is constructed by accretion, or "gradually combining increasingly larger units of meaning from the phoneme-level up to discourse-level features" (Vandergrift, 2004, p. 4). This type of listening instruction has the advantage of focusing the learners' attention on the way in which the sounds of speech convey meaning. The bottom-up approach works because it allows the teacher to focus the students' attention on the skills essential to learning to understand spoken English, such a phonemic awareness or the rules of connected speech. This is important because research in second language acquisition shows us that attention is vital for acquisition (Schmidt, 1990).

A number of recent studies such as those by Chiu (2006) and Lu (2008) (as cited in Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011) show that the best way to teach listening comprehension is neither top-down nor bottom-up processing, but rather a combination of the two. It is up to individual teachers to find "an appropriate balance between providing opportunities for listening skill development through meaning-

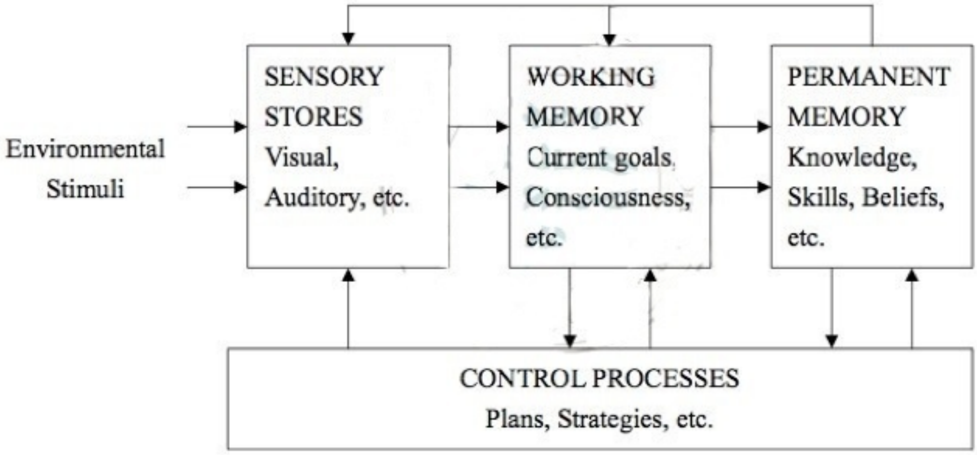


Figure 3. The processing level of L2 skills, (Chan & Teng, 2005, p. 21)

focused listening and through language focused learning which focuses on bottom-up listening practice" (Nation & Newton, 2009, p. 42).

Approaches to Teaching Listening

One problem in teaching listening is that teachers do not understand the pedagogical principles behind how listening should be taught and their teaching is "shaped by convention and textbooks… with teachers appearing to believe that listening is a skill mastered simply through repetition and practice" (Graham, 2011, p.114). This is both surprising and disturbing given that the research shows us that listening needs to be approached in a systematic way that takes into account the processes involved in learning to listen (Vandergrift, 2004). The last part of this paper looks at some of the basic ideas that have come out of recent research into second language listening and what these ideas can tell us about how a good listening class should be designed.

One of the first things a teacher should do when planning a class is carry out "a careful 'needs analysis' and then, as far as possible, ensure that the material chosen is as relevant and useful to these particular students as possible" (Mendelsohn, 2006, p. 78). After the goals of the class have been decided, the next step in the process is to either find or develop the listening texts to be used in the class. These texts should include content that is relevant to the students. Studies have shown that the listeners' familiarity with a topic and their interest in that topic are powerful predictors of how successful the listener will be in decoding the information in the text (Strong & Dias, 2010). Secondly, the materials should be authentic. Authentic means that, even though the texts themselves may be scripted or semi-scripted, they are close to what the learner would experience in a real life situation. In other words, the listening tasks required of the students are usually real-life tasks that they might carry out in their L1 and the texts include examples of "language being spoken at normal speed and with features such as accents, hesitations, fillers, and ellipses" ((Flowerdew & Miller, 2005, p.14). Also, the listening tasks that are connected to the text should include opportunities for both bottom-up and top-down processing to occur. Finally, the teacher should not be afraid of having the students listen to an aural text more than one time as it has been shown that the repetition of passages facilitates "L2 listening comprehension more than other types of modifications (Cervantes & Gainer 1992; Beme 1995; Lund 1991)" (Berne, 1998, p. 169).

These listening texts should be scripted texts or semi-scripted texts that have been graded to the level of the student. For example, with vocabulary, Nation (2009) suggests that "95 percent to 98 percent of the running words should be within the learners' previous knowledge, and so only five or preferably only one or two words per hundred should be unknown to them" (Nation & Newton, 2009, p. 3). As listening consists of decoding information into episodic memory and then moving it from there into short or long term memory (see Figure 3), it is also important not to overwhelm the students with information. According to Chafe (1985), research shows us that students can usually only hold seven to eight words in their short term memory (as cited in Buck, 2001) and recorded texts need to include pauses or breaks to give students time to process the information they have listened to.

It is also important to plan appropriate activities connected to these texts. These activities fall into three categories, pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening activities, and this sequence of teaching can help "guide students through the mental processes for successful listening comprehension, and promote the acquisition of metacognitive strategies in three categories: planning, monitoring, and evaluating" (Vandergrift, 1999, p. 172). Pre-listening involves schema activation and makes it possible for students to "use the natural listening skills of matching what they hear with what they expect to hear and using their previous knowledge to make sense of it" (Rost, 2011, p. 189). While-listening tasks are important because they provide students the opportunity to verify and revise their predictions (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). These tasks can vary from meaning-based activities to activities that focus the students attention on form by asking them to "identify differences between what they hear and a printed version of the text, complete a cloze version of the text, complete sentence stems taken from the text, check off from a list expressions that occurred in the text" (Richards, 2005, p. 90). Post-listening tasks should give students "opportunities to connect what they have heard to their own ideas and experiences, and encourage interpretive and critical listening (as well as) reflective thinking" (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011, p. 982).

Conclusion

While this review has provided a very brief overview into how we can use second language research to help make L2 listening classes more effective and enjoyable for our students, it is just that, a very brief overview. It is hoped that this type of overview will help to remind teachers the need to understand the pedagogical underpinnings of the classes they are teaching and encourage them to get a better understanding of how listening should be taught. It is also my belief that the ideas in this paper can present a starting point that will allow individual teachers to begin to explore the current research being done in the field of second language listening.

References

Berne, J. E. (1998). Examining the relationship between L2 listening research, pedagogical theory, and practice. *Foreign Language Annals*, *31*(2), 169–190.

Buck, G. (2001). *Assessing listening*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Chan, C. Y., & Teng, H. C. (2005). *A study of metacognitive strategies in EFL listening comprehension*. Unpublished master's thesis, National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, Yunlin, ROC.

Field, J. (2004). An insight into listeners' problems: too much bottom-up or too much top-down? *System*, *32*(3), 363–377.

Flowerdew, J., & Miller, L. (2005). *Second language listening: theory and practice (Cambridge Language Education)* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Gilakjani, A. P., & Ahmadi, M. R. (2011). A study of factors affecting EFL Learners' English listening comprehension and the strategies for improvement. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *2*(5), 977–988.

Graham, S. (2011). Self-efficacy and academic listening. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *10*(2), 113–117.

Lynch, T. (2004). *Study listening: a course in listening to lectures and note-taking* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Lynch, T. (2011). Academic listening in the 21st century: Reviewing a decade of research. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *10*(2), 79–88.

Mendelsohn, D. J. (2006). Learning how to listen using learning strategies. In E. Uso-Juan & A. Martinez-Flor (Eds.), *Current trends in the development and teaching of the four language skills* (pp. 75-89). Berlin, Germany: Muton de

Gruyter.

Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Richards, J. C. (2005). Second thoughts on teaching listening. *RELC Journal*, *36*(1), 85–92.

Rost, M. (2011). *Teaching and researching: Listening (Applied Linguistics in Action)* (2nd ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson ESL.

Rubin, J. (1994). A review of second language listening comprehension research. *The Modern Language Journal*, *78*(2), 199–221.

Schmidt, R. W. (1990). The Role of Consciousness in Second Language Learning. *Applied Linguistics*, *11*(2), 129–158.

Strong, G. B., & Dias, J. V. (2010). Blended learning in a listening course: Seeking best practices (pp. 20–30). Presented at the JALT Conference Proceedings, Nagoya.

Suzuki, K. (2011). Factors that affect listening performance: Strategies helpful for Japanese EFL learners. *Journal of Waseda University School of Education*, *18*(2). Tokyo, Japan: Graduate School of Education of Waseda University.

Van Dozer, C. (1997). Improving ESL learners' listening skills: At the workplace and beyond. *marshalladulteducation.org*. Center for Applied Linguistics Project in Adult Immigration Education. Retrieved June 9, 2012, from http://www.marshalladulteducation.org/pdf/briefs/Improving%20ESL%20Lrns%20List.vanDuzerdoc.pdf

Vandergrift, L. (1999). Facilitating second language listening comprehension: Acquiring successful strategies. *ELT Journal*, *53*(3), 168–179.

Vandergrift, L. (2004). Listening to learn or learning to listen? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *24*(1), 3–25.

Wallace, M. P. (2012). Searching for a new approach to listening. *Accents Asia, 5*(1), 8–22.

Wilson, J. J. (2008). *How to teach listening*. Harlow, England: Longman.

Author's Biography:

Gavin Brooks has a Masters of Applied Linguistics from the University of New England and has spent 15 years teaching English in Japan, Indonesia, Colombia and Ecuador. He spent 5 years teaching at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, Japan and is currently working as an ALE at Kwansei Gakuin University in the School of Policy Studies.

Towards a Pedagogy of Conversation

John Campbell-Larsen
Momoyama Gakuin University
joncamlar@hotmail.com

Japanese learners of English often find it difficult to apply their knowledge of the language to engage in naturalistic conversation. This paper will use data derived from videotaped student conversations to identify some common features of the spoken language of Japanese speakers of English. The data showed such traits as frequent and prolonged pausing, lapses into Japanese, minimized turns and lack of discourse markers to be prominent. By adopting a teaching approach that had repeated focus on these interactional issues within a framework of student autonomy, students were able to change their interactional styles and become more able to engage in more fluent naturalistic speaking.

本稿では、会話にみられる日本人英語学習者の問題点とそれらの改善を考える。

日本人英語学習者は、たいてい英語での会話の際、それまでに培った英語知識を応用することが難しいようだ。そこで本稿では、まず、学生による会話を撮ったビデオをもとに作成した日本人英語話者の持つ共通な問題点を紹介し解決策を考えていく。まず問題点だが、データから、会話中長い間止まってしまう、よく日本語を使用し返答が短い、談話標識が欠落していることなどがわかった。学生達の会話の自立性を高めるため、何度も授業の中で、これらの問題をとりあげ繰り返し練習を行った結果、生徒達の言葉のやりとりのスタイルが変わり、より自然な話し方出来るようになった。

Key Words: Speaking, Conversation, Fluency, Classroom Interaction

Introduction

Many Japanese students of English display a marked imbalance between their passive knowledge of vocabulary and grammar and their ability to use this knowledge to engage in spontaneous, spoken interaction. Student spoken output is often characterized by hesitancy, frequent pausing, recourse to L1 utterances, especially markers, complete absence of common English discourse markers and L1 style backchanneling. This paper investigates some common traits of Japanese English learners' speaking, based on analysis of video recorded student speaking, with focus on fluency and interactional aspects of speaking. I will detail the way in which these issues are dealt with in a two semester course and show the changes that are brought about in student spoken language performance through comparison of video recordings made at the beginning and end of

Campbell-Larsen, J. (2013) Towards a pedagogy of conversation. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 37-42). Hiroshima: JALT.

the course. The paper suggests that by focusing on specific speaking skills within a framework of student autonomy, students can move beyond overriding concerns with grammatical correctness towards a more naturalistic manner of speaking English.

The Japanese Learner

There exists a wide and varied literature on the teaching of English in Japan, and on the nature of Japanese communication style. Studies range from anthropological accounts (McVeigh, 2003) to in-depth descriptions of specific points of Japanese communication (See for example, Clancy, Thompson, Suzuki, &Tao, 1996; Fox, Hayashi and Jasperson 1996; Carroll 2005; Greer, Bussinguer, Butterfield & Mischinger, 2009; Locastro, 1987.)

Ellis (1991) gives an overview of some of the studies concerning Japanese speakers, and provides a list of general statements on Japanese speaker's traits, focusing on sociolinguistic competence such as levels of formality, differentials of directness according to status, and so on. There are two items on the list which have a narrower linguistic focus, namely, that Japanese are "less verbal, more inclined to use silence in intercultural interactions" and "are inclined to use more backchanneling devices." (p. 116). Ellis warns that data derived from elicited data may not reflect actual behavior in real communicative situations. That is, it is better to observe actual language use by learners than rely on data derived under test or interview conditions. Investigation of actual student speaking can provide a nuanced view of what is taking place in conversation, providing a solid, empirical basis for making statements about how Japanese learners actually speak, with concomitant implications for the development of English language speaking and interactional skills.

To sum up, Japanese L1 interaction is carried out in ways which are different from English interaction, with Fox, Hayashi and Jasperson (1996) suggesting that interactive workings of a language are deeply connected to the grammar of that language. This would suggest the strong possibility that interactional norms from the L1 may be transferred into second language (L2) speaking. Whatever the case, there will be certain recurrent behaviors in Japanese speaker's performance which will seem 'foreign-sounding' to native/proficient speakers of English, and thus prime candidates for language instruction.

Some Features of Japanese Speaking

The following section deals with some traits of Japanese speakers of English that were observed in analysis of videotaped conversations of Japanese university students engaging in English 'free conversation' (N=14). The students were free to choose partners and no direction was given by the teacher regarding topic choice. Other groups continued their own conversations in the background. The atmosphere was lively and dynamic and the camera was handheld by the teacher. The recorded sections were each five minutes in length, representing five minute stretches of ongoing conversations. The videotapes were transcribed using simplified conversation analysis (CA) transcription conventions and analyzed.

In any situation where learners are conversing using the target language the most noticeable indicators of 'foreignness' will probably be matters of pronunciation that is, foreign accent. Similarly, non-normative grammatical constructions such as "Yesterday, I go to shopping." will color impressions of proficiency, especially if repeated across a number of turns or constructed identically by several speakers. The analysis of the student conversations ignored these phenomena and focused on interactional traits that contribute to feelings of dysfluency and foreignness in the student's speaking. The following traits were recurrent and characteristic of many Japanese learners' speaking. Each case is illustrated with an excerpt from the videotaped conversations. The excerpts are not one-off examples but serve to illustrate features of conversation that were recurrent both within turns and across speakers.

Use of L1

Students often display a tendency to revert to their L1 during English spoken interactions. These reversions fall under three separate categories.

Firstly students may consciously code switch and abandon the English interaction. Secondly, students may use Japanese words during English language utterances with varying degrees of consciousness and then self-correct or translate. Thirdly students may unconsciously mark their English speaking with Japanese markers such as '*etoh*', '*anno*' or self-correct with Japanese markers, '*jya*', '*chau*'.

(Extract 1.1) Switch to L1

Parentheses indicate short pause. Double parentheses indicate transcriber's guess of unclear utterance and transcriber's comment.

A: What kind of (.)what (.) you ((pick up))
B: I want to some café. I don't decide eh (.) ((Inaudible Japanese)) Mada (.) not decide
A: Mada kimeteinai
B: So
B: Kyo hataraku

(Extract 1.2) L1 Lapse, Self-correction

A: Sunday is Ryoya's tanjyobi (.)ah tanjyobi jyanai (.)birthday

(Extract 1.3) L1 Marking

A: my (.) eto I was was born in Kobe buto eto (.) eto (.) s (.) sugu

Lack of English Markers

Hasselgreen (2004) refers to 'smallwords' as "small words and phrases, occurring with high frequency in the spoken language, that help keep our speech flowing, yet do not contribute essentially to the message itself." (p. 162). Words such as 'well' 'you know', 'I mean' are the most prominent members of this group of words (see McCarthy, 2010). Hasselgreen states that use of these words is central to creating fluency and enabling the speaker to use language interactively. The video data shows a complete lack of these markers. There were zero occurrences of 'Well', 'You know', 'I mean' across six conversations of five minutes duration.

Backchannel and Aizuchi

The term backchannel refers to the utterances of speakers that indicate attention, understanding, agreement and so on, whilst another speaker is still in possession of the floor. Typical backchannel utterances in English are 'Yeah', 'Right', 'Uh huh' and so on. The parallel term in Japanese is Aizuchi. The literature on Aizuchi is large and varied, prompting Hayashi and Yoon (2009) to observe, "In the literature on Japanese communication style, response tokens have been one of the most common objects of study" (p. 268). In the present study I found that several students displayed a strong tendency to use Japanese style Aizuchi instead of English style backchanneling in English language interactions. These responses are most noticeable for their pronunciation. Words such as 'Ah' and 'Eh' may be stretched over a much longer period than is usual in English and are often uttered with sharply rising intonation and accompanied by facial expressions of raised eyebrows, widened eyes, open, slightly rounded mouth and with repeated nodding head movements. Weaker learners sometimes adopted a passive stance to the conversation and contributed little to the conversation beyond repeated Aizuchi.

(Extract 2.1) L1 backchannel

Colon use indicates sound stretch, (.) indicates short pause. Double parentheses indicates transcriber's comment.

A: (Omitted)
B: Oh:::
A: But my family eto came to Shizuoka to
B: Ah:::
A: Kobe come I eto stay I live in ((inaudible)) with my family
B: Ah:::(.) eh::: about (.) one (.) ((inaudible))
A: Un about one one year
B: One year
A: Very (.) nice (.) very en, enjoy
B: Ah::: so ka

Pausing

Many students engage in prolonged inter-turn and intra-turn pauses. Multi-second silences are not uncommon, accompanied by averted gaze. Seedhouse (2004) observes "…gaps between speakers are measured in tenths of a second" (p. 27). Multi-second pausing is not characteristic of speech in normal English conversation, and it is often confusing when deployed by students as an interactional resource, especially if pauses occur after every word in an utterance.

(Extract 3.1) Pausing

Figures in parentheses are pause durations in seconds.

A: How many times a week
B: hhh (3.1)about (2.2) thirty hours
A: (8.8)
A: Hmm (.)so
B: (7.9) come on
A: let's go let's go to Osho together next time

Short Turns

One of Grice's conversational maxims (Cited in Cook, 1989, p. 29) is the maxim of quantity, that is, speakers should say the right amount to meet the current purposes of the exchange. Many students engage in extremely short turns that go little beyond meeting the bare needs of answering the question, with zero attempts at elaboration. A short turn is not necessarily out of place, but if a speaker engages in a prolonged series of such minimal turns then it may create a problem for the interaction. Schegloff (2007) asserts that in responses to topic proffering, "… the key issue is whether the recipient displays a stance which encourages or discourages the proffered topic…" (p. 171). He goes on to add "… [a key feature] is whether the response turn is constructed to be minimal … or expanded." In the language of Conversation Analysis (CA), a series of minimized turns constitute dispreferred responses.

(Extract 4.1) Short Turns

Parentheses indicate short pauses, colon indicates sound stretch.

A: What (.) did (.) you do(.) weekend this weekend (.) last weekend weekend
B: Part time job
A: Oh eh what whato what job
B: Konbini (.)ence store
A: Oh (.)where where
B: Near my home.
A: My home my(.) near
B: Near
A: Near eh Seven Eleven
B: No circle K
A: Circle K Circle Circle (.) ah: ah: ah:::

Re-starts

Wong (2005) describes a tendency of non-native speakers (NNS) to orient their talk towards grammatical correctness in interactions with native speakers, with NNS having a tendency to orient towards meaning. Wong's data concerns Finnish language interactions and she concludes, "… the NNSs treat grammatical correctness as being a more important factor for understanding than NSs" (p. 157). The NNS in Wong's study engaged in word searches and multiple attempts to produce grammatically correct forms. Japanese learners often display this tendency with many re-starts and hesitancies seemingly connected to the desire to produce correct language and an orientation to the institutional (and possibly culturally bound) identity of learner/ non-native speaker.

(Extract 5.1) Restart

Parentheses indicate short pauses

A: Did (.) you(.) give(.) present(.) to your mother?
B: Yes ah: I (.)I (.) give (.) I gave (.) I gave flower

The Classroom as Venue for Conversation

The above list is not intended to be a comprehensive account of all of the traits of Japanese learners of English. Neither are all of the traits present in the speaking of every student. The list should be seen more as a broad brush-stroke picture of common points that create a sense of foreignness and hinder smooth interaction. If these points are to be addressed by the teacher then it is proposed that the institutional identities of both teacher and students will have to be re-imagined and the classroom as a venue for conversation will have to be talked into being. Seedhouse (1996) argues that due to the institutional nature of the L2 classroom true 'natural' conversation cannot take place, stating:

> The only way, therefore, in which an ELT lesson could become identical to conversation would be for the learners to regard the teacher as a fellow- conversationalist of identical status rather than as a teacher, for the teacher not to direct the discourse in any way at all, and for the setting to be non-institutional. (p. 18)

This is clearly a tall order, but not impossible to achieve with careful planning and training, and with repeated focus across the year on the interactional traits referred to above. The students in this study were habituated to initiating and sustaining conversation in English each lesson. After the teacher had performed the institutionally required task of taking attendance the students began their conversations. The teacher did not offer any cues, allocate groups or topics or set a time limit. The teacher moved among the groups fulfilling a variety of rolls, such as monitoring interactional behavior for later discussion, prompting use of discourse markers, drawing attention to L1 usage, providing vocabulary and grammar help or simply joining in the conversations as an equal participant. Over the course of the academic year the students became more oriented to their rolls as conversationalists, and, it is argued here that on many occasions speaking occurred that fulfilled Cook's (1989) criteria for conversation.

1. It is not primarily necessitated by a practical task.
2. Any unequal power of participants is partially suspended.
3. The number of participants is quite small
4. Turns are quite short
5. Talk is primarily for the participants and not for an outside audience. (p. 56)

Outcome

The students were videotaped again at the end of the academic year and the conversations transcribed and analyzed. The conversations were compared with the recordings made at the beginning of the academic year. The results showed that changes in the students' speaking had taken place. L1 utterances were much reduced, with L1 marking being seen in a single instance of '*jya*' in one of the conversations, quickly self-corrected. Smallwords were used frequently by students in the conversations. Backchanneling was largely in English and there was a reduced occurrence of Aizuchi. Turns were longer, there were fewer pauses and re-starts and the students were able to employ a wider vocabulary. The cumulative impression was that the students were more able to engage in conversation in a more naturalistic, confident and fluent manner than at the beginning of the year. To sum up, identifying interactive language skills, and then repeatedly addressing these in lessons and creating a venue for emergent, student initiated conversation can bring about real and measurable change in students' speaking and conversation.

References

Carroll, D. (2005). Vowel-marking as an interactional resource in Japanese novice ESL conversation. In K. Richards, & P. Seedhouse (Eds.), *Applying conversation analysis* (pp. 214-234). Basingstoke, England: Palgrave.

Clancy, P. M., Thompson, S. A., Suzuki, R., & Tao, H. (1996). The conversational use of reactive tokens in English, Japanese, and Mandarin. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *26*, 355-387.

Cook, G. (1989). *Discourse*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (1991). Communicative competence and the Japanese learner. *JALT Journal 13*(2), 103-127.

Fox, B.A., Hayashi, M., & Jasperson, R. (1996). Resources and repair: a cross-linguistic study of syntax and repair. In E. Ochs, E.A. Schegloff & S.A. Thompson (Eds.), *Interaction and grammar* (pp. 185-237). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Greer, T., Bussinguer, S., Butterfield, S., & Mischinger, A. (2006). Receipt through repetition. *JALT Journal*, *31*(1), 5-34.

Hasselgreen, A. (2004). *Testing the spoken English of young Norwegians: A study of test validity and the role of "smallwords" in contributing to pupil's fluency.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge

University Press.

Hayashi, M., & Yoon, K. (2009). Negotiating boundaries in talk. In J. Sidnell, (ed.), *Conversation analysis: Comparative perspectives.* (pp. 250-278) Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

LoCastro, V. (1987). Aizuchi: A Japanese conversational routine. In L.E. Smith (Ed.), *Discourse across cultures*, (pp. 101-113). Hemel Hemptstead, England: Prentice Hall.

McVeigh, B. J. (2003). Performing the part of the English teacher: The role of anthropologist and the anthropologist of roles in Japan. In E. P. Bueno & T. Caesar (Eds.), *I wouldn't want anybody to know: Native English teaching in Japan,* (pp. 134-146). Tokyo, Japan: JPGS Press.

McCarthy, M.J. (2010). Spoken fluency revisited. *English Profile Journal, 1*(1), 1-15.

Schegloff, E.A. (2007). *Sequence organization in interaction: A primer in conversation analysis*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Seedhouse, P. (1996). Classroom Interaction: possibilities and impossibilities. *ELT Journal 50*(1), 16-24.

Wong, J. (2005). Sidestepping Grammar. In K. Richards & P. Seedhouse (Eds.), *Applying conversation analysis,* (pp. 214-234). Basingstoke, England: Palgrave.

Author's Biography:

John Campbell-Larsen has taught English in Japan since 1995 and is currently teaching at Momoyama Gakuin University.

Face-to-face Communication and Instant Messaging: Similarities and Differences

Seth E. Cervantes
Tomakomai Komazawa University
sesu46@gmail.com

Robert C. Olson
Tomakomai Komazawa University
robolson32@hotmail.com

This article reports on a small study examining whether EFL learners use interactional practices found in face-to-face communication to organize chats using Instant Messaging (IM). Transcripts of IM chats between seven intermediate level learners and two native speaking English teachers were collected over four weeks, and the following interactional practices were analyzed: (1) turn (transmission)-taking, (2) sequencing, (3) organization, and (4) repair. Findings suggest that EFL learners use similar communicative practices found in speech. The implications are that language teachers can use IM in a systematic manner to highlight the role of pragmatics and the manner in which face-to-face communication (or talk-in-interaction) is organized.

対面コミュニケーションとインスタントメッセージングにおける類似点と相違点

本稿では、EFL 学習者がインスタントメッセージング（IM）を使用してチャットをする際に、対面コミュニケーションで使われる相互作用の特徴を用いるか否かについて吟味する。中級レベルの学生7名と英語が母語の指導者2名の間で、4　週間にわたるIMチャットの記録を収集し、相互作用における特徴を以下の項目により分析した。(1) turn (transmission)-taking practices (ターン・テイキング)、(2) sequencing practices (会話の流れ)、(3) organization practices (会話の構成)、(4) repair practices (会話の修復)。その結果、教師は語用論の役割および対面的コミュニケーション（またはトークインの相互作用）の特徴を強調する場合、体系的な方法での IM の使用が可能であることがわかった。

Keywords: Computer mediated communication (CMC), Instant Messaging (IM), transmission unit, interactional practices, Conversation Analysis (CA)

Computer mediated communication's (CMC) rise has changed how people communicate, for better and worse (Turkle, 2011). Foremost, CMC provides English learners with safe and meaningful practice opportunities and teachers with exciting possibilities that are easy to implement and inexpensive.

Baron (2008) claims that IM borrows many features associated with face-to-face communication. Unlike texting, which is asynchronous, IM is synchronous which creates the feeling of an informal chat. Users of IM, however, convey meaning through writing rather than ephemeral sounds or body

Cervantes, S. E., & Olson, R. C. (2013). Face-to-face communication and instant messaging: Similarities and differences. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 43-48). Hiroshima: JALT.

gestures (See Navarro, 2009).

Baron (2008) also observed that IM and face-to-face communication have similar turn lengths, use one-word utterances, and have closings that end gradually rather than abruptly. Another similarity exists between *turn-at-talk* in face-to-face conversation and IM *transmission units*. When a writer composes and sends a message, the message constitutes a transmission unit. Baron (2008) used the analogy of intonation units (Chafe, 1980) to explain why IM has the feel of a face-to-face conversation. Intonation units, Baron notes, are recognized by intonation, pauses, and often conjunctions (e.g., *but* and *and*) at the beginning. Transmission units seem to represent intonation units that can be broken into chunks, a process Baron calls *utterance chunking*. When two transmission units constitute one sentence it forms an utterance break pair (UB pair):

Example 1

Transmission 1 (T1): What's up

Transmission 2 (T2): John?

The following neither constitutes utterance chunks nor a UB pair because the transmissions are not intonation units:

Example 2

T1: What's

T2: up? John.

The second transmission of an utterance break can be either a dependent clause starting with a coordinating conjunction or an independent clause, although the latter is not frequent (Baron, 2008). The following is an example of a second part UB starting with a dependent clause:

Example 3

T1: I went to California ←1st UB independent clause

T2: but I didn't visit Disneyland. ←2nd UB dependent clause

Interactional Practices

The similarities between face-to-face communication and IM conversation are not completely linear. In face-to-face communication, speakers employ what Wong and Waring (2010) call *interactional practices*. Interactional practices consist of (1) turn-taking practices, (2) sequencing practices, (3) overall structuring practices, and (4) repair practices. These practices, when mastered, give speakers a sense of competency that O'Keeffe, McCarthy, and Carter (2007) call *confluency*. Although Baron compared and contrasted face-to-face communication with IM conversations, she did not consider fully how interactional practices allow speakers to co-produce talk; also Baron's focus was not limited to foreign language learners. With the above in mind, we formed the following question to guide our research: Do non-native speakers of English employ interactional practices to organize IM chats?

Method

Seven undergraduate students (five females and two males) participated in this study. These students were selected because their instructors (also the authors) felt they had the ability and willingness to participate.

Materials and Apparatus

The students used two laptop computers (placed in different rooms) equipped with Internet access and ICQ, an instant messaging computer program. ICQ was selected because it is free, simple, and includes a function that allows for IM conversations, along with the time and date each transmission unit was sent, to be downloaded as .txt files.

Procedures

The research experiment lasted four weeks. In week one, the instructors gave a short lecture on IM, and then gathered the students for a chat between the two classes. Students from each class participated for five-to-ten minute periods. In the following week, four pairs of students were blindly paired and chatted for 20-minutes with some overlap between pairs. In week four, the same process in week two was followed.

Results

To determine whether English learners employed interactional practices, we examined the IM transcripts using the following analytical concepts borrowed from Conversation Analysis (CA): (1) turn (transmission)-taking, (2) sequencing, (3) overall structuring, and (4) repair.

Turn-taking

The basic unit of a turn is the turn construction unit (TCU). The importance of a TCU is that it allows the recipient to project an end to a turn. This is achieved when a turn is perceived as being grammatically or pragmatically complete. Extract 1 and Extract 2 show that our participants' TCUs were grammatically complete, projecting to the recipients a sense that the transmissions had ended, thus freeing the recipient to respond in turn. Each turn type is listed following each TCU (see arrows). The time each transmission was sent is also shown in the extracts. The extracts were recorded verbatim.

Extract 1

A 10:12 (the time the transmission unit was sent)
01 yes i like tomakomai ← sentential TCU (a complete sentence)
A 10:12
02 but sometimes very cold ← clausal TCU (a clause)

Extract 2

A 10:15
01 I like K-POP. ← sentential TCU
B 10:15
02 yes, i`m korean. ← sentential TCU
B 10:15
03 really? oh thats good! ← sentential TCU
A 10:16
04 Especialy, T-ARA. ← phrasal TCU (a phrase)
B 10:16
05 t-ara! ← lexical TCU (a word)
B 10:16
06 very famous girl group. ← phrasal TCU

In face-to-face communication, there is generally no silence gap with some occasional overlap (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974; Carrol, 2011). We found differences between face-to-face communication and IM. One concerns gaps. Extract 3 is an example of significant silence gaps between turns:

Extract 3

A 9:19
01 I ilke play sports and read a book in my free time.
B 9:20
02 That's good! Waht's your favorite book?
A 9:22 ← significant gap between transmissions
03 My favorite book is Isaka Kotaro's book. Do you know?

Sequencing

The manner in which turns are sequenced together form sequencing practices. At the heart of sequencing practices are *adjacency pairs* (i.e. greetings are followed by greetings and offers are followed by an acceptance). These preferred responses are contrasted with dispreferred responses. A preferred response to an invitation is a quick acceptance, while a dispreferred refusal is delayed and usually followed by an explanation of the refusal (ten Have, 2007). Extract 4 is an example of a dispreferred response we found in our data:

Extract 4

A 9:50
01 Please give me sweets. ← request
B 9:52
02 Really? I want to buy sweets for you, but i don't have money. ← refusal

In Extract 5, B compliments A on being an exchange student from Thailand. A mitigates the compliment by explaining how hard Japanese is, which is followed by B's insistence that if she studies Japanese she will speak it well. In the next turn, A downgrades the compliment.

Extract 5

A 9:36
01 Yes!!! I come from Thailand. I'm a exchange student.
B 9:37
02 Wow . That's great!!!! ← compliment
A 9:38
03 Really? But the Japanese language is so hard for me. ← mitigation

B 9:41
04 Oh . . . but if you study Japanese, you good speak japanese!!
A 9:42
05 No!!! I can speak a little bit. ← downgrading

In Extract 6, B responds to the compliment by thanking A.

Extract 6

A 10:18
01 amazing, you are so wonderful! ← compliment
B 10:19
02 Thank U! ← acceptance of compliment

Overall Structuring

Overall structuring practices concern the opening and closing of a conversation. In this section we examined how participants open and close IM chats. Extract 7 is a typical opening we observed in the transcripts:

Extract 7

A 10:05
01 This is Hisae. ← identification
B 10:07
02 hello my name is liz ← identification
A 10:08
03 Hello! I am Japanese. ← identification
B 10:09
04 nice to meet you. ← greeting

Typically, participants opened an IM chat by identifying themselves, usually by name. It should be noted that typical IM conversations do not open with self-introductions because interlocutors almost always know each other. However, the participants basically chatted with strangers so identification was important.

Closings in face-to-face communication are usually drawn-out affairs; Baron (2008) found that closings in IM conversations in her study averaged seven transmissions. However, closings were problematic during initial IM chat sessions as participants closed their IM chats abruptly. Extract 8 illustrates this in the first IM chat sessions:

Extract 8

A 10:04
01 yes! i got it! by the way, when the weather will turn warm here..?
B 10:04
02 it's time to go !!! thank you!!! ← announced closing sequence and appreciation
A 10:05
03 Thank u very much*) ← terminal exchange

In line 01, B introduces a new topic by asking "… by the way, when the weather will turn warm here ..?" In line 02, B announces that their IM chat is ending and shows appreciation by thanking A. B ignores A's question in line 01. Because both transmissions were sent at 10:04, it is possible that B had already written his announced closing sequence prior to receiving A's introduction of a new topic. Nonetheless, B initiates a terminal exchange by thanking A, leaving A's question and terminal exchange unaddressed.

After observing similar clipped closings, we explained conversation openings and closings. In the second IM chat session, the participants were asked to close conversations gradually. Extract 9 is an example of a gradual closing that occurred during second IM chat sessions:

Extract 9

A 9:57
01 Well I have to go to library. ← pre-closing signal, announced closing sequence
B 9:58
02 See you. Thanks for talking, Good, bye. ← appreciation sequence, terminal exchange
A 9:58
03 OK! Have a nice day!! Bye. ← solicitude sequence, terminal exchange

In line 01, A gives a pre-closing signal ("Well") and follows that with an announced closing sequence (I have to go the library). B thanks speaker A and then initiates a terminal exchange ("Good, bye"). A replies in line 03 with a solicitude sequence ("Have a nice day!!"), and terminates the IM chat with a reciprocal "Bye." Although Extract 8 and Extract 9 are each three turns, the closing sequence in Extract

9 has a more natural feel with the appearance of pre-closing signals (e.g., "Well" and "OK!"), varied closing sequences, reciprocal terminal exchanges, and no unaddressed questions.

Repair

The last interactional practice we examined is repair. Repair occurs when there is a misunderstanding between interlocutors. In face-to-face communication most repairs occur when the speaker notices a mistake in his or her output and self-corrects (Wong & Warring, 2010). Another form occurs when the recipient of the output (transmitted message) calls attention to a trouble source in the message. The transmitter picks up on the trouble source and initiates a repair sequence. With the trouble source addressed, the conversation (chat) is picked up where it left off.

Extract 10

Teacher 10:13
01 But Hisae you are doing a bang-up job!
Student 10:14
02 Bang? ← repair initiator
Teacher 10:14
03 Bang-up means super. ← repair outcome
Student 10:15
04 THX!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

In line 01 a teacher compliments Hisae (a pseudonym) by telling her that she is "doing a bang-up job." Hisae indicates confusion with a repair initiator (i.e., "Bang?"). The question mark indicates that "Bang" would have an upward intonation in face-to-face conversations, which highlights the trouble source in line 01. The teacher recognizes the repair initiator and offers the synonym "super," allowing Hisae to accept the compliment in line 04 with "THX!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

In face-to-face communication some "mistakes" are ignored. There is reluctance on the part of interlocutors to correct the person they are communicating with, especially when mistakes do not impede comprehension. The ignoring of "mistakes" is illustrated in Extract 11.

Extract 11

A 9:14
01 My hobby is praying sport and listen to music
B 9:16
02 That's nice! What do you play sport? ← B avoids correcting A

A's misspelling of "playing" as "praying" does not cause B any problems, so she ignores it, responding with a follow-up question (What do you play sport?). In line 02, B spells "play" in its standard form, which indicates that she did understand A's transmission in line 01. Later on in the chat, A continues to misspell "play" even though B does not. The possibility of A acquiring the standard spelling of "play" incidentally through noticing was a point we failed to consider prior to examining the transcripts (Adams, 2007; Smith, 1998).

Discussion

We found that our participants did employ interactional practices found in face-to-face communication. The participants sent transmission units that were similar to TCUs in that they were grammatically and pragmatically complete. However, we found silence gaps between transmissions, which, as we noted earlier, are usually avoided (See Carroll, 2011). Our examination of sequencing practices also showed that participants were aware of adjacency pairs, one example being the conversation that contained the refusal of a request to purchase sweets. There were also instances of participants accepting (Extract 5) and downgrading (Extract 5) compliments. The manner of responding to compliments or complaints (Extract 5) and refusing requests (Extract 4) is significant and deserves attention (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010).

When participants were messaging each other, we found no instances of repair practices, with one exception being when the interlocutor was a teacher. The instance of the participant ignoring a mistake (Extract 11) is similar to listeners not initiating a repair sequence if the meaning is clear.

Conclusion

We believe IM can build awareness of interactional practices and how turns are co-constructed. We advise that teachers consider how IM can be used systematically to focus on specific aspects of interactional practices; for example we noticed that participants abruptly closed conversations. One disadvantage of using IM to teach conversation is that it does not account for the various contexts that accompany long silence gaps. Face-to-face communication takes place in a high-context setting, and requires that interlocutors always consider the manner in which they are acting and speaking. For example, we observed one participant checking her Facebook page on her smartphone during an IM chat. While recognizing that IM and face-to-face communication are similar, we do not suggest teaching IM per se but rather using IM to instruct and highlight aspects of face-to-face communication.

References

Baron, N. S. (2008). *Always on: Language in an Online and mobile world*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Carroll, D. (2010). Conversation analysis and language teaching: A call for action. In T. Greer (Ed.), *Observing talk: Conversation analytic studies of second language interaction* (pp. 7-22). Tokyo, Japan: JALT Pragmatics SIG.

Carroll, D. (2011). Taking turns and talking naturally: Teaching conversational turn-taking. In N. R. Houck & D. H. Tatsuki (Eds.), *Pragmatics: Teaching natural conversation* (pp. 91-103). Alexandria, VA: TESOL Publications.

Chafe, W. (1980). The deployment consciousness in the production of a narrative. In W. Chafe (Ed.), *Cognitive, cultural, and linguistic aspects of narrative production* (pp. 9-50). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Ishihara, N. & Cohen, A. D. (2010). *Teaching and learning pragmatics: Where language and culture meet.* London, England: Longman.

Adams, R. (2007). Do second language learners benefit from interacting with each other? In A. Mackey (Ed.), *Conversational interaction in second language acquisition*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Navarro, J. (2008). *What every body is saying: An ex-FBI agent's guide to speed reading people.* New York, NY: Harper-Collins.

O'Keeffe, A., McCarthy, M., & Carter, R. (2007). *From corpus to classroom: Language use and language teaching*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. A, & Jefferson, G. (1974). A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language, 50*(4), 696-735.

Schegloff, E. A., Jefferson, G., & Sacks, H. (1977). The preference for self-correction in the organization of self in conversation. *Language, 53*(2), 361-382.

Smith, F. (1998). *The Book of learning and forgetting.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

ten Have, P. (2007). *Doing conversation analysis: A practical guide.* Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Turkle, S. (2011). *Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Wong, J. & Waring, H. Z. (2010) *Conversation analysis and second language pedagogy: A guide for ESL/EFL teachers*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Authors' Biographies:

***Seth E.* Cervantes** is a lecturer at Tomakomai Komazawa University. His current research interests include pragmatics and foreign language education in Japan's elementary schools.

***Rob C.* Olson** is an associate professor at Tomakomai Komazawa University. He is the author of two comic books, and is currently working on this third comic book about international marriages.

Spirited Singles: Re-reading Femininity in Anne of Green Gables

Kristie Collins
Department of American Literature
University of Tsukuba
Email: kristiecollins@yahoo.com

Lucy Maud Montgomery's classic novel, *Anne of Green Gables*, has captured the hearts and imagination of Japanese readers for over half a century, and its appeal endures to this day. This paper explores how the text can be used as a teaching resource to facilitate critical readings of gender issues, and three single female characters are presented as examples of Montgomery's strong, female-centered world. The author posits that the novel offers many interesting teaching possibilities for a gender classroom—such as the Cuthberts' unconventional family structure, the subversion of gender roles seen in Marilla and Matthew's parenting responsibilities; and the dissimilar valuing of boy/girl children in adoption practices—and advocates for further research on interdisciplinary textual analyses of classic children's and young adults' literature.

ルーシー・モード・モンゴメリの『赤毛のアン』は、日本の読者の心と想像力を半世紀にわたって掴み、その魅力は現在でも健全だ。本稿は、このテクストがジェンダー問題の批評的読解を促す教材として使えること、すなわち三人の独身女性の登場人物たちがモンゴメリの強力な女性中心の世界を示す例として提示されていることを論じるものである。筆者は、この小説がジェンダーを教える授業の可能性——たとえば、カスバート家の型にはまらない家族構成、マリラとマシューの子育てにおけるジェンダー逆転、養子に際しての男／女の価値不均衡——をしめすだけでなく、児童文学や青少年向け文学の古典を学際的に精読するためのリサーチを奨励するきっかけとなることを願うものである。

Key Words: Gender, Singleness, Canadian Studies, Literature

Introduction

Growing up in Prince Edward Island, Canada, it is impossible to sidestep the omnipresent influence of Lucy Maud Montgomery's literary legacy and her most celebrated novel, *Anne of Green Gables* (1908).

Collins, K. (2013). Spirited singles: Re-reading femininity in Anne of Green Gables. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 49-54). Hiroshima: JALT.

As children, we read the *Anne* series in English classes and sang songs in choir from Canada's longest-running stage production, *Anne of Green Gables—the Musical*; as young adults we drove cars with Anne's face emblazoned on the provincial license plates and took summer jobs in a tourist industry thriving on lobster suppers, Celtic ceilidhs, and *Anne* tourism—the last of the three geared with particular enthusiasm at visitors from Japan.

Anne of Green Gables—known as *Akage no An* to Japanese readers—was first introduced in Japan in 1952 (translated by Hanako Muraoka), along with other children's literature such as Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House* series, as part of an effort to "give hope to young readers in Japan as they rebuilt their devastated nation" (Kajihara, 1999, p. 434). The spirited nature of Montgomery's protagonist has inspired generations of Japanese readers since its introduction, and "*Anne of Green Gables* has been perennially popular among both children and adults. It has never been out of print, nor have its sequels; and new editions for children and adults are set to be published" (Akamatsu, 1999, p. 205).

As a gender scholar, I never imagined that I would become reacquainted with—or interested in—the classic novel of my youth. And yet, as an Islander teaching in Japan, I have found myself continuously urged to incorporate the book in my syllabi. This year, in a twist of fate, I was assigned a North American Literature course and decided to re-read Montgomery's first novel: to my delight and surprise, *Anne of Green Gables* proved to be the perfect text for my class—a classic piece of Canadiana as well as an ideal resource for teaching gender topics.

Anne of Green Gables as a Gender Studies Resource

Anne of Green Gables is the story of an eleven-year-old orphan child named Anne Shirley, who gets adopted by an aging duo named Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert. The Cuthberts own and manage a farm called Green Gables in the fictional town of Avonlea, Prince Edward Island, and decide to adopt an orphan boy to help Matthew with the physical labor required on the farm. Much to their surprise, a mistake is made while procuring the child from Nova Scotia, as the orphanage had been told they wanted a girl instead. While Marilla initially considers correcting the mistake and replacing Anne with an orphan boy, she decides to keep her when she learns of the child's difficult past and sees the girl's heart set on a future at Green Gables; furthermore, Matthew is enchanted by the girl from the moment he meets her—a rare happenstance for this perpetually shy farmer—and he plays advocate for the tribulation-prone Anne throughout the novel. In this way, it is set up early on that Matthew will be the nurturing parent and Marilla the disciplinarian—a reversal of conventional gender roles in which women are expected to be caretakers and men figures of authority.

Even more significantly, Anne's new guardians are not a married couple. Marilla and Matthew are, in actuality, sister and brother, and neither of them has ever married. The two of them function as partners in the running of the farm and farmhouse, and seem quite content in their companionable living arrangement. As Virokannas (2011), in her thesis on "The Complex Anne-Grrrl: A Third Wave Feminist Re-reading of *Anne of Green Gables*," argues:

> Marilla and Matthew's relationship as siblings makes them in some ways more equal than a married couple.… [Marilla] can be seen as economically independent, not dependent on her brother's charity or in need of a husband. Moreover, being a capable woman with a strong will she can easily be seen as the dominating figure in the Green Gables household instead of the shy, quiet, withdrawn Matthew.… The Cuthberts' family structure, made up of siblings as adoptive parents, not husband and wife and the adopted child, lacks 'the dualistic family values of hierarchy and coercive authoritarian control' and is resistant to the patriarchal 'essential family form' i.e. the heterosexual, two-parent family, which is 'in conflict with feminist values.' (p. 20-22)

As we can see, the general premise of the novel offers many interesting teaching possibilities for a gender classroom: unconventional family structure; subversion of gender roles; gender socialization; and dissimilar valuing of boy/girl children. There are various ways that this text—and other children's literature classics such as *Little Women, Pippi Longstocking*, or *The Secret Garden*—could be utilized as a resource for critical reading in gender studies courses, and I propose that *Anne of Green Gables* has particular value in the way it positions and esteems the role of women in the running of the community, and in the way they "support, direct, and serve Anne as models throughout her life" (Berg, 1992, p. 160). In particular, I will focus on three single female characters from the book who play significant parts in Anne's moral, educational, and cultural upbringing: Marilla Cuthbert, Muriel Stacy, and Josephine Barry.

Miss Marilla Cuthbert

> *Marilla was a tall, thin woman, with angles and without curves; her dark hair showed some gray streaks and was always twisted up in a hard little knot behind with two wire hairpins stuck aggressively through it. She looked like a woman of narrow experience and rigid conscience, which she was; but there was a saving something about her mouth which, if it had been ever so slightly developed, might have been considered indicative of a sense of humour.* (Montgomery, 1942, p. 5)

Marilla Cuthbert is, certainly, the most important female role model as Anne's adoptive mother and guardian. Although she often comes across as stern, particularly in the earlier parts of the novel, there is little doubt that she falls quickly under Anne's spell and grows deeply proud and fond of her young protégé—not that she will often tell her so, however. We see evidence of this in her conversation with Matthew, after Anne's successful oration at the school concert:

> "Well now, I guess our Anne did as well as any of them," said Matthew proudly.
>
> "Yes, she did," admitted Marilla. "She's a bright child, Matthew. And she looked real nice, too. I've been kind of opposed to this concert scheme, but I suppose there's no real harm in it after all. Anyhow, I was proud of Anne tonight, although I'm not going to tell her so."
>
> "Well now, I was proud of her and I did tell her so 'fore she went upstairs," said Matthew. (Montgomery, 1942, p. 217)

Marilla's strict deportment, nevertheless, is not emblematic of a lack of caring or concern for her ward. In fact, Virokannas presents Marilla's style of parenting as feminist as she calls upon women in the community for guidance and advice in mothering Anne, a style of child rearing that welcomes "othermothers" (p. 22). Interestingly, other Avonlea women—such as Mrs. Lynde, Mrs. Allan, and Mrs. Barry—offer suggestions for mothering Anne, which Marilla adopts or ignores as she sees fit, but it is never implied that Marilla, as an unmarried woman, is less than capable of parenting Anne. As single mothers are frequently marginalized in society, this distinction seems noteworthy. Other examples of Marilla's feminist parenting are seen in her continued participation in activities she did prior to the adoption—evidence of a life of her own beyond the newly-acquired role of mother—and in her (and Matthew's) dedication to Anne's education:

> "When Matthew and I took you to bring up we resolved we would do the best we could for you and give you a good education. I believe in a girl being fitted to earn her own living whether she ever has to or not. You'll always have a home at green gables as long as Matthew and I are here, but nobody knows what is going to happen in this uncertain world, and it's just as well to be prepared." (p. 258)

As a guardian, respected community leader, and independent woman, Marilla provides an excellent example to Anne of what she can accomplish as a strong—and single—woman. Most importantly, she is able to provide Anne with what she wanted most in life—a home and a family.

Miss Muriel Stacy

> *She led her class to think and explore and discover for themselves and encouraged straying from the old beaten paths to a degree that quite shocked Mrs. Lynde and the school trustees, who viewed all innovations on established methods rather dubiously.* (Montgomery, 1942, p. 269)

Miss Stacy is another significant single woman in Anne's world. Although she is described as young and ladylike, her unmarried status seems to be of little concern to the community, and she is able to teach and inspire her students without any matchmaking interference from the Avonlea townspeople. Like

Marilla, Muriel Stacy is aware of the value and importance of education—for her female students as well as the males—and decides to create and run an advanced study course for Avonlea students planning to continue with their studies at Queen's Academy. Anne and six of her classmates join the "Queen's Class," but her best friend, Diana, is denied this experience as "her parents did not intend to send her to Queen's" (Montgomery, 1942, p. 259). The Barry family's decision to not enroll Diana in the course underscores the progressive view of the Cuthberts, as it would have been common in the early 1900's for young Prince Edward Island women to be directed towards marriage and domestic responsibilities rather than education or career training. However, as single women themselves, Marilla Cuthbert and Muriel Stacy would certainly recognize the value in acquiring a teaching certification.

The text itself can be exploited to draw out further commentary on feminist issues such as women and education or work. Anne's questions and comments on the world around her offer us interesting viewpoints on gender (in)equality, and give instructors various ways into teaching points for a gender class. Take, for instance, the following excerpt where Anne describes to Marilla her classmates' motivations for joining the Queen's Class:

> Jane and Ruby are just going to study to be teachers. That is the height of their ambition. Ruby says she will only teach for two years after she gets through, and then she intends to be married. Jane says she will devote her whole life to teaching, and never, never marry, because you are paid a salary for teaching, but a husband won't pay you anything, and growls if you ask for a share in the egg and butter money. (Montgomery, 1942, p. 244)

Thanks to Miss Stacy's thorough guidance and support, Anne passes the entrance exam at the top of the list. Muriel Stacy's influence on Anne's development as a scholar and as a young woman is profound—she helps her harness her remarkable imagination and sets her on a path that leads to her own successful teaching career.

Miss Josephine Barry

> *Miss Barry was a rather selfish old lady, if the truth must be told, and had never cared much for anybody but herself. She valued people only as they were of service to her or amused her. Anne had amused her, and consequently stood high in the old lady's good graces.... "I thought Marilla Cuthbert was an old fool when I heard she'd adopted a girl out of an orphan asylum," she said to herself, "but I guess she didn't make much of a mistake after all. If I'd a child like Anne in the house all the time I'd be a better and happier woman."* (Montgomery, 1942, p. 251)

The final strong, single woman that deserves consideration is Josephine Barry, the unmarried, elderly great-aunt of Anne's best friend, Diana Barry. While the reader's first impression of "Aunt Josephine" is one of a cantankerous old woman, it is quickly revealed that Miss Barry is another of Anne's "kindred spirits." Not only does she act as a cultural mentor to Anne and Diana when the girls visit her in Charlottetown—offering a glimpse into a world beyond that of rural Avonlea—Miss Barry eventually becomes Anne's benefactor when she leaves her one thousand dollars in her will (in the third novel, *Anne of the Island*). This inheritance makes it possible for Anne to continue her studies at Redmond College, acquiring the advanced training that would offer a young woman a career and financial independence.

Josephine Barry, although depicted as somewhat selfish and difficult, is not seen as pitiable or lacking as an unmarried woman—in fact, no accounting of her singleness is given in the novel. As it happens, within the *Anne of Green Gables* series, single female characters are seen in abundance, and rather than being portrayed as "cautionary tales" for young readers, their lives are presented as very satisfactory. Moreover, many *Anne* scholars note that the central relationships in most of the Anne stories are largely those between women, not between men and women, the more conventional heteronormative narrative that female readers tend to encounter (see Berg, 1992; Gay, 1992; and, Rothwell, 1999). As Gubar (2001, p. 53-54) writes:

> Numerous critics have noticed how insistently Montgomery stresses the importance of female community in her novels. Carol Gay, Gabriella Åhmansson, K. L. Poe, Eve Kornfeld, and Susan Jackson all note Montgomery's habit of setting up "matriarchal utopia[s]" in place of more traditional family configurations (Åhmansson 142). Offering, in Phillipa's words, "the fun of homemaking without the bother of a husband," havens like Patty's Place fleetingly fulfill Anne's childhood fantasy that she and her friend Diana "'will never marry but be nice old maids and live together forever'" (*Anne of the Island* 117), and the cheerful aunts, merry widows, and charming spinsters who inhabit Anne's world serve as role models for other young women interested in the allure of unmarried life (*Green Gables* 315-16).

Thus, Miss Barry's role as a cultural mentor and benefactor plays a significant role in Anne Shirley's life, and the reader is given yet another positive example of female singleness in Aunt Josephine Barry.

Concluding Thoughts

In this paper, I have presented a different "lens" through which we can read the classic Canadian novel, *Anne of Green Gables*. As this book holds great appeal to a Japanese readership, I would argue that it would be a welcome addition to many of our classroom settings in Japan. It is my hope that this type of study may open up possibilities for other educators interested in exploiting texts for critical readings of gender issues to pursue a re-visiting of other texts, too. Together, we may find that there are unlimited resources available to us that will helpfully bridge literary studies, gender studies, language studies, and many other fields of research.

References

Akamatsu, Y. (1999). Japanese readings of *Anne of Green Gables*. In I. Gammel & E. Epperly (Eds.) *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian culture* (pp. 201-212). Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press Incorporated.

Alcott, L. M. (1868). *Little women*. Boston, MA: Roberts Brothers.

Berg, T. (1992). *Anne of Green Gables*: A girl's reading. In M. Reimer (Ed.), *Such a simple little tale: Critical responses to L.M. Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables* (pp. 153-164). Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc.

Burnett, F. H. (1911). *The secret garden*. New York, NY: Frederick A. Stokes.

Gay, C. (1992). "Kindred Spirits" all: Green Gables revisited. In M. Reimer (Ed.), *Such a simple little tale: Critical responses to L.M. Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables* (pp. 101-108). Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc.

Gubar, M. (2001). "Where is the boy?": The pleasures of postponement in the Anne of Green Gables Series, *The Lion and The Unicorn*, *25*(1), pp. 47-69.

Kajihara, Y. (1999). An influential Anne in Japan. In K. McCabe & A. Heilbron (Eds.), *The Lucy Maud Montgomery Album* (pp. 432-438). Markham, Canada: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited.

Lindgren, A. (1954). *Pippi Longstocking*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Montgomery, L. M. (1942). *Anne of Green Gables*. Toronto, Canada: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited.

Rothwell, E. (1999). Knitting up the world: L.M. Montgomery and maternal feminism in Canada. In I. Gammel & E. Epperly (Eds.) *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture* (pp. 133-144). Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press Incorporated.

Virokannas, M. (2011). *The complex Anne-Grrrl: A third wave feminist re-reading of Anne of Green Gables*. Unpublished thesis (72 pages). School of Modern Languages and Translation Studies, University of Tampere, Finland.

Wilder, L. I. (1932-1971). *Little House Series* (Vols. 1-9) New York, NY: Harper & Brothers.

Author's Biography:

Kristie Collins teaches Gender and Literature at the University of Tsukuba where she is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Podcasting for Your Students: Why and How?

Samuel James Crofts
Meijo University
s.j.crofts@hotmail.co.uk

This article reviews the effectiveness of an English language podcast delivered as a non-compulsory listening resource at an international university in China. After a pilot survey showed that authentic spoken English resources were beyond the capability of many students, a weekly English language "talk show" podcast was created for the 14 weeks of an academic semester. The podcast was hosted by three speakers who designed the content to suit students' abilities and interests. To assess the popularity of the resource, download numbers were examined alongside 76 emails from listeners. Although the podcast saw an overall decline in popularity over the semester, positive feedback from a number of students suggested that this type of resource has considerable potential to attract students to listen to English in their free time.

本稿は、中国にある国際的な規模での大学において強制を強いることのない英語学習ツールの一つである"Podcast"を取り入れることの成功例について述べたものである。先行研究より、ネイティブの英語は多くの英語学習者の英語力では理解不能であるという結果がでていた。そこで筆者を含む3名のスピーカーが生徒のレベルや興味に応じて週ごとに内容を考え、英語の"トークショー"を作成し、大学の1学期間14週を通し、それらを配信し続けた。その結果、ダウンロード数や視聴者である学生から寄せられた76通ものメールにより、本教材は学生から受け入れられ人気のあるものだとわかった。残念ながら学期中を通して全体のダウンロード数は徐々に下降傾向となっていったが、数多くの学生からの肯定的な反応はpodcastのような教材が、時間のある時に「英語を聴こう」と生徒を引き付けることのできる可能性を多く秘めていることを示している。

Keywords: Podcasting, China EFL, EFL Listening, CALL

Introduction

A podcast is a series of audio or video files, often in an episodic format, that users can download and access in their own time, either online or on personal media players. Hammersley (2004) used the word for the first time in the UK's Guardian newspaper and since then the popularity of podcasting has increased exponentially, with podcasts now covering subjects as diverse as politics, sport, music, comedy and, of course, education. In terms of language education, the "Pod101" series perhaps best exemplifies the commercial potential of this format, starting in 2005 as a single website offering online Japanese classes, and developing by 2012 into a company offering courses in 22 languages and boasting over 100 million downloads (JapanesePod101, 2012). Aside from commercial language learning, podcasts have also been created specifically for and by single

Crofts, S. J. (2013) Podcasting for your students: Why and how? In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 55-60). Hiroshima: JALT.

institutions, for example Evans (2008) reports positive results from a study using podcasts to deliver revision material for classes at the University of London.

This paper looks at podcasting not as a commercial venture, nor as a way to deliver class content to students, but as a way to offer interesting and relevant English listening material to supplement students' academic study, and to encourage them to access English in their own time. Driven partly by Templer's (2008) call to allow students to master simple aspects of the language before asking them to climb the "Everest" of complex English, a weekly English language podcast was established at an international university in China and this study measures the ability of the podcast to attract enough listeners to justify the considerable effort put into its creation.

The opening sections of the article aim to answer the two questions posed in the title; looking first at the learning context of the students involved, and second by describing how the podcast was made. Following this, a small scale study tracking student interest in the project is presented and it is hoped that the results are of use to other educators considering using podcasts to deliver supplementary English material to their own language students.

Context: Why the Podcast was Created?

Lazzari's (2009) praise for the potential of podcasts in education highlights accessibility as a particular strength of the podcast format. Alongside this, a number of conditions at the host institution were influential in the decision to establish the podcast. The university in question is marketed as an international institution; where the first year of any degree consists of an intensive academic English course, and where English is used as a teaching medium across all degree courses. Strong links with a British university also allow students to study for years 3 and 4 of their degree in the UK. On the other hand, an almost complete absence of non-Chinese students at the university has given rise to a gap between the language experience provided in the classroom, and students' ability to access English outside the classroom.

A pilot questionnaire administered via the university's intranet to 87 First year students reflected

Apart from study, how much time do you spend on the internet listening to English (Online News/Radio/Sports commentary)?

Response	Average	Total
0 to 1 hours per week	57%	50
1 to 3 hours per week	24%	21
3 to 6 hours per	14%	12
More than 6 hours	5%	4

Figure 1. Time students spend on the internet listening to English

When you watch English language movies, do you use subtitles?

Response	Average	Total
Yes, English subtitles	34%	30
Yes, Chinese subtitles	62%	54
No	1%	1
I don't usually watch movies in English	2%	2

Figure 2. Students use of subtitles

this gap, with fifty-seven percent of respondents reporting that they used the internet to listen to English for less than one hour per week (Fig.1) and 96% of respondents reporting the use of subtitles when watching English language movies (Fig.2). The conclusion drawn from this pilot survey was that a large number of students either did not want to access, did not know how to access, or simply could not understand authentic English material enough to enjoy it. The podcast discussed in the paper was developed as a way to bridge that gap.

Delivery and Content: How the Podcast was Created?

Having decided to create a university podcast for students to access as an extracurricular resource, the most immediate concerns were; firstly, how the podcast should be delivered to students, and secondly, what it should contain. This section will look at each of these considerations in turn.

In terms of delivery, all material was hosted by the university's online Moodle-based learning environment (referred to hereon by its local name, "ICE"). Hart and Rush (2007) suggest that such learning environments are commonplace in universities across the world and although the precise details of how each one of these learning environments functions can vary, each generally provides an online space, often password protected, where students can access university material. In recognition of the differences between the learning environments provided by different institutions, discussion of online hosting will be kept to general terms.

Having decided to host the podcast on ICE (for convenience), the hosts were keen to avoid presenting the resource as a type of homework to be completed and instead encourage students to access the podcast voluntarily. With this in mind, an external website was created as an "access point" to the podcast. This website was hosted under the URL of the main university page and upon downloading the first episode; students were automatically directed to the ICE learning environment containing all the episodes. By selecting to listen to an episode, students became automatically subscribed to the podcast (meaning they had the ability to download further episodes), and were informed that they could unsubscribe at any point with an email to the hosts; it is worth noting however, that none of the eventual 869 subscribers elected to do this.

Podcast episodes were recorded weekly (with a gap in week 7 for reading week) and released online alongside a short email to subscribers alerting them to the fact that a new episode was live. Each episode was delivered in MP3 format, with listeners given the option of downloading or streaming online. In addition to this, a text transcription of each episode was provided as well as an interactive element in the form of a short comprehension quiz or an online survey related to that week's content. Whilst a rather tedious chore, it was felt that a text version of the podcast could be of use to students and so the decision was made to manually transcribe each episode, with duties shared between the three hosts. The technology behind delivering each podcast was very simple, with hosts recording each episode directly onto an MP3 player, and then using a simple editing program (www.free-sound-editor.com) to add sound effects and music to each episode.

In terms of content, Dörnyei's (2006) call for target language material which is interesting and relevant to learners' lives was particularly influential. The hosts were careful to talk about topics that students would be readily familiar with, such as their experiences of campus life in China or comments about the local area or local food. In referencing such local interest, the podcast contrasted with the types of listening resources available to students through their academic listening studies. Finally, the decision to record the podcast as a free conversation was taken as it enabled students to be involved in deciding the topics that were covered from week to week.

Hosted by a male British native speaker and two female non-native speakers (from Poland and China), the podcast exposed listeners to the different accents, personalities and international experiences of the hosts. Of a similar age and sharing the first language of the target audience, the Chinese host played a particularly important role in the podcast, acting as a positive role-model and person that students could identify with. The importance for learners of having a pronunciation role model from the same first language group as themselves has been highlighted by Jordan (2011), and it is argued that the Chinese host in this podcast fulfilled such a role.

Each episode of the podcast was essentially unscripted, giving students exposure to the type of mistakes, interruptions and false-starts that typify real life conversations. Special care was also taken to avoid the kinds of cultural references that can make authentic English conversations so problematic for L2 speakers. To this end, a Chinese a host of similar age to the target audience was particularly helpful. Initial subjects for discussion involved the hosts' reasons for coming to China and initial reactions to Suzhou life, customs and cuisine but as the series went on, students became more involved and specific requests for discussion topics arrived via email. These requests for discussion included cultural differences between America and the UK, how Asian pop music is received abroad, and most numerously, the love-lives of the three hosts.

The non-compulsory nature of the podcast meant that generating and maintaining interest among students was the biggest obstacle to a successful project. In an attempt to maintain interest levels therefore, the hosts gave students a number of ways to interact with the podcast. At the most basic level, an email account was set up for students to suggest future topics which resulted in at least one topic being suggested for each week of the project. Further methods of interaction included online polls for surveys announced each week by the hosts (the best food in Suzhou, the most popular of 3 songs included in the podcast etc.) as well as a number of student interviews which featured on certain episodes. An article was also written for the student magazine about the podcast, driven completely by students and conducted entirely in English.

Measuring the Success of the Podcast

The podcast project was evaluated in two ways; first by the degree to which students used the resource; and second by the reactions of students to what they heard. In quantitative terms, the number of students who downloaded various elements of each episode was gathered through tracking software built into the ICE learning environment. In qualitative terms, listeners' reactions to the podcast came through the analysis of a number of emails from listeners.

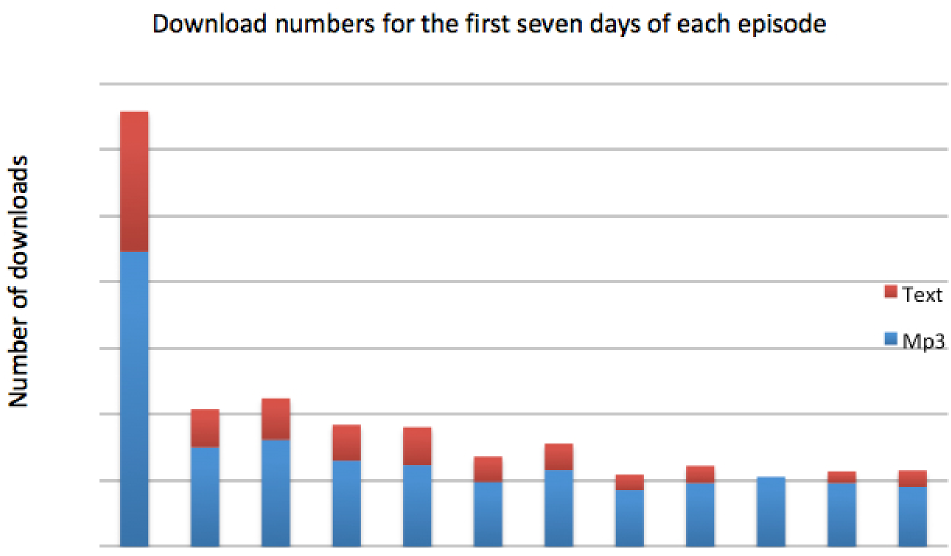


Figure 3. Download numbers for each episode

Results

With over 850 subscribers, over 6500 separate downloads and over 22000 ICE page "clicks" over the 14 weeks of the project, student uptake in the project was pleasing. In the opening weeks of the project especially, a number of positive emails from students and robust numbers of downloads showed enthusiasm among the student body for the project. As predicted however, the maintenance of such high levels of interest proved difficult with download numbers for the podcast decreasing steadily for each of the first 6 weeks of the project (Fig. 3).

Quantitative Data

Statistics recorded by ICE were used to create a graph showing download numbers for MP3 and text files in first seven days of each episode being online. The reason that these statistics are limited to seven days is that episodes continued to be available throughout the duration of the project, and therefore statistics regarding total download numbers could be misleading in terms of each episode's popularity, as higher download numbers for older episodes could be attributed not only to their popularity, but also to their being available for a longer period of time.

As can be seen in Figure 3, the first episode of the podcast recorded significantly higher levels of activity than subsequent episodes, which is suggested to be the result of the novelty of the resource and students' curiosity about the project. Following this, download numbers for the first seven days of each episode continued to steadily decrease until week 6 which saw an increase in download numbers for the first time since the start of the project. By the end of the 14 weeks of the semester, download numbers had stabilized to around 200 downloads per week.

Qualitative Data

The podcast email account received 76 emails from students in the 14 weeks of the project, all of which were of a positive nature. Feedback from listeners suggests that the hosts were able to provide English that was easy to understand yet authentic and entertaining with the relaxed and humorous nature of the podcast receiving specific commendation.

Alongside emails praising the podcast as a useful and interesting resource, a number of messages also suggested future topics for discussion on the podcast. Overall, the impression created by these emails is one of desire for access to light hearted and relaxed English, adding weight to the suggestion that it can be extremely difficult for students to source extra-curricular material which is both interesting and relevant to their lives, whilst also being at a suitable level for their listening ability.

Conclusion

I began this article by looking at the rise of podcasting as a way to deliver sound files to large numbers of listeners. The use of this medium in education was displayed in the commercial success of language learning podcast sites as well as the reported successes of the use of podcasts in tertiary institutions. The flexibility of the podcast format in terms of content, as well as the convenience of delivery convinced myself and two colleagues that podcasting had the potential to enhance the English language experience provided at an international university in China, offering authentic English resources that were both comprehensible and enjoyable.

Having considered the type of resource that ought to be produced, a weekly talk-show based podcast was created and a small-scale study assessing the success of the resource in terms of generating and maintaining interest among students was undertaken. Given the statistical data gained from the University's Moodle-based learning environment (ICE) alongside qualitative data gathered from emails received from listeners, the podcast was judged to be a success. With over 6500 downloads and with a continuous audience throughout the project, it is suggested that the audience reaction does indeed justify the creation of the resource. The ability of the hosts to provide interesting and relevant English and the ability of the podcast format to provide an efficient and flexible platform for students to access the material shows that such resources have considerable potential to enhance the language learning experience of university students.

Although the data presented here does not reveal exactly how students used the resource, it is suggested that such concerns are relatively unimportant. What is important is that the resource was used and students, it seems, were happy that the podcast was introduced. In terms of creating future seasons, the results presented in this paper provide enough evidence to justify the recording and releasing of subsequent podcasts. The maintenance of student interest and a consistent audience in what is a completely voluntary activity is, however, predicted to be a continuing issue of concern. It is hoped that the increasing bank of episodes will endure as an interesting, relevant and engaging resource for future cohorts of students, who can dip into the resource as they wish and access authentic and understandable English which has some real relevance to their own lives.

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank his fellow hosts, Aneta Kaczor and Yunyi Zhou for their continued effort, support and ideas in the recording of the 2012 XJTLU Podcast.

References

Dörnyei, Z. (2006). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Evans, C. (2008). The effectiveness of m-learning in the form of podcast revision lectures in higher education. *Computers & Education, 50*(2), 491–498.

Hammersley, B. (2004, February 12). Audible revolution. *The Guardian*.

Hart, M. & Rush, D. (2007). Open Source VLEs (moodle) and student engagement in a blended learning environment. In Remenyi, D. (ed.) (2007) *ICEL2007 2nd International Conference on E-Learning* (pp. 213–222).Reading, England: Academic Conferences Limited.

JapanesePod101. (2012). *Our story*. Retrieved on March 30th 2012 from http://www.japanesepod101.com/about-us/our-story.

Jordan, E. (2011). Japanese English pronunciation– issues of intelligibility, achievability and perception in the context of World Englishes. *Journal of English as an International Language*, *6*(1) 81-91.

Lazzari, M. (2009). Creative use of podcasting in higher education and its effect on competitive agency. *Computers & Education, 52*(1) 27-34.

Remenyi, D. (ed.) (2007) *ICEL 2007 2nd International conference on E-Learning.* Reading, England: Academic Conferences Limited.

Templer, B. (2008). "Let students master plain, simple English". *The China Post (Taiwan),* June 5th 2008. Retrieved on April 7th 2012 from http://www.chinapost.com.tw/commentary/letters/2008/06/05/159634/Let-students.htm.

Author's Biography:

Having recently returned to Japan after a year teaching at a Sino-British university in China, ***Samuel Crofts*** teaches at Meijo University in Nagoya. He is particularly interested in finding ways to improve students' engagement with English in their spare time

---

Metaprograms for Literacy Development and Critical Thinking

Brian Cullen
Nagoya Institute of Technology
cullen.brian@gmail.com

Avril Matsui-Haye
Nanzan University

Sarah Mulvey
Nanzan University

This paper presents the concept of metaprograms as a useful tool for exploring critical thinking skills and literacy development. Metaprograms can be defined as mental processes which manage, guide and direct other mental processes. The first four metaprograms are more commonly known as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a common personality assessment tool in schools and workplaces. This paper presents a comparison of data from the U.S. and Japan on the MBTI in order to highlight the differences in cognitive style between different cultures. This is followed by a practical activity showing how metaprograms are useful in examining and discussing people's cognitive and social strategies.

本稿はメタプログラムの概念をクリティカルシンキング(批判的思考)能力やリテラシーの開発に役立つ道具として紹介している。本稿におけるメタプログラムとは、心理プロセスを指令、誘導、指示する心理作用と定義する。最初の4つのメタプログラムは学校や企業において普及している性格検査、MBTI(Myers−Briggs Type Indicator)としてのほうがより広く知られている。本稿では異文化間の認識スタイルの違いを明らかにするために、アメリカ合衆国と日本のMBTIデータの比較を提示し、人の認識・社交的戦略を検証・議論するにあたってメタプログラムがいかに役立つかを例示する実践的アクティビティを紹介する。

Keywords: Critical thinking, literacy development, metaprograms, NLP

What are Metaprograms?

Metaprograms have their origins in Carl Jung's concepts of psychological types (Jung, 1953, 1971) and Myers-Briggs personality typing (Quenk, 2009), and they were later developed by the field of Neuro-Linguistic Programming into a comprehensive framework for identifying and utilizing over 60 personality characteristics (e.g. Hall, 2003). Metaprograms can be defined as mental processes which manage, guide and direct other mental processes. They may also be conceptualized as the underlying strategies which control our habits and cognitive thinking patterns, and they are useful in examining and discussing people's cognitive and social strategies. The first four of the metaprograms discussed in this article correspond to the traditional Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), which is widely used by schools and company personnel departments around the world as a 'personality test' or aide in helping people to find a suitable kind of work. The second half of this article briefly introduces three more metaprograms from NLP.

Cullen, B., Matsui-Haye, A., Mulvey, S. (2013). Metaprograms for literacy development and critical thinking. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 61-67). Hiroshima: JALT.

Table 1
The Myers Briggs Type Indicator

Type Indicator Parameters		Description	Standard Elicitation Question
Extrovert E	Introvert I	Attitude towards external world	"When it's time to recharge your batteries, do you prefer to be alone (Introvert) or with people (Extrovert)?"
Intuitor N	Sensor S	Internal process	"If you were going to study a certain subject, would you be more interested in the facts and their use now (Sensor) or would you be more interested in the ideas and relationships between the facts, and their applications in the future (iNtuitor)
Thinker T	Feeler F	Internal state	"Do you make decisions relying more on logic and reason (Thinker) or on personal values and feelings (Feeler)?"
Judger J	Perceiver P	Adaptive response	"If we're going to do a project together, would you prefer that it were outlined, planned, and orderly (Judger), or would you prefer if we were able to be more flexible in the project (Perceiver)?"

Myers Briggs Type Indicator

The full MBTI test usually involves about 90 forced-choice questions. The results of the test assign a person a four-letter indicator such as ENTJ or ISFP (see Table 1). There are sixteen possible combinations of MBTI. Information is widely available online. For example, the Personality Page website (2012) offers an enormous amount of descriptive information for each of the MBTI types which teachers and students may find useful. It includes succinct summaries which we have found useful in the classroom such as:

> **2. ISTP - The Mechanic**
> Quiet and reserved, interested in how and why things work. Excellent skills with mechanical things. Risk-takers who live for the moment. Usually interested in and talented at extreme sports. Uncomplicated in their desires. Loyal to their peers and to their internal value systems, but not overly concerned with respecting laws and rules if they get in the way of getting something done. Detached and analytical, they excel at finding solutions to practical problems.

The description above is just a summary, and each type can also be described in much greater detail. This type of information is routinely used by careers departments at schools and universities, or at human resource departments in companies to give advice to job-seekers or make personnel decisions. While there are dissenting voices about the overly widespread use of MBTI (e.g. Pittenger, 1993), there is considerable research indicating that it gives good insight into cognitive style (e.g. Lawrence & Martin, 2001). While the full test may give higher accuracy, James (1988) suggests that the concise elicitation questions shown in Table 1 can usually be considered equally effective.

Comparing Distributions in Japan and the US

As one indicator of the relevance of MBTI to

ISTJ 6.3% 12.5%	**ISFJ** 7.2% 11.5%	**INFJ** 7.4% 2%	**INTJ** 10.1% 3%
ISTP 8.8% 5%	**ISFP** 14.6% 7%	**INFP** 11.0% 4.5%	**INTP** 9.4% 4%
ESTP 0.9% 4.5%	**ESFP** 4.5% 6.5%	**ENFP** 11.1% 7%	**ENTP** 1.9% 3.5%
ESTJ 1.2% 10%	**ESFJ** 3% 11%	**ENFJ** 4.6% 3.5%	**ENTJ** 3.1% 3.5%

Figure 1. Comparison in MBTI between Japan and US

critical thinking and literacy styles, we carried out an international comparison of the MBTI in two countries. Figure 1 provides a comparison between MBTI distribution in the United States and Japan. We have compiled this data from two sources. The U.S. data is drawn from the Center for Applications of Psychological Types (2012a). This research institute offers data on the distribution of the MBTI types in the United States drawn from "more than a million records from people who have taken the Indicator" (Center for Applications of Psychological Types, 2012b) The data for Japan is drawn from the Sociarc website which offers user-generated data on the distribution of MBTI in Japan. This is a popular site and the sample size was almost 136,000 people when the page was retrieved in July 2012.

While variations exist between different data sources, and the MBTI can even vary for a person from one testing to another, there are very clear and strong differences between the overall figures when comparing Japan and the United States. For each MBTI type, the figure for Japan is shown on top and the US below.

While a full analysis of this data is beyond the scope of this paper, some of the more obvious differences that can be highlighted include:

- 50% of people in the U.S. are classified as Introvert. In Japan, this leaps to 75%. This is a very significant difference and some researchers including Bouchard and Hur (1998) suggest a genetic basis to these differences.
- In Japan, the number of Intuitors (59%) is twice that of the U.S. (31%). Conversely, the U.S. has a much higher percentage of Sensors. In the EFL classroom, this suggests that Japanese students are likely to want to learn the big picture before they learn the details.
- 63% of people in Japan are classified as Feeler, compared to 53% in the U.S. This emphasizes the importance of positive affect in EFL in the Japanese context.

These significant differences between the U.S. and Japan are very useful in beginning to understand how the critical thinking styles of our students can differ greatly from Western norms.

Three More Metaprograms

The standard four distinctions of the MBTI have been expanded, especially by Hall (2003) and others in the field of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP).

Table 2
Three Additional Metaprograms

Type Indicator Parameters		Description	Standard Elicitation Question	Sample Answer
Towards	**Away**	**Direction of motivation**: A person will usually talk either about what they positively want (Towards) or what they don't want (Away).	"What do you want in a job?"	Towards: "I want to get job satisfaction and a high salary." Away: "I don't want to be working overtime."
External	**Internal**	**Frame of reference for success**: A person will usually judge success based on either Internal or External criteria.	"How do you know when you've done a good job in learning something?"	External: "Because my teacher tells me that I've done well, or I get a good score in a test." Internal: "I just feel inside that I have really learned it well."
Matcher	**Mismatcher**	**Relationship**: A person will either describe similarities (Matcher) or differences (Mismatcher).	"What is the relationship between what you were doing last year and what you are doing this year?"	Matcher: "It's pretty much the same. I'm a student – learning the same kind of stuff." Mismatcher: "Our subjects are completely different and I'm learning all new things."

Hall expanded the number to more than 50, but most of these are not commonly used, and only three additional metaprograms have been given below which illustrate how metaprograms can be useful in exploring critical thinking and literacy skills.

Using Metaprograms for EFL

These metaprograms can be utilized in EFL in many ways, one of the most obvious being to help our students to develop and apply critical thinking and literacy skills to the comprehension of texts. The metaprograms can be introduced by having students elicit each other's MBTI in pairs or groups using the standard elicitation questions. This can also be done kinesthetically as a fun whole-class activity by having students move to one side of the classroom or the other depending on their forced choice for each of the metaprogram elicitation questions.

The development of reader awareness and writing for a specific audience can be greatly facilitated by using the concept of metaprograms. The appendix shows a sample activity for use in a business communication class. One sequence of tasks that can be used is shown below:

1. Have students become familiar with the seven metaprograms by asking the elicitation questions in pairs or groups.
2. Have the students analyse the target

metaprogram combination of the sales letter (see Appendix). Discuss the results to ensure that they have understood the distinctions correctly.

3. Ask students to decide a product that they would like to sell. It can be a real or imaginary product. They can even be 'selling' themselves in a job interview.
4. For homework, have them prepare a sales presentation (or a letter if the course focus is on writing). Their sales presentation should deliberately target one combination of seven metaprograms in a similar way to the sales letter that they have already analyzed.
5. The following week, have the students give their presentations and analyse the target of the sales presentations that they hear.

Drawbacks or Potential Pitfalls

The MBTI and additional NLP metaprograms could easily be used to assign labels to people and to place them into little boxes of one personality type or another, but this misses the primary point that metaprograms are strategies that we run within ourselves, just like any other strategy, and that we can potentially change them. A big component of critical thinking skills is the ability to take multiple perspectives on an issue and to consider the pertinent points from each perspective. The metaprograms are all best considered as a continuum running from one extreme to another. Each extreme can be useful in certain circumstances. For example, when considering a major change in your life, it is useful to consider the negative points as well as the positive ones, and when the "Towards" person (who wants to move towards goals) begins to realize that the "Away" strategy (moving away from problems) can also be a powerful tool, each can begin to incorporate that strategy at the most appropriate times. Rather than being caught in little boxes, awareness and growing flexibility in moving between metaprograms allows us to gain the benefits of every position.

Conclusions

We have found the MBTI and other metaprograms from NLP to be of great value in helping our students to develop literacy fluency and critical thinking skills. The comparison between data from the U.S. and Japan illustrates just how deeply thinking styles can vary between cultures. When we begin to notice these differences and help students to do so, too, we have taken a big step towards helping our students to adopt the most appropriate critical thinking strategies for any situation.

References

Center for Applications of Psychological Types (2012a). *History and Mission*. Retrieved from http://www.capt.org/about-capt/history-mission.htm.

Center for Applications of Psychological Types (2012b). *Estimated Frequencies of the Types in the United States Population*. Retrieved from http://www.capt.org/mbti-assessment/estimated-frequencies.htm.

Sociarc (2012). 性格テスト【私家訳版】. Retrieved from http://www5.big.or.jp/~seraph/zero/mbti.cgi?mode=analyze on July 1, 2012.

Bouchard, Jr., T. J., & Hur, Y.M. (1998), Genetic and environmental influences on the continuous scales of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator: An analysis based on twins reared apart. *Journal of Personality*, *66*. 135–149. doi: 10.1111/1467-6494.00006

Hall, L. M. (2003). *Figuring out people: Design engineering with meta-programs* (1st ed.). Williston, VT: Crown House Pub.

James, T., & Woodsmall, W. (1988). *Time line therapy and the basis of personality.* Capitola, CA.: Meta Pubs.

Jung, C. G. (1971). *Psychological types.* Bollingen series. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Jung, C. G., Read, H., Fordham, M., & Adler, G. (1953). *The collected works of C. G. Jung*. Bollingen series. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Lawrence, G., & Martin, C. (2001). *Building people, building programs*. Gainesville, FL: Center for Applications of Psychological Type Inc.

Mathison, P. T. a. J. (n.d.). *Neuro-linguistic programming: Its potential for learning and teaching in formal education*. Retrieved from: http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003319.htm.

Personality Page (2012). *Portrait of an ISP*. Retrieved from http://www.personalitypage.com/ISTP.html

Pittenger, D. J. (1993). Measuring the MBTI and coming up short. *Journal of Career Planning & Placement*, Fall.

Quenk, N. L. (2009). *Essentials of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment* (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Author's Biography:

Brian Cullen is an associate professor at Nagoya Institute of Technology. His main research interests are in L2 creativity, neuro-linguistic programming, and materials development.

Avril Matsui-Haye is a lecturer at Nanzan University. Her research interests include gender awareness and university language education.

Sarah Mulvey is a lecturer at Nanzan University. Her research interests include gender awareness, materials development, and learner autonomy.

Appendix - Sample Reading/Writing Activity

This letter has been written carefully to match the seven metaprograms of a potential customer called John. Identify the correct metaprogram from each of these seven pairs.

To help you get started, consider the first paragraph. Do you think that John is an Intuitor or a Sensor?

Extrovert / Introvert

Matcher / Mismatcher

Intuitor / Sensor

Towards / Away

Thinker / Feeler

External / Internal

Judger / Perceiver

Dear John,

I am writing today to tell you about a great training opportunity that could change your whole business – not just a few little things, but the way that you look at everything.

Our training seminar is set up so that you have the chance to interact and learn from other people. Group learning is powerful and can help you to energize yourself with the knowledge and expertise of others.

When you think logically about this offer, I am sure that you will come to the conclusion that this will really help your business. Each step of the training is rationally planned to help you make the changes required for higher sales.

We have also attached a full schedule for the training program which breaks down the activities hour by hour to give you a complete picture of what you will be learning.

When you think about what you were doing last year, do you really want to be doing the same thing next year? We are sure that you would much prefer to be doing something new – to be really increasing your sales rapidly.

This training seminar will help you to move towards your goals easily and quickly.

You know that others around you may doubt the value of yet another training program, but when you consider your own values, you will realize that it is your own decision and that you can take that decision yourself regardless of external criticism.

Sincerely,

Abe Michaels

Academic Science Texts and Popular Science Texts: Differences and Similarities

Stuart Cunningham
Kwansei Gakuin University
stuart71cunningham@yahoo.co.uk

Paul Leeming
Kwansei Gakuin University
paulleeming@yahoo.com

This paper considers popular science texts and academic science texts and focuses on differences between the two kinds of text. After considering the different purposes of the texts, three different linguistic features are presented which highlight the differences between the two genres.

本稿は、ポピュラーサイエンス・テキスト（一般向け科学書）およびアカデミックサイエンス・テキスト（学術的科学書）を取り上げ、2種類のテキストの相違点に焦点を当てる。これらのテキストのそれぞれに異なる目的について考察した後、2つのジャンルの違いを明確に示す言語学的特徴を3点提示する。

Keywords: popular science, academic science, English for Specific Purposes

Background

The question that led to this research was first asked by the authors when we began teaching science majors at a university in Japan. One of the authors had a background in chemistry, having completed chemistry to the level of Master's Degree (as well as a Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics), whereas, the other author had followed an entirely Humanities-based path to his Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics. Having started a new teaching position at the same time it seemed only natural that a discussion arose as to how best to approach teaching English for scientific purposes. In the course of this discussion it became apparent that our background was having a distinct influence on our approach to investigating and therefore typifying and categorizing the key language points needed in the classroom. Having different academic backgrounds meant one of us was accessing academic science textbooks (*academic science* in this paper will refer to textbooks used in university undergraduate courses) whilst one of us was accessing popular science books (the term *popular science* will be used to refer to books that are written by scientists, or science journalists, for a general audience with no background in the sciences). Furthermore, having talked to a number of other teachers throughout Japan in similar situations, we discovered the dilemma we faced was not unique to ourselves but rather more widespread. This led us to ask the question, "Are these two approaches equally valid for teaching English for Scientific Purposes?" This paper will briefly detail how we came to conclude that the answer was a resounding "No". After outlining the difference of purpose of each approach, the paper briefly examines the main linguistic differences. Finally, the strengths of each approach will be discussed so as to aid teachers who need to choose one of the two approaches.

Cunningham, S., & Leeming, P. (2013). Academic science texts and popular science texts: Differences and similarities. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 68-72). Hiroshima: JALT.

Texts: Audience and Purpose

The audience for popular science is the general public, and no specialized or prior knowledge of science is assumed. People buy the texts from a general interest in the subject, and based on reviews of the books by journalist writing for newspapers. This is evident from the "blurb" on the back of the books, which quote popular newspapers glowing reviews of the texts. For this reason, the author must make the book appealing and accessible to as wide an audience as possible in order to ensure sales, and subsequent writing contracts with publishers.

The textbooks that we examined were written for undergraduate level students and presupposed a basic familiarity with the subject. Students usually have little or no say in selecting such texts, which are chosen by the teacher and are considered compulsory texts for the students taking the given course. For this reason, the author appeals not to the direct audience for the book, i.e. the students, but to the professor using the book. This means that the text must be informative, and contain the information considered necessary to pass the course, and issues such as interest and ease of use for the reader may often be secondary. The texts often have no reviews on the cover, and are generally considerably more expensive than their popular science equivalents. Furthermore, textbooks represent a particular stage in the development of the reader, which permits the textbook writer to have a fairly accurate idea of what category of individual will best represent the idealized reader.

The clear difference in audience and purpose for the texts outlined here is an important consideration when one begins to examine the language used and the manner in which information is presented. Popular science represents a description of the content, which must be both educational and entertaining. The dense language of academic science (see below for a detailed discussion) may make any text inaccessible to general readers. Furthermore, popular science can sometimes diverge in content from academic science, "when the desire to entertain and generate controversy pushes into the deep background any intent to communicate sound, verifiable information" (Doherty, 2005). This highlights a difference of purpose between academic and popular science. A scientist is perhaps unlikely to read a book designed to explain scientific concepts to a lay audience. Science textbooks on the other hand will be scrutinized by experts in the field who will expect complete accuracy. Of course, the fact that some popular science texts are written by leading scientists will make it likely that such texts are both entertaining and scientifically accurate, yet this need not be the case for every popular science text.

Methodology

When attempting to identify key linguistic features of academic science texts the authors first turned to Halliday (1998), Halliday and Martin (1993), and Martin and Veel (1998). Three features appeared pivotal to academic science texts: nominalization, lexical density, and graphical representations. The authors proceeded to compare academic science texts with popular science texts in these three areas in order to establish whether or not popular science could be seen as representative of academic science in its linguistic content.

When investigating how popular science texts compared with academic counterparts we sampled from three areas; biology, physics and chemistry. It is important to point out that this does not represent our belief that these are the only subjects that can be called "science", but rather that we felt these three areas represented the least controversial choices as representatives of science. We sampled a popular science text on genetics (Collins, 2010), this particular book was chosen because we knew the author was a well-respected figure in genetics (he had been the head of the Human Genome Research Project), and therefore, having published widely in academic science would therefore be capable of incorporating into his writing the features he utilizes when writing academic science. This was compared with an undergraduate textbook on genetics (Watson et al., 1987). In physics we sampled a best seller (Greene, 2000), again written by an academic expert in his field (string theory). This was compared with a textbook (Becker et al., 2006). Finally, in chemistry we compared a popular science text with an academic science text written by the same author. Cambridge

University chemist Peter Atkins wrote both the popular text *The Periodic Kingdom* (1995) and the academic text *Physical Chemistry* (1978). Regarding the size of the sampled text, 2000 words was chosen as the sample size as Biber (1993) suggests that 1000 words can be sufficient size to gain representativeness of a texts, however, less frequent grammatical features may require a larger sample size. A sample size of larger than 2000 words did not appear to have any noticeable impact on the results and therefore it was concluded that 2000 words represented the saturation point.

Results

Nominalization

Nominalization is representing a process as a noun, e.g. *declare* (verb) would be represented as *declaration* (noun). The sentence; *"When the minister declared war on tax avoidance it was met with applause"* would become; *"The minister's declaration of war on tax avoidance was met with applause"*. Even the most cursory of glances over an undergraduate science textbook will reveal the importance of nominalization, which, given the importance of processes in science, should come as no surprise. Yet, what we were primarily interested in was not merely three important features in academic science but in discovering how the use of these features in popular science compared with academic science. What we discovered was that in a sample size of 2000 words, the academic texts were using between 90 to 114 instances of nominalization. This was in stark contrast to the popular texts, which were using 49 to 51instances of nominalization per 2000 words. Clearly nominalization is of greater importance to the academic texts than the popular texts.

Lexical Density

The second feature of academic science texts we compared with popular science texts was lexical density (content words/total number of words*100). The academic science texts had a lexical density of between 71% and 76% whereas the popular science texts had a lexical density of between 52% and 55%. The much greater density of the academic texts when compared to the popular texts suggests that if a student is learning English for Scientific Purposes then popular science texts are not exposing the students to the type of language being used in academic science texts. This also helps to explain why scientific texts can be hard to access by a general audience as they contain large amounts of information with relatively little textual redundancy.

Graphical Representation

The third feature of academic science texts compared with popular science texts was graphical representations. Unlike the humanities, academic scientific texts use very little redundancy between what is described graphically and what is described textually. The multiple semiotic nature of scientific writing is jointly co-constructed through graphics and the written word. What is represented as a graphic (e.g. a figure, table, graph, illustration) in academic science texts (see Lemke 1998 for a detailed account) is not explained in the text, unlike the humanities style of writing. Instead, the graphic is deemed self-explanatory, and is usually simply referred to by way of explanation. Furthermore the academic science texts displayed a much higher ratio of graphics per page than their popular science counterparts. The academic science texts averaged 2.3 graphics per page in comparison with the popular science texts, which averaged 0.2 graphics per page. This clearly displays a major difference between the two types of text.

Discussion

In the three linguistic features discussed, the undergraduate science textbooks selected displayed a very pronounced difference from the popular science texts. This would appear to suggest that when teaching English for Scientific Purposes it would be of limited benefit to draw classroom materials from popular science texts. Given that the three linguistic features are so important to academic science and so relatively under-utilized by popular science it may seem hard to make any case for using popular science texts for students studying English for Scientific Purposes. However, the simple fact is that the level of the students is as much a matter for consideration as the kind of materials to be used in the classroom. The dense nature of the language of academic science makes it inaccessible to many students, whereas the language used in popular science is more accessible. The teacher is faced with a choice; on the one hand, the language of academic science is more challenging but more authentic for students of English for Scientific Purposes, but on the other hand the language of popular science is less challenging, but less authentic for students of English for Scientific Purposes. Ultimately, the teacher must reach a conclusion that balances their knowledge of the materials and the students. It may be of benefit to lower level students to progress from popular science texts to academic science texts, or to use popular science texts with academic science texts.

Conclusion

Coming from two contrasting academic backgrounds, the authors of this paper were initially unaware of the differences between academic and popular science texts that seemed to cover the same content, and merely offered different paths towards the same goal. Academic science texts and popular science texts service different audiences and therefore serve different purposes. These different purposes require a different linguistic functionality that has given rise to very different linguistic features. The linguistic features examined (nominalization, lexical density and graphical representation) are central to authentic academic science texts and, at best, peripheral to popular science texts. The teacher of English for Scientific Purposes may be faced with choosing between more authentic, less appropriate texts, or less authentic, more appropriate texts, or compromising by incorporating the two text types into the course materials. The findings of this paper can aid the teacher in making this decision. The most important thing is that teachers are aware of the differences between the two kinds of texts and are able to make decisions as to their respective appropriacy in a given context. In the end, it is a choice that requires the judgment of an informed teacher.

References

Atkins, P. (1995). *The periodic kingdom: A journey into the land of the chemical elements*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Atkins, P. W. (1978). *Physical chemistry.* Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Becker, K., Becker, M., & Schwarz, J. H. (2006). String theory and M-theory. A modern introduction. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Biber, D. (1993). Representativeness in corpus design. *Literary and Linguistic Computing, Vol. 8*, No. 4, 1993.

Collins, F. S. (2010). *The language of life: DNA and the revolution in personalized medicine.* New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

Doherty, P. (2005). *The beginner's guide to winning The Nobel Prize.* Carlton, Australia: Melbourne University Publishing Limited.

Greene, B. (2000). *The elegant universe*. London: Vintage.

Halliday, M. A. K. & Martin, J. R. (1993). *Writing science. Literacy and discursive power.* London, England: Falmer.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1998). *The language of science*. London, England: Continuum.

Lemke, J. (1998). Multiplying meaning: Visual and verbal semiotics in scientific text. In J. R. Martin & R. Veel (Eds.), *Reading science: Critical and functional perspectives on discourses of science* (pp. 87-115). New York, NY: Routledge.

Martin, J. & Veel, R. (Eds), *Reading science: Critical and functional perspectives on discourses of science.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Watson, J. D., Hopkins, N. H., Roberts, J. W., Stetz, J. A., & Weiner, A. M. (1987). *Molecular biology of the gene*. San Francisco, CA: Benjamin Cummings.

Author's Biography:

Stuart Cunningham teaches English at Kwansei Gakuin University, School of Science and Technology. His interests include Conversation Analysis and English for Specific Purposes.

Paul Leeming teaches English at Kwansei Gakuin University, School of Science and Technology. His interests include group dynamics, leadership and English for Specific Purposes.

Working Together: Using Tasks to Teach Reading and Writing

Loran Anna-Marie Edwards
Kansai Gaidai University
loranedwards@me.com

Working together: communicative reading and writing (Edwards, 2011) is a course book that uses task-based activities to teach both reading and writing skills through a cooperative learning approach. In writing this book, the author had several goals. These included that the tasks and activities be easy for both the students and the teacher to use; there be enough material for an entire course without the need to supplement with outside materials; the students be presented with some concrete reading and writing tools that would help them develop their language skills; and that the activities be fun. This paper will examine how these goals were met through a look at the course components included in the book, and the language learning philosophies that went into its creation.

本稿はコーポラティブ　ラーニングアプローチによるタスクベースのアクティビティを使用したコースブックであるワーキングトゥギャザー　リーディング及びライティングコミュニケーション(Edwards，　2011)に焦点をあてリーディングおよびライティングスキルを紹介する。本著は以下の目標を掲げている　内容が学生や講師に分かりやすいタスクやアクティビティである、本教材では十分な量のアクティビティを供給している、言語能力の向上のために具体的なリーディングとライティングの教材をを紹介する、そして楽しいアクティビティを紹介する。本稿ではこれらの目標を達成するにいたったコース構成要素や言語学習フィロソフィーを説明する。

Keywords: reading and writing, task-based, cooperative learning, communicative

Introduction

Many EFL and ESL programs around the world offer courses such as Reading and Writing I or Intermediate Reading and Writing, but it is often difficult to find one textbook that not only presents students with both reading and writing study tools, but also provides adequate practice in both areas. As an EFL teacher in Japan, I have often had to make tough choices between choosing a writing textbook and supplementing with outside reading materials, and choosing a reading textbook and preparing my own writing handouts. Another challenge I have faced is finding activities that both engage the students and provide them with opportunities to work with their peers in order to communicate about what they are learning. Especially in EFL environments, where students have few chances to use English outside the classroom, it is important to provide opportunities

Edwards, L. A. (2013). Working together: Using tasks to teach reading and writing. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 73-78). Hiroshima: JALT.

to maximize its use in the classroom (Nation, 2003). With these two challenges in mind, I designed and wrote *Working Together: Communicative Reading and Writing* (*Working Together*), which uses task-based activities to teach both reading and writing skills through a cooperative learning approach (Edwards, 2011).

As the title implies, each chapter of *Working Together* presents students with a variety of both reading and writing tasks based on similar themes so that students can build on activities and skills learned in preceding chapters. However, the title also indicates that students will be asked to work *together* with their classmates in order to complete assignments. This makes the classroom atmosphere enjoyable for students and the pair work helps them to understand and retain information longer. But how is this collaboration achieved? This paper will first present the writer's goals for the book and outline the course components and tasks presented in *Working Together*. It will then examine the language-learning philosophies that went into its development along with a discussion of how the author's goals for the book were met.

Goals for the Book

When I first began writing this textbook, I had several clear goals for the final product. First, one of the main reasons for writing this textbook was that I wanted to provide teachers with enough material for an entire course without having to supplement with outside materials. However, I also did not want the book to be too long; most textbooks are 12 to 15 chapters long, but teachers often find themselves only using a small percentage of these. This sometimes leaves students feeling dissatisfied with the course and the use of materials.

Also, it was important that the book teach both reading and writing equally. I wanted students to be presented with tools for both writing and reading and have opportunities to use these tools multiple times throughout the course. I also wanted the book to be user friendly; both for the teacher and for the students. It was important that the amount of information presented on one page be limited so that there would be space for students to complete the tasks in the book. It was also important that tasks and activities be repeated so that students could use information gained in previous lessons.

Finally, in my experience with Japanese students, their reasons for studying English are often more for social reasons than for academic ones. Therefore, in order to cater to the interests of the students without sacrificing the academics, the topics and tasks in *Working Together* had to be carefully designed to be academically challenging as well as fun and engaging.

Course Components

Working Together is a complete course book designed primarily for EFL students in Japan, but could also be used by students in other countries or in an ESL environment as well. It has been written for students at an intermediate level, but has also been successfully used with more advanced students.

Many other reading and writing textbooks offer between 10 and 12 chapters however, as a teacher, I find that I can only teach four or five in a semester. Therefore, *Working Together* has been divided into just five chapters of three units each. If teachers follow the recommended course schedule, this will provide teachers with approximately 26 90-minute lessons; enough material to cover an entire course with a few extra class periods for quizzes, a final test, make-up work, etc. Also, because there is not too much material, students have the opportunity to really learn the methods being taught. The first chapter is an introductory chapter that presents students with some specific reading and writing tools. Chapters two through five are skill-building chapters that incorporate a variety of tasks in order for students to use and improve upon the skills gained in Chapter One.

Chapter One

Chapter One is an introductory chapter that helps teachers create a positive atmosphere in the classroom and introduces the skills to be used throughout the rest of the course. Unit One is an introductory unit that contains several group development and classroom language activities. These are designed as simple tasks to help the students speak English as much as possible in the classroom and build a strong working relationship with their teacher and classmates.

In Unit Two, students learn and practice a four-step writing process, which includes Pre-Writing, First Draft, Peer-Editing and Final Draft, that they will then use to complete writing tasks in chapters two through five. Students are encouraged to use the language-learning tools gained in Unit One, such as working with a partner and using English as much as possible, while they complete Unit Two. Also, as with Unit One, the activities begin simply and follow a step-by-step format with each step utilizing the preceding information so that students can use knowledge previously acquired in order to complete new tasks.

Chapter One concludes with Unit Three, which introduces students to a reading process. As with Unit Two, it progresses through several steps and provides students with some concrete reading tools that they can use throughout the rest of the book. The main readings in *Working Together* are essays, and this unit teaches students how to read for main ideas and write an outline of the essay in order to help with comprehension. It then teaches them how to use this outline to write a summary of the essay.

Because this is an introductory chapter in which students are learning skills to be used later, it should take a little longer to complete than the rest of the chapters. It is recommended that the teacher plan to use one to two class periods for Unit One, two to three class periods for Unit Two and one class period for Unit Three.

Chapters Two – Five

The rest of the chapters in the book build on the skills gained in chapter one and provide students with three writing tasks and two reading tasks in each chapter. There is also a supplemental quiz for each chapter in the teacher's manual that corresponds to the main essays. These four chapters all follow the same format:

1st unit: Paragraph Writing [two class periods]

1st class period: Pre-writing activities, First draft

2nd class period: Peer-editing and Final draft

2nd unit: Essay Reading [two class periods]

1st class period: Pre-reading activities, Vocabulary study

2nd class period: Read the Essay, Summary writing

3rd unit: Creative Reading & Writing [one class period]

The focus of these chapters is to help students become more confident in their reading and writing ability through a focus on meaning rather than form. The most important element in meaning-focused teaching, according to Willis (2007), is that students have opportunities to act autonomously and decide for themselves what language items to focus on. It is important to allow them freedom to explore their own ideas and find unique ways to express these ideas in English. Therefore, there are no activities in *Working* Together that focus directly on grammar and usage and, although model sentences are provided in the teacher's manual, it is important to allow for student variety and usage mistakes, as long as the mistakes do not hinder meaning.

Language-Learning Philosophies Employed

In order to meet all of the goals for *Working Together*, several language-learning philosophies have been integrated into the final production of the book.

Task-Based Learning

In task-based learning, students use language to achieve a specific outcome; the task is the primary focus of the classroom. The task should reflect real life and the focus is on meaning rather than on form (Bowen, n.d.). In each unit of *Working Together* students are asked to complete one task, which follows a task-based sequence of preparation, task completion and report (Willis, 2007).

In the first unit of chapters two through five, for example, students are asked to complete an Interview Paragraph. To begin, students free-write about the topic, brainstorm interview questions with their partner and then complete a detailed interview about their partner's experiences. After writing a first draft, they then work with the same partner to improve and correct the first draft using peer-editing before writing a final draft that will be evaluated by the teacher.

The second unit of each chapter is an Essay Reading activity. Again students are asked to complete a task sequence with their partner. They begin with several pre-reading activities, which includes vocabulary study. They then proceed to the main task of reading the essay together with a partner and identify the main ideas of the essay through the completion of a reading outline. They complete the sequence by using their outline to write a summary paragraph in their own words that shows they have understood the reading.

In all of these tasks, there is no specific focus on grammar. In the interview task, the idea is that students are working with their partner to combine the language skills they already have in order to understand each other and negotiate meaning while talking about their lives and experiences. In the reading task, the focus is on comprehending the main ideas without having to understand the language on a sentence level.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning principles and techniques, which are tools that teachers use in order to encourage cooperation and active participation of all students in pairs or small groups, has been around for a long time (Jacobs & Hall, 2002). According to Stahl (1994), there are several essential requirements to cooperative learning including: equal opportunity for success by all students; positive social interaction in which students have to work together to complete the task; face-to face interaction and individual accountability. In an EFL setting, researchers propose that there are several advantages to employing cooperative learning techniques. One is that it helps to create a more relaxed atmosphere, which in turn leads to increased speaking by students. Cooperative learning techniques also facilitate discussions in which students are negotiating meaning and receiving increased amounts of comprehensible input (Jacobs & Hall, 2002).

In *Working Together* every activity and task has been designed with the idea that students can complete them in pairs. This leads to improved communication skills and better understanding through collaboration. For example, the third unit in chapters two through five is a creative reading and writing activity. Students are asked to read the first part of a story taken from the Cengage Learning graded reader series. After completing some comprehension activities, they then work together with their partner to write their own ending. This type of task naturally leads to large amounts of negotiation between the two students as well as with the teacher; students often don't know how to express what they want to say in English, which leads them to ask the teacher for help. As Willis (2007) points out, this type of activity, where the student controls what language to focus on, promotes real learning because the students are using and focusing on language that they are ready for and everyone in the class can be learning at different levels at the same time.

Students are also encouraged to work with many different partners throughout the course. Each unit in each chapter, although related to the other units, is a separate task. This gives the teacher the opportunity to change pairings frequently. In this way, students become comfortable communicating with a variety of partners. However, although students work together to gather information and perform the task, in most cases the final paragraph is written individually, so that there is individual accountability and assessment. In this way, students do not feel frustration or anxiety that their grade is tied to their partner's performance.

Repetition and Recycling

The idea that in order to learn a language well there must be a lot of repetition and reuse of that language is one of the most basic principles of language teaching. This idea can also be applied to the acquisition of skills; if certain types of activities are presented several times, students will be able to solidify their understanding and use of the skills being developed. Another goal for *Working Together* was that students would be presented with some very concrete tools for improving both their reading and writing skills and then be given multiple chances to reuse this information in order to gain proficiency as well as confidence in their language usage. By the end of the course, it is hoped that the skills gained will be solidified for the students and they can then apply them to other courses and language-learning experiences.

In order to accomplish this, it was important that only a few activity types be included in the book and that they be repeated many times. This allows students to learn just once how to do a certain type of task or activity and then the rest of the course can be used to practice those skills with new vocabulary and content. That is, the instruments of instruction stay the same while only the language changes. With this in mind, chapter one is devoted to teaching students the main task-types used in the book and provides them with some concrete reading and writing tools, including paragraph writing, reading for main ideas and summary writing. This information is then used throughout the rest of the book, giving students many opportunities to practice and build their skills.

This type of task repetition and focus on skill-building not only helps the students gain confidence in their language learning ability, but it is easy for both teacher and students to see growth throughout the course of the semester. Also, since a task only has to be taught once, after the initial instruction period is over, the teacher is free to help individual students at their own pace and level. Since much of class time is devoted to students working together with a partner to complete a task, the teacher is able to move amongst the students and provide one-on-one instruction, which makes possible the student-generated focus on language and genuine learning that Willis finds so beneficial (Willis, 2007).

English Only

One of the hot debates in the EFL world is whether or not English-only policies are beneficial or not. I believe that establishing a classroom environment where students are encouraged to use only English is a highly beneficial way for them to increase their language skills. Therefore, *Working Together* has been written so that teachers have the option of employing an English-only policy in the classroom if they wish.

I like to think of the first few days of class as L+1/4 rather than L + 1; for many students the idea of speaking and working only in English is intimidating and even scary. They do not believe they can do it. Therefore, to successfully implement this type of instruction, it is important to begin very slowly in order to gain students' trust and also to show them that they are capable of doing it. The biggest hurdle is not the student's lack of ability but their lack of self-confidence. Therefore, the activities in the book begin very simply so that students can utilize language skills they already have and can focus on using that language without worrying about gaining new skills right away. Once the students have gained some confidence in their own ability, they are introduced to some simple tools that can help them use English only. Finally, they begin to learn the reading and writing skills the book is based on, but very slowly and simply, using the English-only tools already established in a manner that makes it easy for the students to be successful.

Conclusion

I have been using *Working Together* in my university classes for the past year, but I have been using the tasks and activities it is based on for a long time. Through my own observations, informal feedback surveys of the students and official class evaluations, I believe that I have successfully created a reading and writing textbook that meets all of the original goals. The tasks and activities are easy for both the students and the teacher to use so that real learning can take place; there is enough material for an entire course so there is no need to supplement with outside materials; the students are able to learn some concrete reading and writing tools that help them build and develop their language; and the activities are fun. As a teacher, I want to be able to look out at my students and see them laughing and enjoying themselves while they are learning because I know that this will increase their focus on the task and will help them retain the skills gained. I feel my greatest success has been in finding topics and tasks that the students enjoy; it makes their learning experience more meaningful and that in turn makes my job meaningful.

References

Bowen, T. (n.d.). Teaching approaches: task-based learning. *Onestopenglish.com,* Macmillan Publishers Ltd. Retrieved from http://www.onestopenglish.com/support/methodology/teaching-approaches/teaching-approaches-task-based-learning/146502.article

Edwards, L. (2011). *Working together: Communicative reading and writing.* Tokyo, Japan: Cengage Learning.

Jacobs, G. M., & Hall, S. (2002). Implementing cooperative learning. In J. C. Richards & W. A. Renandya (Eds.), *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice* (pp. 52-58). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Nation, P. (2003, June). The role of the first language in foreign language learning. *Asian EFL Journal: English Langauge Teaching and Research Articles, vol. 5*, article 1. Retrieved from http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/june_2003_PN.php

Stahl, R. J. (1994). The essential elements of cooperative learning in the classroom. Bloomington: ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED370881)

Willis, D. (2007). *Accuracy, fluency and autonomous learning: A three way distinction.* Retrieved on July 8, 2012, from http://www.willis-elt.co.uk/books.html

---

Author's Biography:

Loran Anna-Marie Edwards currently teaches at Kansai Gaidai University. She recently published her first textbook, *Working Together: Communicative Reading and Writing* with Cengage Learning.

Model United Nations in the ESOL Classroom

Tom Fast
Okayama Gakugeikan High School
International Center
tom@gakugeikan.ed.jp

Nothing stimulates high school students' learning like the Model United Nations (MUN). It challenges them to role play UN delegates from other countries, exercises their English (through research, writing, presenting, questioning, and debating) and promotes critical/creative thinking skills to attempt to resolve the most difficult issues of our day. This paper explains what the MUN is and discusses how the author prepared Okayama Gakugeikan High School students for the annual Kansai High School Model United Nations in Kyoto. It describes how the MUN fosters global literacy and features comments from former students about its impact on their education and future career paths.

本稿では模擬国連について紹介する。実際、模擬国連ほど、高校生の学習意欲を刺激する活動はない。模擬国連は、生徒たちに、他国の国連代表としてのロールプレイに挑戦させ、英語の学習（調査、作文、発表、質疑、ディベート）を行ない、今日もっとも困難とされる問題の解決策を考えることを通じて、批評的で創造的な思考法を向上させる。そこで、本稿では、模擬国連とは何か、そして筆者が、毎年京都で開催される「関西高校生模擬国連大会」に岡山学芸館高校の生徒を参加させるためにどのような準備を行ったかを論じ、模擬国連がどのようにグローバルリテラシーを育て、卒業生たちの教育と将来の進路に与えた影響を述べる。

Keywords: Model United Nations, 4 Skills, Content-based Instruction, Creative/Critical Thinking, Global Issues

Introduction

The Model United Nations (MUN) first came to the author's attention ten years ago, while teaching in the United States. After some years in Japan, attending a large number of speech contests, the author began looking for more practical and rewarding extracurricular opportunities. Once aware that the Model United Nations was taking place in Japan, a group of third year English Course students was sent as part of Okayama Gakugeikan High School's Super English Language High School (SELHi) project. Over the last six years the MUN has blossomed into one of the pillars of Gakugeikan's English program.

Description of the MUN

The Model United Nations (MUN) is a simulation of the real UN in which students play the role of diplomats discussing solutions for urgent

Fast, T. (2013). Model United Nations in the ESOL Classroom. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 79-85). Hiroshima: JALT.

problems of the day. The MUN is as old as the United Nations itself (Muldoon, 1995). Over time the MUN has spread around the world and is now conducted by over 400,000 middle school, high school and university students (UN Headquarters, 2012).

The Kansai High School Model United Nations (KHSMUN) is 22 years old. It is held each June at the Kyoto International Conference Center, where important agreements like the 1997 Kyoto Protocol were enacted. The conference is in English but is intended for non-native speakers, so content and procedures have been simplified somewhat. Students discuss two topics. This year's topics were child soldiers and child labor. Past topics include food security, water, and climate change.

The MUN is becoming increasingly recognized as a valuable learning experience. This year the number of students in attendance at KHSMUN increased from 200 to over 300. Participating schools included Kyoto Gaidai Nishi (the host), Ritsumeikan, Sangyou University High School, Senzoku Gakuen, Nada High School, Wakayama Hidaka, Osaka YMCA, Kansai Soka, Kansai International, Senri International, Nishiyamato Gakuen and Okayama Gakugeikan.

Kansai MUN Schedule

The following is the three-day schedule for the Kansai MUN.

Day 1: After a welcome ceremony, students break into regional blocs (Africa, Asia, Americas, etc.) to discuss assigned subtopics, (e.g., rehabilitating reintegrating child soldiers, defining acceptable working conditions for child labor). In the morning students present their opinions in English. In the afternoon, they have the option of using Japanese if necessary, but at the end of the day a written resolution must be produced in English and contain "clauses" or ideas to address the issues. Teachers create the preamble statements of the resolutions in order to guide discussions (Appendix A).

Days 2 and 3: The students are divided into general assemblies consisting of approximately 100 delegates in separate conference rooms. Students engage in three forms of debate. "Formal Debate" is when the students deliver prepared speeches and introduce draft resolutions. "Informal Debate" is a moderated question and answer session. "Caucusing" is where the students are free to speak to each other informally. Japanese is allowed only during caucus time.

MUN Preparation

Each school has its own approach to prepare for the MUN. Some start preparing months in advance, others may dedicate only a few weeks, depending on available time and the ability of their students, whose English levels range from intermediate to near native. Below is an outline of how the third year English Course students at Okayama Gakugeikan were prepared:

Step 1: MUN lessons start in April and are held four hours per week. The students form groups of two or three, select a nation to represent, and prepare PowerPoint presentations introducing their countries.

Step 2: Students research and present on various aspects of the United Nations in order to understand what it is and what it does. Students also learn common phrases and vocabulary used during the MUN.

Step 3: Students begin researching the two assigned topics. Students are provided with general content language integrated learning (CLIL) materials. Students are required to seek out their own country's specific information as well. As a final assessment, the students produce a short position paper to be read at the MUN and two clauses which students share on the KHSMUN BBS with students from the same regional blocs.

Step 4: Conduct an MUN practice run in class before heading to Kyoto.

MUN and ESOL

The MUN utilizes all four skills of English over the course of the project. Students read prepared materials, skim official documents, and scan websites. Students write position papers, and draft and edit resolutions. Radio stories and films on the

Table 1
Student Evaluations of MUN.

	Very positive	somewhat positive	somewhat negative	very negative
Overall Impression	62.5%	31.25%	6.25%	0
Has it helped your Speaking?	43.75%	31.25%	12.5%	12.5%
Writing?	25%	37.5%	25%	12.5%
Reading?	43.75%	31.25%	6.25%	18.75%
Listening?	56.25%	12.5%	18.75%	12.5%
Grammar?	6.25%	43.755	37.5%	12.5%
Has it helped you prepare for university?	43.75%	43.75%	12.5%	0
Has it helped you in other ways?	62.5%	25%	12.5%	0

topics are also utilized for listening activities during preparation. In addition, students spend a significant amount of time listening to other delegates during the convention. Regarding speaking, students have opportunities to deliver speeches as well as participate in impromptu discussions and debates.

MUN and Global Literacy

"Think global, act local" is one possible definition for global literacy. MUN students learn to "think global" by researching world issues. After the MUN, the students at Gakugeikan High School reflect on the topics from a local perspective. Last year, after studying food security from the perspectives of other nations, students considered food issues that affect Japan, for example the fact that Japan produces less than 40% of its own food domestically (2010, Japan Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries) and eats 10% of the world's fish caught annually (Hayes, 2009). Students then tried to "act local" by proposing projects like supporting local farmers via farm internships for students and creating sustainable sushi menus for local sushi shops to combat overfishing (Appendix B).

Student Reflections

Every year students' opinions on the MUN experience are collected on a one page survey. Questions on the overall experience, whether or not it helped their English, was useful for university entrance, etc. are accompanied by this 2 centimeter scale: ☹____________☺. Students draw a vertical line to indicate where their feelings lie on the scale. When tallying the results, the scale is divided into equal fourths. Marks within five millimeters of the ☺ are considered very positive, and five millimeters of the ☹ very negative. Marks within five millimeters of the middle on either side are considered somewhat positive or negative.

This year's results were typical: 15 out of 16 reported having a very positive or somewhat positive experience. Only one reported having a somewhat negative experience. Students also reported positive impacts on their English skills. Table 1 indicates how students answered other questions on the survey:

As can be seen, the student reactions were overwhelmingly positive (very positive or somewhat positive) for all questions.

Former students were also contacted and reported the following:

"I was amazed to meet all the Kansai students. Their English skills definitely motivated me to study harder." (Okayama University student)

"It was really interesting to learn about a country that I didn't know before (Cuba), but it was really really hard! I also learned about other teams' countries and their problems. It told me a lot about the character of each country!" (Kwansei Gakuin University student)

"The topic we discussed (climate change) does help my current study in university. I still remember learning about "carbon foot print" and "Kyoto Protocol." It was a great experience to learn world-wide issues IN ENGLISH." (International Christian University student)

"Through MUN I discovered what I want to study in university. Now I belong to CITYNET Youth Japan. We are preparing workshops, study tours, etc. And we just finished a discussion workshop with National University of Singapore. Next I'll join TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on African Development). And this August, I'm volunteering in Vietnam for 3 weeks." (Yokohama City University student)

"As a block leader, I could acquire leadership skills. In fact, I've played the role of leader in many events after MUN." (International Christian University student)

"I now understand the hardness of making an agreement with ALL countries in the MUN. This also applies to other meetings (committees, work, etc). Compromise is NOT EASY." (Akita International University)

"MUN is not only MUN. I guess what we experienced there will help us through our whole life." (Bowling Green University student)

Conclusion

Kansai MUN is one of a growing number of events in and outside Japan for adventurous students who are eager to communicate in English. It should be noted that students need not be high level speakers. Japanese students are desired at international events because their attendance is low compared to other Asian participants. For the past two years, the author has taken small groups to WEMUN Beijing, the largest MUN in Asia. The author's students were the only Japanese out of 3000 participants from around the world. Teachers interested in the MUN and similar events should encourage their schools to join the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (UNESCO ASP-NET). In return their schools will get access to interesting and collaborative international contests, projects, and events.

The value of the MUN is clear in terms of critical thinking skills, improvement of English abilities, and awareness of global issues, and current events, but it also shows itself in sometimes unusual ways. Gakugeikan English Course graduates often go on to study abroad in places like England, the USA, and Australia, but recent graduates have been choosing more unexpected locales: Sweden, Malta, South Africa, and Morocco—countries the students may not have considered prior to their MUN experience. When students join the Gakugeikan English Course, many dream of being flight attendants. After participating in the MUN, aspirations often change to international diplomat or volunteer. MUN widens students' perspective of the world.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank all involved in the Kansai Model United Nations and acknowledge the hard work of the staff of Kyoto Gaidai Nishi High School, who organize the event each year. Also a special thanks to Okayama Binan Rotary for their annual sponsorship.

References

Hayes, J. (2009). *Commercial fishing in Japan: Fishing industry, overfishing, fish farms, fisherman and giant jellyfish*. Retrieved on July 26th 2012, from http://factsanddetails.com/japan.php?itemid=937&catid=24&subcatid=159

Kyoto Gaidai Nishi High School. (2012). *Kansai High School Model United Nations*. Retrieved from http://www.khsmun.com

Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries. (2010). *FY2010 Annual report on food, agriculture and rural areas in Japan (Summary).* Retrieved from http://www.maff.go.jp/e/annual_report/2010/index.html

Muldoon, J. P. (1995). The Model United Nations revisited. *Simulation & Gaming*, *26* (March), pp. 27-35.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2012). *UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network*. Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/networks/global-networks/aspnet/

United Nations. (2012). Model UNHeadquarters FAQs. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/modelun/faq.html

WELAND. (2012). WEMUN Expo. Retrieved from http://www.welandedu.com/front

Author's Biography:

Tom Fast is Director of the International Center at Okayama Gakugeikan High School where he teaches English and International Understanding.

Appendix A: MUN Resolution

Below is an abridged Kansai High School Model United Nations Resolution. The preambles (underlined statements at the top) were prepared by the teachers to guide student discussion. The high level English is a result of the combined efforts of the student committees. Teachers edited the text for language problems that might impede debate.

KHSMUN Commission B

Agenda:	The Rights of the Child
Topic 2:	Child Labour
Issue 3:	Defining Acceptable Conditions for Child Work
Author:	Latin America and the Caribbean Bloc

The General Assembly,

Deeply disturbed that one third of the world's children live in countries that haven't ratified ILO convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour and convention 138 on minimum age for work,

Understanding that families are often dependent on their children's income for survival,

Recognizing that there are cultural differences in how "child" is defined and how children's roles are understood,

Strongly believing that all children need to be educated for their future and to break the cycle of poverty,

1. **Recommends** that all governments sign the International Labour Organizations Convention #182;

2. **Recommends** that all governments set the minimum age for child work by 2015;

3. **Requires** all governments to make employers submit information about work performed by children to the government in order to get permission for employment;

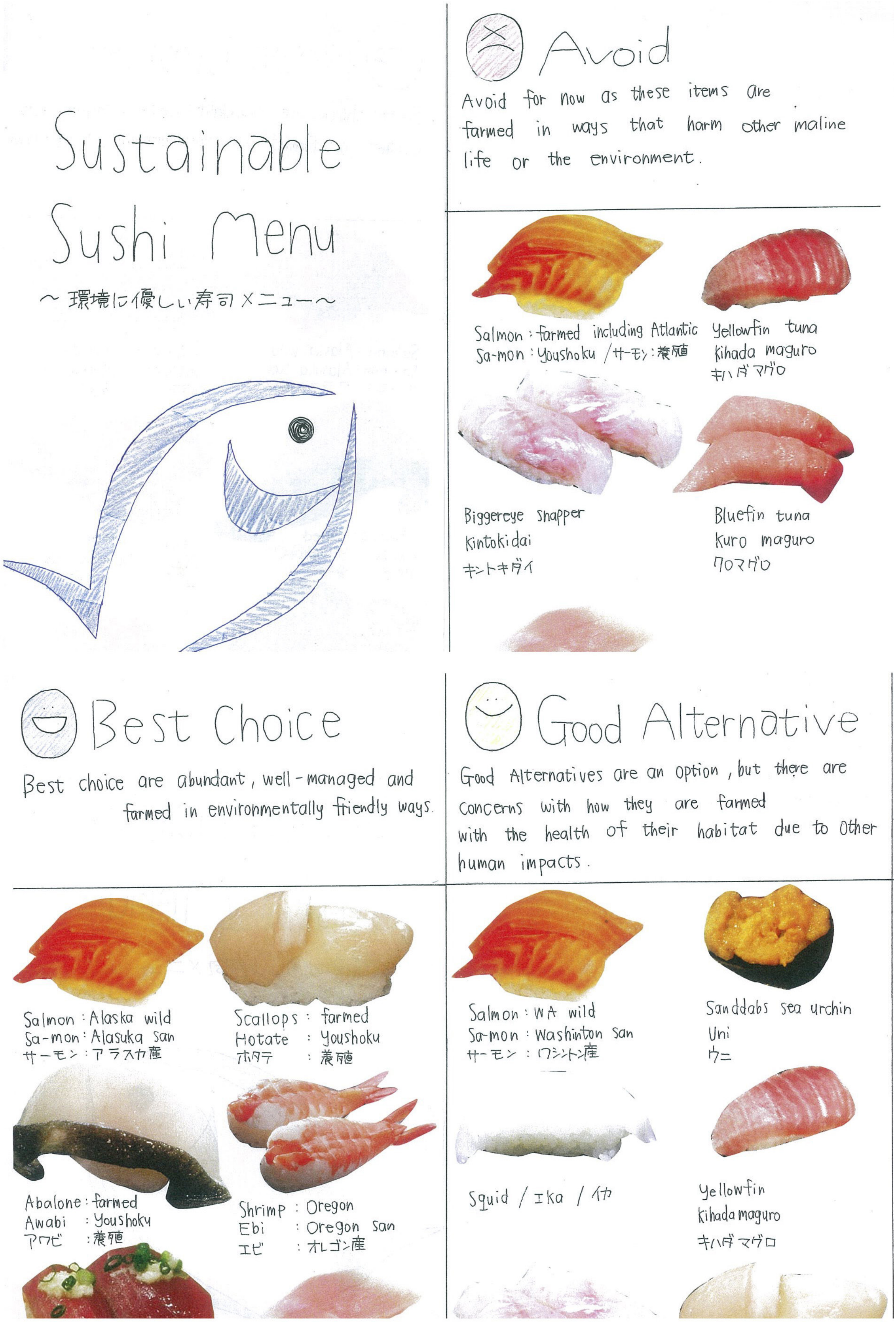
4. **Insists** that local monitoring groups trained by the United Nations staff work to end debt bondage by 2020 in countries where there are child labour problems;

5. **Demands** random safety checks in the manufacturing industry be carried out by United Nations staff in countries which have not signed and ratified ILO Convention #182;

6. **Requests** that all governments that have children who have not finished compulsory education restrict these children from working more than 4 hours a day, and restrict all children from working more than 8 hours a day;

7. **Recommends** all countries to establish vocational schools for parents and children in order to allow them to earn a living without their children working;

Appendix B: Sample of Students' "Act Local" Projects



From Praise to Critique in Offering Peer Feedback on Writing

Mayumi Fujioka
Kinki University
School of Pharmacy
mfujioka42@hotmail.com

This paper reviews relevant literature on pragmatics related to feedback and offers suggestions for second language (L2) English learners to learn to produce pragmatically appropriate oral and written feedback in English for peers' writing. Based on the notion of "from praise to critique" as a preferred mode of L1 English written feedback (e.g., Hyland & Hyland, 2001) and a linguistic politeness strategy (Bell & Youmans, 2006), this paper introduces the expected structure of feedback and important discourse markers (e.g., positive comments followed by *however*), as well as the use of certain hedge phrases (e.g., *a little*, *could*, *might*) in oral and written feedback in English. The paper concludes with pedagogical implications and teaching suggestions in order to assist L2 English learners in adopting effective and pragmatically appropriate peer feedback in English.

本稿では、フィードバックについての先行研究にもとづき、第2言語(L2)英語学習者が英語で仲間（ピア）のライティングについて、口頭または文章による語用論的に適切なフィードバックができるよう提言をする。具体的には英語のライティングによるフィードバックで求められる形（e.g., Hyland & Hyland, 2001）、および言語ポライトネスストラテジー（Bell & Youmans, 2006）についての研究からの「ほめから批評へ」という概念にもとづき、英語において口頭および文章で求められるフィードバックの形式、特徴的な談話マーカー（例：肯定的なコメントの後にhoweverが来る）、およびヘッジ表現（e.g., a little, could, might）の使用を紹介する。最後に、これらの先行研究をもとに、L2英語学習者が効果的でかつ語用論的に適切なピアフィードバックを英語で遂行できるよう、教育的示唆と教授への提言をする。

Keywords: feedback, pragmatics, oral and written feedback, peer response

Introduction

Offering constructive and tactful oral and written feedback can be difficult in one's first language (L1), let alone in a second language (L2). Nevertheless, with increasing attention to peer feedback as an instructional practice in the L2 writing classroom (see Liu & Hansen, 2002; Hyland & Hyland, 2006, for comprehensive reviews of L2 studies on peer response), L2 English learners who engage in peer response activities on writing may be required to offer peer feedback in English, which could be a daunting

Fujioka, M. (2013). From praise to critique in offering peer feedback on writing. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 86-91). Hiroshima: JALT.

task for them. Drawing on necessarily limited language resources, these L2 English learners may be too direct in their criticisms compared to their L1 English counterparts, or they may use inappropriate phrases such as *must* or *should* in offering feedback (Nguyen & Basturkmen, 2010). L2 learners' difficulty in offering appropriate feedback in English is attributable to fundamental issues of L2 pragmatics that learners lack knowledge of and exposure to the target pragmatic structure. Focusing on offering peer feedback on writing, this study identifies difficulties for L2 English learners offering feedback in English and provides suggestions to help them learn to offer effective peer feedback.

Feedback can be investigated through specific speech acts (see Fujioka, 2005, for the speech act of suggestion in peer response activities). However, feedback is a complicated discursive practice that is more than a collection of multiple speech acts (see Nguyen & Basturkmen, 2010, for advice-giving and other language issues in constructive critical feedback). Thus, this article addresses larger issues of offering oral and written feedback on writing in English, that is, the overall structure of feedback, as well as specific linguistic phrases and speech acts employed in feedback. The paper consists of three main sections: first, background literature on the structure of oral and written feedback on English writing is introduced. Next, pedagogical implications for L2 English learners in learning to offer feedback in English are discussed from a pragmatic point of view. Finally, a summary of sample activities is presented in order to demonstrate how L2 English learners can learn to adopt effective and pragmatically appropriate feedback to help improve their peers' writing.

Structure of Feedback on Writing in English

Written Feedback

The identification of the expected structure of written feedback in English in this paper is based on two studies on teacher written feedback: Smith (1997), who focused on L1 English university teaching assistants' and teachers' comments on L1 English college students' writing, and Hyland and Hyland (2001), which is about L1 English teachers' written comments on L2 English students' writing. Both of these studies made detailed text analyses of teacher written comments and they share similar findings. Smith, analyzing a large sample of comments, found a general pattern which begins with positive comments, moves to negative comments and coaching (suggestions) and ends with either coaching or positive comments. Speculating on reasons for teachers' initial praise comments, she points out that teachers relate to students' general anxiety about having their writing judged, or they wish to support students' motivation with initial praise. Hyland and Hyland, in their analysis of comments by two teachers on the multiple written assignments of six English as a Second Language (ESL) students, also found "praise-criticism-suggestion" (2001, p. 196) to be the most common pattern, pointing out that initial praise comments served as a mitigation strategy for teachers to maintain or develop positive relationships with their students.

In addition to the overall praise-negative comment-suggestion feedback structure, the two studies revealed linguistic patterns commonly used in teacher written comments. Those patterns include the use of such phrases as *however, but, although, while,* to signal the turning point between positive and negative comments (Smith, 1997). Moreover, teachers use various hedges to mitigate the impact of their comments, including such phrases as *some, a little, seemed, wonder,* and *could* (Hyland & Hyland, 2001).

Oral Feedback

Bell and Youmans (2006), referring to the findings of these two studies of teachers' written feedback, commented that the pattern of praise statements before negative comments is an important teacher response strategy in oral as well as written feedback. They analyzed this comment pattern in oral discourse by using a well-known framework of linguistic politeness developed by Brown and Levinson (1987, as cited in Bell & Youmans, 2006). Bell and Youmans, observing tutoring sessions between L1 English tutors and L1 and L2 English tutees in a US writing center, summarize that tutors' use of praise statements at the beginning of sessions is attributable to their desire to create rapport and common ground for discussion with their tutees. According to linguistic politeness theory, such behavior among tutors is explained by the concept of *positive politeness.* Bell and Youmans also note the same patterns of discourse markers and phrases in their oral feedback of L1 English tutors as those identified in other studies (Smith, 1997; Hyland & Hyland, 2001), including signaling positive to negative comments with such phrases as *however* or *although*, and the use of various mitigating phrases to tone down the critique statement (e.g., *kind of, maybe,* and *might want to*).

Previous Studies and Pragmatics

The findings from the three studies introduced above are relevant to pragmatics in two ways. First, the structure of initial praise, evaluations, and suggestions in both oral and written feedback by tutors and teachers can be considered to be *sociopragmatics* (a cultural aspect of pragmatics) in that it is a preferred way of communicating feedback among L1 English teachers. Second, it represents *pragmalinguistics* (a linguistic aspect of pragmatics) in that L1 teachers and tutors use certain discourse markers to indicate the turn from positive to negative statements, and various mitigating phrases to soften the impact of the negative comments or suggestions. Although these findings suggest that L2 English learners can learn to make similar comments in English on their peers' writing, there are some issues that need to be considered. Thus, the next section introduces some of these issues and discusses pedagogical implications of them.

Pedagogical Implications

To teach L2 English students to provide effective feedback on peers' writing, it seems necessary to promote both their receptive and productive skills. Promoting students' receptive skills is important in terms of sociopragmatics because, while the pattern of starting with praise and moving to negative comments and suggestions (hereafter from praise to critique) is a practice to which US-educated students are acculturated, it may be unfamiliar to learners from other cultures (Bell & Youmans, 2006; Smith, 1997). Based on their observations of writing center tutoring, Bell and Youmans point out that some L2 English students get confused over tutors' switching from positive to negative comments and need to be familiarized with this discourse pattern at the receptive level.

Another area of difficulty for L2 learners is the ritualized aspect of initial praise comments. Some L2 students have difficulty understanding the "politeness gesture" (Bell & Youmans, 2006, p. 40) in tutor comments as they take the praise at the face value. Thus, L2 English students need to be introduced to this praise to critique pattern of comment and helped to understand the intricacies of the role of initial praise statements.

The previous studies also indicate that students may understand but not necessarily appreciate the role of praise comments they perceive as only ritualistic. Smith (1997) and Hyland and Hyland (2001) share the view that ritual positive openings, if considered insincere, can diminish their effectiveness. Thus, an important pedagogical implication here is that students need to be assisted in understanding the roles of initial praise as well as learning to make sincere praise comments in their peer feedback.

Another important pedagogical implication from the previous studies is the need for students to learn how various English mitigating phrases are used in critiques. Hyland and Hyland (2001) point out that L1 English teachers' use of various hedges to tone down the impact of their negative comments or suggestions through indirect phrases may result in serious misunderstandings. For example, one student misunderstood her teacher's hedged criticism and suggestion "*the conclusion may be a bit abrupt – you could re-state some of the main points*" (Hyland & Hyland, 2001, p. 205), interpreting it as the teacher's criticism of her stance stated in the conclusion, and consequently did not restate the main points as suggested. Regarding the use of hedges, Hyland and Hyland also note that indirectness may be counter-productive to the teacher's goal in conveying important points.

In another study focusing on the use of hedges, Bankier (2012) found that Japanese learners of English had trouble understanding the hedged expressions heavily loaded in English passages. L2 English learners are instead likely to benefit from explicit instruction on various hedges in English and their intended meanings, such as *you could* or *you might want to* as a friendly suggestion. After they have developed the receptive skills to understand hedges used in teacher comments, students need to develop the productive skills to use common hedging phrases in their own peer feedback. Equally important, students need instruction on phrases they should avoid, including *you must/have to/had better*, as research indicates that L2 English learners tend to be overly direct in their advice-offering (e.g., Houck & Fujimori, 2010).

Lessons on from Praise to Critique Structure

Based on the pedagogical implications from the previous studies, two 60 to 90-minute lessons in which L2 English students learn the receptive and productive skills to offer pragmatically appropriate peer feedback in English are summarized in this section (see Fujioka, 2012a, for details of the lesson plans). The target population is university level students with intermediate or advanced level of English proficiency. One focused on receptive skills and the other on productive skills. The lessons are intended for Japanese learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), which is the group I teach, but they can be applied to ESL students as well as other EFL populations with necessary modifications. In order for the following lessons to succeed, students need prior training in understanding how effective writing in English works, including how to write the following: clear thesis statements, topic sentences with supporting details, and conclusions that are connected with the introduction.

Part 1: Receptive Skills

As a brainstorming activity, students read two teacher-prepared written comments on a student's writing: one with only negative comments and the other with initial praise statements and a critique (pointing out areas for improvements and specific suggestions). They are asked to share their feelings in pairs, groups, or entire-class discussion, about the two kinds of comments. They are most likely to agree that receiving only negative comments is discouraging or demotivating.

After having students reflect on the two sample comments, the teacher explains that in English from the praise to critique structure is a preferred way of communicating feedback on others' work. Although technical information about the linguistic politeness theory may not be necessary, the teacher can share his/her perspectives in explaining why this is the preferred mode of offering feedback such as the wish to alleviate students' anxiety about having their works judged, the goal of building rapport with students, and support of students' motivation to further revise by initially acknowledging strong points and giving concrete suggestions for further improvement in the end. The teacher can then point out that this feedback rationale applies to students' making comments on their peers' writing as well.

The lesson on receptive skills ends with exercises on linguistic analysis of the structure of feedback. In the sample comment with praise and critique, students are asked to point out what phrase is used to signal the move from the praise comments to areas for improvements (e.g., *however*) and are also introduced to other phrases with the same function (e.g., *although, but, while*) with sample sentences. Then, students are asked to point out in the sample comment what modals are used to show suggestions (e.g., *you could/might*), which are contrasted with modals that imply commands (e.g., *you should/have to/must*). If necessary, the teacher explicitly explains the illocutionary forces of those modals in that *could* and *might* leave the decision to the hearer and thus convey friendly suggestions, while *should, have to,* and *must* convey rules and obligations, which are not appropriate for making suggestions.

Part 2: Productive Skills

As a bridge between the lessons on receptive and productive skills, students engage in a brainstorming activity of putting scrambled pieces of written comments in the right order from a praise opening, comments on areas for improvements, and suggestions. After the brainstorming, students engage in critiquing a sample student essay that the teacher has prepared. First, they are asked to evaluate how well each of the specific elements of the sample essay has been accomplished (e.g., clear thesis statement, clear topic sentence in each paragraph, detailed supporting evidence). Students are asked not only to check *Yes* or *No* on specific items (e.g., *Is the thesis statement clear?*) but also to generate reasons for their chosen answers.

Based on their evaluations, students engage in writing a comment. Since writing a detailed comment with the expected structure of praise and critique may be difficult, students can engage in sentence completion exercises. For example, for initial praise statements, they are asked to complete a sentence such as *I like your introduction because....* By adding specifics to their praise statements, the problem of initial praise sounding insincere may be avoided. Next, students are presented possible sentences to show a move from the initial praise to pointing out areas of problems, for example, *However, your third paragraph is a little confusing because ...*, and are asked to provide specific reasons. Finally, students provide suggestions to improve the sample essay, using pragmatically appropriate modal auxiliaries learned in the previous lesson. For example, they are to fill in the blanks in a sentence such as *You* (   ) *add an example to illustrate your point in the third paragraph.* Advanced level students can be encouraged to write a comment on their own by using the expected structures, discourse markers, and hedged phrases that they have learned.

After students work on the sample essay, they can compare their comments with their peers to see what similar or different aspects of the same piece of writing they refer to. After they have completed enough additional structured exercises on offering feedback, students are encouraged to execute this commenting practice in speaking or writing activities, where they exchange their drafts of speeches or writing assignments with their peers and provide feedback for real audiences. In pairs or groups, they can decide whether they want to offer peer feedback orally or in writing.

Final Remarks

Offering feedback is a complicated discursive practice featuring the expected use of overall structure and certain discourse markers and linguistic phrases. In this paper, suggestions for teaching are offered as a first step for helping L2 English learners offer effective and pragmatically appropriate peer feedback in English. In order to further develop understanding of effective feedback practices, studies from a wider perspective might need to be reviewed in the future (see Howard, 2012, for example, for teacher feedback in university classroom discussion; see also Fujioka, 2012b, for pragmatics related to writing center tutor feedback).

To become adept at providing effective peer feedback, students need to develop an attitude of respect for peers' work and trust in peers' comments. Therefore, pragmatic lessons on peer feedback need to be introduced at an appropriate stage as students become mature as learners. Pragmatics concerns social skills in language use, and teachers and students need to keep in mind that the development in language skills goes hand in hand with human development.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Professor Sharon L. Pugh for her valuable comments and suggestions on the earlier version of this manuscript and my anonymous reviewer of the JALT Pan SIG proceedings for his/her helpful comments.

References

Bankier, J. (2012). *Japanese university students' awareness of hedging devices in academic writing: A pilot study.* Paper presented at JALT Pan-SIG Conference, Hiroshima University, Hiroshima, Japan.

Bell, D. C., & Youmans, M. (2006). Politeness and praise: Rhetorical issues in ESL (L2) writing center conferences. *Writing Center Journal, 26*(2), 31-47.

Fujioka, M. (2005). The speech act of suggesting as part of peer response activities. In D. Tatsuki (Ed.), *Pragmatics in language learning: Theory and practice* (pp. 166-170). Tokyo, Japan: JALT

Fujioka, M. (2012a). From praise to critique: Receptive skills; productive skills. In J. Ronald, C. Rinnert, K. Fordyce, & T. Knight (Eds.), *Pragtivities: Bringing pragmatics into second language classrooms.* (pp. 143-149). Tokyo, Japan: JALT

Fujioka, M. (2012b). Pragmatics in writing center tutoring: Theory and suggestions for tutoring practice. *Kinki University Center for Liberal Arts and Foreign Language Education Journal, 3*(1), 129-146.

Houck, N. R., & Fujimori, J. (2010). Teacher, you should lose some weight: Advice giving in English. In D. H. Tatsuki & N.R. Houck (Eds.), *Pragmatics: Teaching speech acts* (pp. 89-103). Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

Howard, A. M. (2012). *Feedback in university level discussion sections.* Paper presented at JALT Pan-SIG Conference, Hiroshima University, Hiroshima, Japan.

Hyland, F., & Hyland, K. (2001). Sugaring the pill: Praise and criticism in written feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 10,* 185-212. doi:10.1016/S1060-3743(01)00038-8

Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (2006). Contexts and issues in feedback on L2 writing: An introduction. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (Eds.), *Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues* (pp. 1-19).Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Liu, J., & Hansen, J. (2002). *Peer response in second language writing classrooms*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Nguyen, T.T.M., & Basturkmen, H. (2010). Teaching constructive critical feedback. In D. H. Tatsuki & N.R. Houck (Eds.), *Pragmatics: Teaching speech acts* (pp. 125-140). Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

Smith, S. (1997). The genre of the end comment: Conventions in teacher responses to student writing. *College Composition and Communication, 48*(2), 249-268. doi:10.2307/358669

Author's Biography:

Mayumi Fujioka is an associate professor of English at Kinki University, Osaka. Her research interests include L2 English academic literacy development, writing center tutoring, and interlanguage pragmatics.

Using Texts in the University Classroom: Japanese Teachers' Practices

William Green
Sapporo University
wrgreen@sapporo-u.ac.jp

This presentation described a study of Japanese teachers' cognition and practices, focusing on their use of texts in the classroom. The aim was to inform the design of co-ordinated English programmes taught by Japanese and expatriate teachers. The study identified a number of issues in the Japanese teachers' thinking which resonate with expatriate teachers, including students' shyness, the importance of teaching and learning English as a living language in context, the value of extensive reading, and centring lessons and learning on the students. It was suggested that these areas could form the basis for co-operation and collaboration between Japanese and expatriate teachers.

本稿では、教室でのテキストの利用に焦点を当て、日本の英語教師の認知と実践の研究を述べる。本研究の目的は、日本人と外国人講師による協調英語プログラムの設計を助けることにある。研究の結果、外国人教師と日本人教師が同様の問題ー学生の内気を克服、生きた原語としての英語学習の重要性、多読と学生中心のレッスンや学習の価値ーを認識している事実が確認された。したがってこれらの領域において、日本人と外国人教師間の協力と共同作業の基礎を形成する必要があると分かった。

Keywords: Language teacher cognition, Japanese university teaching

Introduction

One of the defining features of English language education in Japanese universities is the presence of two groups of teachers: Japanese teachers of English (JTs) and teachers from English-speaking countries (ETs). For the most part the two groups work separately, but in this talk I argued that English education in Japanese universities could be improved by collaboration between the two groups. I presented the results of a study into JTs' thinking and practices which showed that ETs and JTs have much in common that could be used as a basis for pedagogical co-operation and collaboration.

Concepts

Language teachers' practices are influenced by cognitive structures and processes including the thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, knowledge and principles that they have about their teaching. Teacher cognition research involves looking at the origin, characteristics and development of these cognitive structures with a view to understanding the

Green, W. (2013). Using texts in the university classroom: Japanese teachers' practices. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 92-96). Hiroshima: JALT.

relationships between teachers' cognition and practice. Such understandings are useful in informing projects which are dependent on the co-operation of teachers, for example, curriculum renewal projects, pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes, or pedagogical innovations based on local practices.

In the study reported in this presentation, I investigated the cognition and practices of a group of JTs working in higher education in Japan. The aim was to help inform the design of co-ordinated English programmes to be taught by both JTs and ETs.

Teachers in Splendid Isolation?

It became clear from preliminary interviews that I held with JTs and ETs that neither group had much idea what the other group was doing. For example, one Japanese teacher expressed curiosity about his students' performance in ET-led classes in his institution: "I've always wanted to see how my students work or study in a class with a foreign teacher. I don't know what they can say or how well they can speak, I'm just guessing" (JT2). An ET talking about his writing class reported that

> The writing class is a one-semester class, they get half their mark from me and half their mark from a Japanese teacher. I don't know what the Japanese teacher's teaching but I'm teaching academic writing, I focus on a couple of things, one is timed writing. (ET3)

For another Japanese teacher the isolation caused some uncertainty, even insecurity, about the validity of her own practices: "I teach very slowly, very relaxed but I don't know if it's good. I haven't seen other teachers' class, so I don't know, I cannot say for sure. Am I so different from other people?" (JT4). It is evident that there was plenty of scope for improving teachers' knowledge of their colleagues' cognition and practices as a first stage in building bridges between the two groups.

The Study

In this presentation I focused on data from JTs, and on their use of texts in the university classroom. The data came from a large study which was conducted in the English departments of three tertiary institutions in northern Japan. Three ETs and five JTs participated in this larger study. They completed a background questionnaire which asked about their own language learning experiences, their teacher training, and their English teaching experience. I conducted preliminary interviews with the teachers and asked about their teaching practices and the thinking behind them. These interviews were also used to identify classes for me to observe. The next stage was classroom observation: I observed and video-recorded a lesson taught by each of the teachers. I then used the video recordings in stimulated recall interviews, which I audio recorded. Once I had transcribed all the recordings, I was able to analyse the data using the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As noted above, the results which follow are derived from the JTs' data. I felt I would not be able to do justice to the Japanese teachers if I also included ETs' data in this short presentation.

Results

Text to Enable Teacher-as-Resource Approach

In discussing his reading course, JT1 argued that the students and not the teacher were the main characters in class, and that "teachers can only assist [the students] at their own level" (JT1 preliminary interview: 144). He reported that he recognized the students' various levels and wanted to respond individually. In order to do this, he selected and prepared a text to teach; his preparation involved anticipating students' questions – grammatical, lexical, pragmatic, or sociocultural – and ensuring he knew the answers. He then asked students to read the text in class, helping them to identify the subject and predicate of each sentence in the text, and then leaving them to read the sentences out loud by themselves: "two or three, or possibly five or six times reading is good for the students to appreciate the sentences, and let them know their own capacity or ability to understand" (JT1 PI: 84-6). JT1 stated that students' full understanding would only be reached if they worked at their own level, recognized their own problems and formulated questions for the teacher which would help resolve these problems. He saw the teacher's role as assisting students individually and having enough prepared knowledge to be able to do this, but JT1 commented that this knowledge should not be forced on all the students in a teacher-fronted, lockstep approach. He disapproved of the teacher who "explains super cool things to us but most of us can't understand" (JT1 PI: 181). Instead, JT1 moved around the classroom as the students read the text, watching for signs from the students that they had questions for him, and then responding individually. This backgrounded the teacher, centred the lesson on the students, increased their involvement and, JT1 believed, their learning. While working within the confines of a teacher-selected text, JT1's approach was based on the individual needs of the students in his class.

In this pedagogical approach, it is evident that JT1's extensive preparation was done so that he could answer all imaginable questions from the students. He was therefore able to function as a "resource person" in much the same way that a teacher in the communicative and/or learner-centred tradition might see him/herself (e.g., Nunan, 1998). By selecting a text in advance, JT1 was able to delimit and to some extent predict the resources that students would require during class. In contradistinction to the teacher-centredness which the common interpretation of a traditional, textbook-centred approach would predicate, it seems that the fixedness and structure of the text enabled the teacher to adopt a flexible approach in which individualized teaching was central.

Text as Sharing Successful Learning

In his preliminary interview, JT2 expressed admiration for some of his high school teachers who had done some research and had papers published. He was not impressed by strict teachers, but considered studying hard and thus acting as a role-model for students to be a key part of his job. As a result of this thinking, JT2 used the same materials with his students that he had used to teach himself how to speak English. In the second part of the lesson that I observed (his seminar), JT2 used English conversation materials from NHK with an accompanying CD. In his preliminary interview JT2 reported how he used the radio version of these materials successfully to improve his spoken English and listening comprehension:

> I started learning how to speak in English at the age of 25. I started at that time, I started listening to the English speaking programme on NHK, and that helped me a lot. Yes, it was very effective, and so that's my conclusion, yeah, yeah just imitating and just changing some words is enough, or maybe a better way to communicate. (JT2 PI: 323-328)

By the age of 25, JT2 had been studying English for about 13 years, yet he perceived the radio programme as being the reason for his ability in spoken English. He had therefore decided to use the textbook-with-CD version of the NHK radio programme in his seminar, in the same way that he used, and continues to use, the programme:

> This is the way I do it, I repeat the sentence after the radio programme and I try to learn the new words and phrases and try to remember and try to learn by heart, you know. I'm always trying to say those phrases or sentences with the textbook. I think that helped me to improve my English, so I expect the students to do the same thing. (JT2 stimulated recall interview: 519-524)

In the seminar I observed, JT2 asked the students to memorize those sentences which in his experience were most useful or important. In his stimulated recall interview JT2 also noted that he asked students to memorize sentences that he would use, or that he had heard native-speakers of English use. In this way, JT2 introduced his most successful mode of study to his own students.

Text for Intensive Reading

During her Current Affairs English lesson, JT4 gave the students about 10 minutes every week to read a graded reader. In JT4's own language learning experiences, learning vocabulary had preceded learning grammar, and partly as a result of this experience, JT4 chose to focus on vocabulary with the group that I observed.

> Grammar didn't come first for me, the words came first for me that's why I just want to focus on words, it's my learning experience- it also comes from my learning experience as an English learner and teacher, and reading research papers, and also my learning tell me that words is the key for the- especially for the starting level. (JT4 stimulated recall interview: 214-218)

She used a variety of activities to improve the students' vocabulary, in an attempt to make them "feel more comfortable in reading, speaking" (JT4 SRI: 160). In one such activity, JT4 asked the students to read a graded reader in the lesson, without using a dictionary. Her use of this extensive reading exercise came, she reported

> JT4: (…) from my experience mostly, because I don't use a dictionary when I read English books even though I don't understand all the words, and in so doing I got more vocabulary memorized. (….) It sounds very strange for example, maste- oh I cannot pronounce quite well "catalysis catalysis catalysis" [*sic*] eye disease right? And when I read Robin Cook's novels I just saw that word a hundred times and I didn't look it up until the last- I didn't look it up at all and I just guessed, it should be some kind of eye disease and you cannot make- you cannot see the things, it's blurred, so it must be *hakunaisho* in Japanese that's my guess and I just guessed and I didn't check it up, and that's my attitude and it helped me. (JT4 SRI: 457-466)

Although JT4 misremembered the word "cataracts" in this extract, it was clear that guessing the meaning of words from their context formed a part of her own learning experiences, and she was attempting to engender this skill in her students by frequently using the extensive reading technique in class. She reported that this was "the seventh or eighth or maybe ninth book" (JT4 SRI: 447) the students had read in this way.

The Value of Drama as a Reading Text

I observed a reading class in which JT5 used *The Glass Menagerie* as the text. JT5 noted that her colleagues teaching classes on the same course used a textbook or a collection of short stories, and she gave several reasons for selecting a play instead. In the first place, JT5 noted that she wanted to help her students to overcome their shyness about speaking English, something that she could empathize with.

> Especially I was nervous about speaking English, well of course I was nervous about speaking English with native speakers, yes, but a different kind of nervousness in the classroom with other Japanese students. I think I felt kind of- it was kind of awkward for Japanese to speak English. (JT5 stimulated recall interview: 92-95)

While studying in the US on an undergraduate overseas programme, JT5 had taken a drama class that had helped her overcome her shyness; she said that she wanted to bring these benefits to her own students.

> Using skits or lines from drama sometimes seems to help students overcome shyness or uneasiness about speaking English because they can concentrate on such aspects as pronunciation, intonation, and stress, and because what they are reading aloud is not "their" lines—they are just "playing a part" (I realized that some shy students "acted out" some characters really well in the past). (JT5 questionnaire; parentheses in original)

In the class that I observed, JT5 asked students to work in pairs to prepare a dialogue from the play. She then moved from pair to pair, listening to their practice and helping them with pronunciation and intonation. She elicited from the students the emotions that each character was feeling as they spoke, and then encouraged the students to communicate that emotion through their intonation. In this way, JT5 aimed to improve students' understanding of the text as well as help them to overcome their shyness.

Using a play in this way was also motivated by JT5's belief in the importance of context for language learning. She argued that using plays and films in her classes provided language spoken by characters in context, so that students would realize that English is a functional language rather than just the subject of academic study. She stressed that for language to have meaning it needs to be situated in a context: "I want [the students] to feel the sense that English is a language through reading English in the context, not just sentences but like dialogue" (JT5 SRI: 105-107). In JT5's view, part of the problem with English education in Japan is that English is not contextualized; it is not taught as something that functions to form relationships between people, nor as a reflection of character and personality (JT5 SRI: 653-658). Using a drama in her reading class would, she hoped, go some way to rectifying these perceived shortcomings, as well as developing confidence and linguistic sensitivity in her students.

Conclusions

A number of issues have arisen in these data from JTs which might resonate with ETs, for example, trying to overcome students' shyness, the importance of teaching and learning English as a living language in context, the value of extensive reading, and centring lessons and learning on the students. Each of these represents an area in which bridges between ETs and JTs could be built.

The teachers in this study were also concerned to pass on the learning techniques which had led them to learn English successfully. As JTs might view collaboration with "native-speakers" of English with some trepidation, it should be remembered that actually it is they, not the ETs, who are experts in learning English as a foreign language, and that this expertise is a particularly valuable pedagogical resource that should be mined in future collaborations between the two groups of teachers.

References

Nunan, D. (1998). *Second language teaching and learning*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Author's Biography:

William Green is an English teacher living in Hokkaido.

Teaching Sociolinguistic and Cross-Cultural Literacy Effectively

John Herbert
Hiroshima Jogakuin University
herbert@gaines.hju.ac.jp

This paper explains a hybrid teaching methodology successfully used in teaching a sociolinguistics course at a university in Japan. The course used a combination of mini-lectures and student activities. The aims of the course were: (1) to introduce students to key themes in sociolinguistics (transmission of knowledge in the content area); (2) to get students to apply this knowledge to their own lives and make cross-cultural comparisons (personalization); (3) and for students to improve their English ability by taking part actively in a content-based course through the medium of English (L2 development).

この論文では、日本の大学で社会言語学を教える際にうまく利用されているハイブリッド教授方法について説明します。このコースはミニレクチャーと学生によるグループワークの組み合わせで行われます。このコースの目標は、以下の3点です。（1） 学生に社会言語学の主要なテーマを紹介すること（content areaの知識の伝達）（2）学生がこの知識を自分の生活に当てはめ、複数の文化と比較すること(personalization) (3) 学生がコンテント重視のコースに積極的に参加し、英語を使うことを通して英語能力を向上させること。

Keywords: content-based (teaching); sociolinguistics; cross-cultural (literacy); personalization; hybrid approach

How best to teach sociolinguistic and cross-cultural competency in a Japanese classroom is open to debate. Is a traditional content-rich lecture-style class the most effective approach? Is a student-centered approach more effective? Or is there an alternative approach? These questions have to be dealt with within the context of the curriculum of the institution as a whole, but it is the assertion of this paper that an effective alternative approach exists.

After briefly clarifying some important terminology, this paper sets out some of the weak points of the traditional lecture-style classroom, and describes a hybrid approach that includes a combination of mini-lectures (teacher transmission of knowledge) and student-centered activities based on Adamson (2006). The student-centered activities are divided into six categories, all of which can be applied to a variety of themes within sociolinguistics. An example of the hybrid approach with its mini-lecture/student activities cycle is set out, along with student feedback to this style of class. Finally, the suitability of the hybrid approach is discussed

Herbert, J. (2013). Teaching sociolinguistic and cross-cultural literacy effectively. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 97-101). Hiroshima: JALT.

for other classes that have been designated "lecture [*kougi*]" status.

Definitions

The fields of sociolinguistics and cross-cultural studies have many overlapping themes. Spolsky (1998, p. 3) defines sociolinguistics as "the field that studies the relationship between language and society, between the uses of language and the social structures in which the users of language live." These "social structures" can come in many different forms, and often these structures can form or be thought of as "cultures". Perhaps the most common meaning attached to the term "cultural" is in relation to the perceived cultures of differing nations. It is not uncommon, for example, to equate cross-cultural communication with the efforts of people from different nations (often with different languages) to communicate with one another. However, cultural groupings are not always defined by the geographical boundaries of nations. It is quite reasonable to think of culture in terms of gender, age, region, religion, and ethnic group among others. There is certainly evidence to suggest the existence of a female culture and a male culture (see Tannen, 2005), just as there are youth cultures, regional cultures, and ethnic cultures. As these are some of the areas covered by the field of sociolinguistics, the link between sociolinguistics and cross-cultural studies is clear.

The term "literacy" is often defined as the "ability to read and write", but as Crystal (2009, p. 286) states, it is "also now often used in a broader sense, referring to the ability to understand a technical or cultural domain." In this paper, the term "literacy" is equated with "competency," and it is asserted that sociolinguistic and cross-cultural competency are important fields of study in the classroom.

Traditional Lectures [*Kougi*]

At Japanese universities, a traditional lecture course consists of 15 classes (90 minutes each) over a period of 15 weeks. The teaching method in many cases is one-way transmission of knowledge from the professor to the students, the so-called "sage on the stage." It is of course possible for this to be an interesting and motivating course for students. In the field of sociolinguistics, lectures could be based on stimulating introductory textbooks aimed at native speakers such as those written by Holmes (2001), Romaine (2000), Spolsky (1998), and Stockwell (2002), or even based on Japanese language reading content from sociolinguistics books such as those by Nagao, Hibiya & Hattori (2002) or Tanaka & Tanaka (1996). However, the professor/lecturer not only needs to have stimulating content, but also needs to be a great speaker. If this is not the case, with one voice for 90 minutes, it is all too frequent to see large numbers of unmotivated students with heads on desks fast asleep. This scenario has been noted as commonplace in Japanese universities (Matsumoto, 2008, p.25). In such cases, no matter how content-rich the lecture materials, no content is being transmitted from teacher to student. Is this truly a good learning environment for students? Boredom, passive learning, and problems with attention span are commonplace with this one-way traditional lecture-style class.

There have been various studies conducted on attention span over the years. In the case of lectures, attention span is defined as the length of time a student can concentrate on the contents of the lecture. Johnstone and Percival (1976) found that at the beginning of lectures attention span was between 10 and 18 minutes, but by the end of a lecture that had dropped to 3 or 4 minutes. Hartley and Davies (1978) found that in 50-minute lectures, attention span dropped during the first 10 minutes, and was maintained only at a low level for the remainder of the lecture, with a small spike in attention towards the very end. Both of these studies were conducted within English-speaking lecturer/student environments, and it is not hard to imagine the attention span for foreign language learners of English would be even less.

Hybrid Approach

In my classes, I use a hybrid approach with a teaching cycle of mini-lectures (approximately 10 minutes in length) and carefully designed group activities that are related to the content of the mini-lectures, allowing for the recycling of both content and language. In the one-semester sociolinguistics class described in this paper, the themes covered using this hybrid approach were:

1. variation in language
2. age and language
3. region and language (dialects)
4. gender and language
5. politeness and language
6. non-standard language (slang)

(1) Mini-lectures in the Hybrid Approach

For the sake of clarity, the mini-lecture parts of the cycle make the most of PowerPoint software, providing students with visual as well as aural content. However, the lecture part of the class need not be a passive experience for the students. It can be made more active by requiring students to take notes of the most important points during the presentation of content. Alternatively, providing printouts of the slides can emphasize the content and reduce the focus on note-taking. There are weak points to both approaches. The note-taking can take the students' focus away from the content, and the provision of slide information can allow students to relax too much and lose concentration. A potential happy medium is to provide students with partial slide information that requires them to fill in only certain essential information from the content of the slides.

(2) Student Activities in the Hybrid Approach

In order to make the learning experience meaningful, it is vital that there is a strong correlation between the student activities and the content of the preceding (or proceeding) mini-lecture. For the themes chosen for this sociolinguistics course, six main categories of activities (set out below) were found to be effective as part of the teaching cycle.

1. *Question and Answer Discussion about Japan/ Japanese*
   This is a vital step in the teaching cycle of the hybrid approach. Ideally, the questions are "personalized" to the students' own situations, but if this is not possible, then they should at least be connected to the students' home countries. This "personalization" has multiple benefits including: allowing students to understand how much they already actually know (local/old knowledge); providing a reference point for comprehension of global/ new knowledge; and allowing cross-cultural comparison.
2. *Conversation (Paper-based) Analysis*
   Students work in groups to identify parts of conversations (reading printed versions rather than listening to audio files) that show the participants are members of certain groups in society, related to the sociolinguistic variable under scrutiny.
3. *Translation (to Standard English)*
   Students translate various forms of English nuanced with gender, age, regional, or ethnic factors into Standard English. Scaffolding in the form of glossaries may be required depending on students' levels.
4. *DVD/YouTube Clips*
   These clips are always met with enthusiasm from students, but need to be carefully designed for content and complemented with suitable exercises.
5. *Group Discussion (on Theme)*
   This kind of activity works very well as long as the students' English level is high enough, although with adequate scaffolding, even lower level learners can take part in discussion activities.
6. *Student Presentations*
   These can be carried out as group presentations or as individual presentations within groups.

Example of the Hybrid Cycle on the Theme of Dialects

The following is an illustrative example, using the theme of dialects, of how the hybrid cycle worked. The example below took up two full 90-minute classes.

1. *Pre-class*: Students read a short article on the

basics of regional dialects to act as "content scaffolding" and also visited the British Dialect Translator website (http://www.whoohoo.co.uk). The teacher emphasized that this was a fun translator and that the dialect translations were exaggerated versions of the real dialect. Students had to type in three Standard English sentences and click the dialect translation of their choice (from Geordie, Brummie, Yorkshire, Scottish, Scouse, Cockney, or Irish). They copied these translations onto their worksheets and brought them to class (see step 5 below).

2. *Mini-lecture 1*: The teacher gave a 10-minute PowerPoint-based lecture covering the definition of dialect, differences between languages and dialects, differences between dialects and standard languages, and the concept of dialect chains.
3. *Activity 1*: The first activity was a simple listing of Japanese dialects with language examples from each of those dialects. This acted as a personalization of the theme, with students able to demonstrate how much they knew about their own dialect, and also of other dialects in Japan.
4. *Mini-lecture 2*: The teacher gave detailed examples of UK dialect differences in vocabulary, grammar, and accent.
5. *Activity 2*: Students worked in groups. Each student showed other students their worksheets with three examples of dialect translations from the UK (see step 1 about pre-class work). The students then worked together to try and recreate the original Standard English sentences. The exercise allowed students to get an introductory grasp on the nature of the differences in phonology, vocabulary, and grammar that are a part of dialects.
6. *Mini-lecture 3*: The teacher explained that many people have strong attitudes towards dialects, and that many countries have prestigious dialects and less prestigious dialects. In some cases, these attitudes are not so serious, but in some cases (such as those used by some ethnic minorities within a country), they have a serious bearing on the lives of the people who speak less prestigious dialects.
7. *Activity 3*: Students discovered their own attitudes toward dialects by marking various Japanese dialects with scores out of 5 for a variety of adjectives that included: sophisticated, stylish, romantic, rural, friendly, and scary. Students then worked in groups to explain their attitudes.
8. *Mini-lecture 4*: The final mini-lecture took the form of a summary of the main points on the theme of dialects.
9. *Activity 4*: The final student activity was a short group discussion. This acted as a review exercise on dialects and also allowed students to give their final opinions on the themes introduced.
10. Simply making students active in the classroom is no guarantee that they will internalize the content of the classes. The hybrid cycle described above includes a summary from the teacher and a review exercise carried out by students (steps 8 and 9), both of which should aid comprehension of the content. However, a systematic check in the form of content quizzes (after the end of each theme), coupled with a final research paper (or presentations and research tasks) is another means of reinforcing comprehension.

Student Feedback

Student feedback pertaining to the hybrid approach has been very positive. The main negative feedback related to the mini-lecture part of the cycle with some students commenting on their dislike of note-taking. Others mentioned that the pace of the slides was too quick to allow them to take full notes. In spite of this, in general there was positive feedback about the PowerPoint slides. Most of the positive feedback was, however, connected to the student activities section of the hybrid approach. Unsurprisingly, students enjoyed the DVD and YouTube clips, but students also commented on enjoying group exercises and group discussions.

Overall, the feedback can be summarized by two students who wrote, "You didn't make me boring [sic]" and "This course had not only lecture."

Conclusion

The hybrid approach, while not being perfect, has been successful in this sociolinguistics course as indicated by student feedback. The hybrid approach is flexible in that it can be tailored to students of different levels. For lower level students, more pre-class work may be required. This may take the form of language or content scaffolding, or preparation notes for the discussion exercises in the group activities section of the class. The class is suitable for Japanese-only students, but perhaps would be even more interesting from a cross-cultural perspective if the students were of mixed nationalities.

The evidence from this study indicates that the hybrid mini-lecture/student activity approach is effective and could be useful in wider contexts. It should be noted that not all themes within the field of sociolinguistics are as easy as others to "personalize" to the students' situations, but it is always possible to create group activities related to the content theme. The approach reduces the likelihood of students sleeping in class, allows students to apply local/old knowledge to global/new knowledge, increases sociolinguistic and cross-cultural literacy, and is thoroughly recommended as an improvement on the traditional lecture style classroom.

References

Adamson, J. (2006). From EFL to content-based instruction: what English teachers take with them into the sociolinguistics lecture. *Asian EFL Journal, Professional Teaching Articles, 10.* http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/profession_teaching_articles.php

Crystal, D. (2009). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics*. Oxford, England: Blackwell.

Hartley, J. & Davies, I. (1978). Note taking: A critical review. *Programmed Learning and Educational Technology*, *15*, 207-224.

Holmes, J. (2001). *An introduction to sociolinguistics*. London, England: Pearson.

Johnstone, A. & Percival, F. (1976). Attention breaks in lectures. *Education in Chemistry, 13*, 49-50.

Matsumoto, Y. (2008). *Investigating classroom dynamics in Japanese University EFL Classrooms*. PhD thesis. The University of Birmingham, England. Retrieved October 26, 2012 from http://cw.routledge.com/ textbooks/eresources/9780415566421/yasuyo.pdf

Nagao, T., Hibiya, J. & Hattori, N. (2002).社会言語学概論[Introduction to sociolinguistics]. Tokyo, Japan: Kuroshio.

Romaine, S. (2000). *Language in society: An introduction to sociolinguistics*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Spolsky, B. (1998). *Sociolinguistics*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Stockwell, P. (2002). *Sociolinguistics: A resource book for students*. London, England: Routledge.

Tanaka, H. & Tanaka, S. (1996). 社会言語学への招待[An invitation to sociolinguistics]. Tokyo, Japan: Minerva.

Tannen, D. (2005). *You Just Don't Understand*. London, England: Virago.

Author's Biography:

John Herbert has been living and teaching in Japan since 1989. His current research interests lie in the fields of sociolinguistics and Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Development Beyond the Classroom

George Higginbotham
Hiroshima Kokusai Gakuin University

Monika Szirmai
Hiroshima International University

Ken Ikeda
Otsuma Women's University

Nathan Ducker
Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University

Masashi Nakamura
Temple University

Bill Mboutsiadis
University of Toronto & TC Columbia University,

Mathew Porter
Hiroshima Bunkyo Women's University

The ultimate goal for language learners is not to succeed within the classroom but to succeed in the real world. The six projects outlined in this paper explore ways in which to motivate students and equip them with the skills and confidence needed to make the step from the classroom to the world beyond. As well as a discussion of four projects that literally take students out of the classroom, two projects show how the limitations of the classroom can be overcome through utilizing online resources. With a focus on encouraging learners to take an active role in their studies the authors argue that it is the teacher's job to give learners opportunities that facilitate the move toward independence.

言語学習者の最終目的は、教室内で成功することではなく、実社会で成功することである。本稿で述べる6つのプロジェクトは、学生の動機づけや教室から社会へ一歩を踏み出すために必要なスキルや自信を身に付けさせる方法を模索する。実際に学生を教室外に連れ出すプロジェクトについての議論およびオンライン情報源を通して教室における制限をどう克服するか考察する。学習者が学習に対して積極的に取り組むことに重点を置き、自律的学習の形成を促す機会を与えることは教師の義務であると主張する。

Keywords: language, motivation, learner-autonomy

One of the main goals for language learners is to develop a set of skills that enable them to operate effectively within the target environment. The real world is however quite different from the artificial and restricted setting of the classroom that most associate with language study. It is therefore doubtful whether classroom study alone can fully prepare students. The classroom is certainly a useful element within the learning process in that it allows students to work with language in an organized manner, receive feedback on their mistakes, and practice within an encouraging atmosphere. For many students, however, the main goal becomes lost within this traditional setting which often overly focuses

Higginbotham et al. (2013). Development beyond the classroom. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 102-110). Hiroshima: JALT.

on passing tests, learning words, and analyzing grammar. With this in mind the authors discuss attempts to bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world and help students to become more autonomous. Of the projects discussed, four contain off-campus components that literally take students out of the classroom. Two more projects also challenge the limitations of the traditional classroom by exploring online resources. A common thread running through these projects is the belief that for students to really improve they need to be motivated and independent. This can be achieved through facilitating an environment that allows learners to take an active part in the learning process. In other words, teachers need to give students opportunities to develop their language skills beyond the classroom.

A Talk in the Park

This section focuses on a semester long project that has been running for over five years at Hiroshima Kokusai Gakuin University; it is the central component of a first year speaking course. All students are non-English majors studying technical subjects. Despite six years of compulsory English classes they enter with TOEIC scores averaging around 300, and typically students are not motivated to study English. As their high school studies have only succeeded in developing the most basic level of competence in the language (and demotivated them in the process), a project was designed that takes quite a different approach. There are three main parts:

a. Students prepare and practice questions in regular classes;
b. Students go to Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and interview English speakers;
c. Students give a presentation (using presentation software) about their interviews.

In the first half of the semester, the students prepare for their interviews. In groups of three or four, the students choose a topic and are guided through the process of creating questions. Halfway through the semester, having prepared and repeatedly practiced their questions, a day is organized (usually a weekend) to try them out for real. At the Peace Park, each group is given a voice recorder and told to approach English speakers and interview them. In the third stage of the project the students prepare and deliver a short talk about their interviews. The assessment for this course is three fold:

a. The recorded interviews are graded on objective criteria;
b. There are regular vocabulary tests throughout;
c. The post-task presentation is graded.

The interview project is considered to be well worth the effort from a number of perspectives; we will briefly consider the language acquired and impact on motivation. For both of these aspects, data was available from tests and questionnaires. As can be seen in Table 1, student scores on a 45 item pre-task vocabulary test were very low. After 15 weeks though, many students made quite dramatic gains when retested on the same 45 items.

Table 1
Vocabulary Test Scores (2011 Cohort)

n=182	Initial test	Final test
Average score	7.5 %	52.6 %
STDEV	6.1	28.2

It is assumed that these test gains were due to intensive work with a discrete set of words that were reviewed in various contexts. While the number of words explicitly taught (60 items over 15 weeks) may not be impressive it is argued that this is more than made up for in terms of depth of processing. Amid current discussions on how best to teach vocabulary (Nation,2008; Pavičić, 2008) there is general agreement that students need to repeatedly review words (both receptively and productively) in order to fully acquire them. Due to the multiple aspects of word knowledge, (e.g. Nation, 2001 lists 18 aspects), when a student meets a new word we cannot expect it to be integrated into the lexicon without considerable processing. As well as vocabulary gains, post-task feedback (formal and informal) indicated that students found the project useful and motivating. In an end of semester questionnaire (July 2011), 82% gave positive comments. Given the general ambivalence to English at the start of the course this was seen as a major achievement. A meta-analysis of over 30 years of research (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003) found that motivation and language learning are highly correlated; the data from this study support this.

In short, this kind of project with an off-campus component has many strengths; specifically, benefits in vocabulary acquisition and motivation have been demonstrated. The positive pressure that comes from using language in an authentic situation leads to even the most recalcitrant students learning something.

Scrabble at Leisure, Scrabble for Pleasure

The Hiroshima Inter-University Scrabble Project started in April 2009, and now five universities prepare teams for the annual *friendly* competition. One of the main aims is to offer a chance for students to practice English outside classes. As well as meeting classmates informally, students have a chance to communicate with their peers from other institutions. This event also gives an opportunity for teachers at different universities to share ideas. Scrabble is not only a great way to socialize, but it also has considerable educational value.

Scrabble is an excellent language game for people of all ages and as the title of this section suggests, it can be fun if you have enough time to play. Scrabble sets available in Japan come with rules in English and Japanese, and they can be easily modified according to the age and ability of the players. For example, to make it easier, the use of dictionaries can be allowed and common abbreviations and acronyms can be accepted.

As for building language skills, Scrabble serves as a good way to reinforce spelling skills and review vocabulary. During the game, players can be required to explain the meaning of words when they play their tiles. If students play on a regular basis, they may become more competitive, and as a result, may want to prepare for the next game by consulting dictionaries. Repeatedly doing this will improve: vocabulary, knowledge of the alphabet, and speed at locating items in a dictionary. Still, no matter how hard they prepare, scrabble remains unpredictable. Where words are placed on the board and what letters each player gets depend on luck. Once students understand and get to like the game, they are willing to spend time outside of class playing full games. That usually means about an hour or an hour and a half of practicing English, without even realizing that they are actually studying in a less traditional way. Even students who would not do any homework are happy to play. For more practical minded students, it may help to offer some kind of reward, for example, extra points counting toward their grade.

According to a survey carried out before we started organizing Scrabble events on a regular basis, not many students knew about Scrabble. In order to attract students to such an extracurricular activity, it is therefore necessary to first introduce them to the game. The best way to do this is by sacrificing 5-10 minutes of class time for an explanation of the game and its basic rules. The use of actual scrabble boards requires a lot of time so worksheets and power point presentations are recommended to introduce the basic rules over a series of short sessions. Student feedback from class questionnaires showed a great majority liked Scrabble activities. Many of them even marked Scrabble as their favourite activity in class, in spite of the fact that most of them had never played a full game but only used the worksheets. Even though it is difficult to objectively measure the impact of Scrabble games, and academic articles about Scrabble are scarce, Scrabble's educational and social value has long been recognized by parents, educators, and students alike.

Probing the Intensive Aspects of an English Camp

The English Department at Otsuma Women's University hosts a four-day language course called ISEC (Intensive Spoken English Camp) during the last four days of summer vacation aimed primarily at first-year students. The course began as an Intensive Training Course (英語特殊演習) 37 years ago, consisting of supplemental lessons and lectures on grammar, language skills, and intercultural communication. Its two guiding principles were to have "students use only English and allow anyone of any language level to attend" (Kobayashi, 1978).

The stipulation of *anyone can attend* requires more than student enrollment on a sign-up-first basis. It would also be quixotic to simply demand that only English be used in Japanese environment. The course aims to enable students of differing language abilities to cooperate in communicating and working together while inspiring individuals towards maximum benefit and enjoyment. Through the filter of the term *intensive*, its two guiding principles can be discerned at work with regards to the camp schedule, preparation of students, and instructional renewal.

The four day camp timetable is packed with scheduled group-oriented sessions. The first two days largely consist of 70-minute lessons with camp instructors (mostly native English speakers) on topics taken from social media, such as TED talks. Evenings consist of a variety of recreational group activities. The latter two days are spent in preparing students for two kinds of presentations: individual speeches, and a small group skit. A towel tug contest between these skit groups helps cement camaraderie. On the camp's final day, each group gets to stage their skit in their respective rooms and everyone moves en masse to watch and cheer them. From this year a three-hour *orienteering* scavenger hunt has been included in which student teams will roam the grounds to solve language tasks.

Attention in the camp instruction of recent years has been given to preparing students so that they can engage in the camp from the start. The 2nd camp director found that students who enrolled in the intensive course without mental preparation experienced sharply declining motivation. He instituted three mandatory preparatory sessions (事前授業) to acquaint students with the camp lesson topics, self-presentations, and plays (Ito, 2012). The present director has recognized that intensive student engagement cannot be achieved by spontaneous participation but that prior awareness about the camp components needs to be built-up.

The directors have not managed the camp from a blueprint nor run it on autopilot. They have actively recruited instructors' input every year, resulting among many things in: the play-staging, this year's orienteering, a reduction in the length and number of lessons, and greater rest time for the students. Over the past twelve years, the course name and components have been revised to emphasize the *fun* element of camp. The site also moved, to the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center in Yoyogi Tokyo. The course was at first intended to supplement existing curricular aims; in its latter years it has been run as a self-contained experience. Senior-year students retain favorable impressions of their ISEC participation as one of the relatively few opportunities to use English outside of the classroom. What keeps the camp intensive has been conscientious renewal and careful preparation of students. Sustaining student involvement while maintaining camaraderie between all participants, (camp directors, instructors and students) allows its guiding principles to be assiduously upheld.

Accountable Autonomy: Is Assessing Autonomy Possible or Fair?

In a recently implemented project based-learning course, I was required to demonstrate accountability to the university authorities. A meta-study of project-based learning literature by Stoller (2006) reveals that such courses are believed to encourage student autonomy. This led to a discussion amongst the course planners on how autonomy can be evaluated and thus how a student can be assessed.

The centrality of the student to autonomous learning success creates two stumbling blocks to evaluating autonomy: firstly, the individuality of the construct to each student – as Murphey (2003) points out "Autonomy can't be the same thing for everyone – that would be an oxymoron" (p.7). Secondly, the apparent paradox of *requiring* students to develop themselves – as Breen and Mann point out "Learners will seek to please me as a teacher…learners will give up their autonomy to put on the mask of autonomy" (as cited in Benson 1997: p.52). However, a counter-argument is provided by Murphey (2003) who argues that autonomy is a teacher influenced activity, and

Sheerin (1997) who indicates that autonomous learner development needs teacher involvement. In each case, forms of teacher feedback and control are vital to learner success. Given these arguments, a project-based learning elective course for the 2011 – 2012 fall semester was developed. The criteria for projects were:

- Be based on the local environment, under the umbrella of culture
- Use English to communicate with stakeholders
- Study the problem from an academic viewpoint
- Create a product that benefits and is accessible to the community

The project followed the steps below:

- Forming a group
- Finding a problem area to study
- Planning the steps of their research
- Academic reading and first hand data collection (in either order)
- Developing and actually creating a product
- Presenting the product
- Evaluating the project

Students worked in a team, holding meetings to review progress and make decisions, and reporting progress to and getting advice from the teacher. Products included: a motivational website to help Japanese junior high school students feel positive about Japan following recent economic troubles and natural disasters, a video highlighting local projects that promote integration between international students and local people, and websites giving job hunting hints, tips and advice for international students. Student evaluation came from:

1. An on-going journal (submission dates at student discretion) following the criteria (descriptive, affective, evaluative, analytical, and pro-active).
2. A benchmarking activity where students developed criteria for evaluating a product, compared another group's product to their own, and respectfully suggested ways to improve weaker areas.
3. A review of work processes in which students looked back and discussed how each activity they carried out helped contribute to the final product.
4. A learning review essay based on selected points from a questionnaire reviewing students' learning and progress.

Students' reports revealed the social responsibility and pressure that they felt towards their groups. Students felt they needed to match up to their peers, which encouraged important autonomous efforts towards improving academic skills and language ability. This included: attending writing workshops in the self-access center, detailed self-directed analysis of course materials, re-writing and reading of group meetings minutes, and organizing further meetings using online media such as Skype and Facebook chat. Based on such feedback, it was surmised that the course does provide autonomy inducing structures. However, based on the audience responses to the forum, it seemed most teachers were more interested in teacher and student welfare (such as stress), rather than questions surrounding fairness of grading autonomy.

Digital Comic Narratives of Language Learning Histories

Meisei University's International Studies Department is promoting learning autonomy (LA) through its CALL LA course. This paper examined an exploratory research project that engaged university students in using digital comics (DC) as an approach to giving them a voice through critical reflection and self-assessment of their language learning histories (LLH). This action research examined the motivational potential and self-efficacy enhancing of DC narratives, in opening doors into learners' LLH, and shedding a critical light on current motivations in language acquisition. The purpose of the final class DC project was to be an effective communication tool for facilitating learner critical reflective practice and self-assessment of their learning process and learning styles and strategies. Lastly, and more importantly, the activity was to help students answer questions such as: Why am I learning English? Is learning English beneficial? Are there alternatives to learning English? The project involved a planning stage where three storyboards were sketched out and narrated. Each storyboard worksheet represented a different stage of their English language experience. The first two storyboards described, in comic form, their past and present English language experiences. The final comic strip had the learners imagine future life experiences with English and thus in effect, constructing an ideal L2 self. After receiving peer and teacher feedback on their storyboards, the learners then used an online website, *bitstrips.com*, to animate their narratives. A final process of sharing and revising their narratives led to a final colour printed comic strip. The class comic strips were then made into booklets for the students to keep as a class memento.

In second language acquisition, biographical research methodology has traditionally been incorporated and represents a shift of focus away from teaching towards learning issues. Language learning histories (LLH) are often used in classrooms to motivate students to reflect on their individual learning styles and strategies (Deacon et al., 2006). Many educator researchers view reflections of language learning as a diagnostic tool for both the learner and the teacher:

> Before we are able to help students to progress in their language learning abilities and skills, it is useful for the students and teacher to discover what the students are bringing from their past language learning experiences (Oxford & Green 1996: p.23).

Norton and Toohey (2001), among others, criticize the strong focus on language learning styles and strategies as being too narrow and limiting and thus state:

> The recent literature has been concerned not only with studying individuals acting on L2 input and producing L2 output, but also studying how L2 learners are situated in specific social, historical, and cultural contexts and how learners resist or accept the positions those contexts offer them. (Norton & Toohey, 2001, p.310)

By having students reflect on their own motivations of learning English, the benefits of learning English, and alternatives of learning English, they are expanding this narrow focus of LLH by critically thinking (CT) about their learning environment. There are various approaches to CT and many have located it within transformative pedagogies where reflection is a key concept. For example, David Stein (2000: p.3) defines reflective skepticism as a process starting from raising awareness to exploring possibilities for change. He lists three main steps:

- Assumptions analysis – a first step to make explicit our taken-for- granted notions of reality
- Contextual awareness – the realization that assumptions are socially and personally created in a specific historical and cultural context
- Imaginative speculation – imagining alternative ways of thinking about phenomena

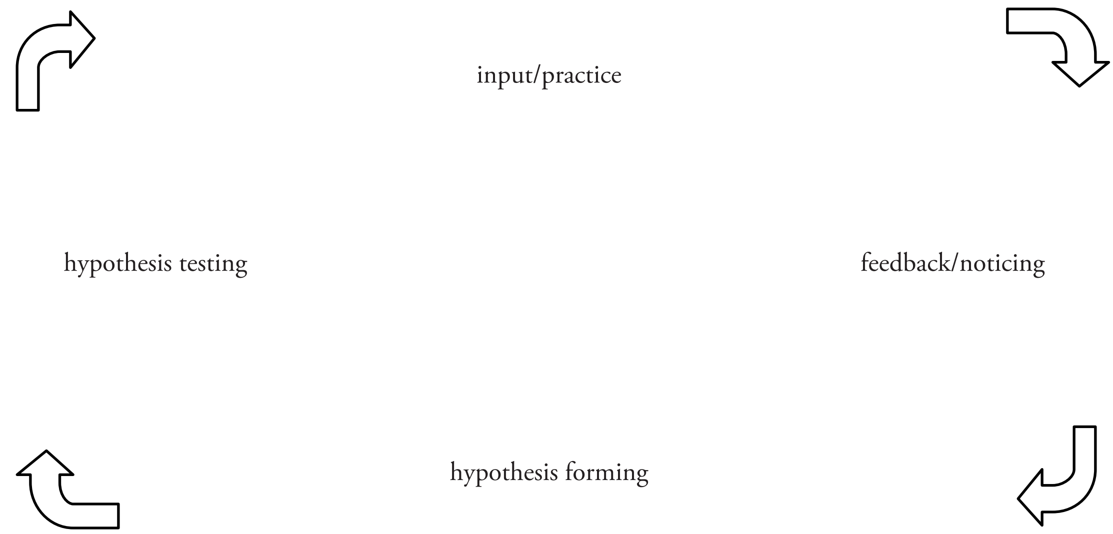
The DC narrative project had students challenge their learning assumptions, become aware of past and present learning contexts, and speculate on alternative ways of seeing English in their futures. Through reading my student LLH comics I came to a clearer understanding of their diverse past motivations, current context realities, and imagined future dreams.

Supporting Self-Directed Pronunciation Study

Effective pronunciation study is often not possible in general English classrooms at most Japanese universities due to factors such as class size, priorities, and curriculum constraints. The importance of phonological competency though, particularly to lifelong learning, cannot be underestimated. However, there is a way to equip students with knowledge and strategies allowing them to take ownership of their pronunciation studies. In this section, three web-based tools that can support self-directed pronunciation learning are introduced.

These sites were selected based on a model, illustrated below, of pronunciation learning strategies (PLS) influenced by Kolb's learning cycle (Eckstein, 2007).

Table 2
Eckstein's Taxonomy of PLS based on Kolb



English Accent Coach

Students must be able to hear distinctions between L1 and target language sounds in order to notice areas for growth. Not only is this ability essential for developing noticing skills, but improving sound perception also affects production (Flege and Bohn, 1997). Sites such as English Accent Coach (http://www.englishaccentcoach.com) make it possible to do focused perception practice by presenting the user with syllable or word-level minimal pair activities spoken by a large variety of voices. Users can choose to focus on vowels or consonants and also select the number of consonant sounds to contrast. The site is free, but registration is necessary so that students can track their progress. Also, although there is no Japanese support, the site is fairly intuitive.

Phonetics: The Sounds of American English

Next, sites like *Phonetics: The Sounds of American English* (http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/), developed by the University of Iowa (UI), can provide support for better hypotheses formation by assisting with the development of phonological meta-competence, or the "how to" of pronunciation (Wrembel, 2005), which is necessary to encourage self-monitoring and self-diagnosis, two indispensable abilities for forming new ideas about sound production and enabling lifelong learning. The UI site encourages deeper understanding of phoneme articulation by introducing each phoneme of American English through multimedia with animated cutaway views and videos of the mouth as well as recorded examples of the sound in different positions. Because the site is in English and includes jargon, some Japanese support might be needed.

EnglishCentral

The final web-based tool is EnglishCentral (EC) (http://www.englishcentral.com/), which can be described as a "freemium" service, with both paid and limited free content. It provides a wide range of original and sourced videos graded and subtitled for vocabulary and pronunciation practice. All users receive individualized feedback from EC's voice recognition software, but only paid subscribers have access to the progress tracking feature. Full of natural, contextualized sounds for practice, EC is an environment where students can gain experience in each stage of Kolb's learning cycle. Also, there is a separate pronunciation section to encourage the development of phonological meta-competence that has videos, with Japanese subtitles, devoted to the introduction and practice of difficult sounds, and these videos are available to all users.

Perception and production problems related to pronunciation seriously interfere with Japanese students' ability to take control of their English learning outside of the classroom, and introducing students to technology that can enable them to do so seems like a solution. However, although these online pronunciation learning sites certainly have a lot to offer students, introducing students to these sites doesn't mean they will automatically be able to use them effectively or independently. Students must also be shown how to leverage the technology to benefit their own learning cycles and be exposed to pronunciation learning strategies appropriate for each site. This guidance is vital when using technology to guide students towards greater success and autonomy in their language studies.

Conclusions

The six projects discussed are all run within Japanese universities and at a basic level the participants are similar in terms of background (mostly Japanese) and age (19-24). It would however be unwise to think of them as a homogenous group because a wide variety of college students is represented. There are technical students and also English majors, some study at single-sex institutions and others are mixed, some have a high ability, and some are at a basic level. We are not dealing with a homogenous group at all but rather a diverse cross-section of youngsters from all over Japan. Consequently there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and the six projects all reflect their differing requirements and the unique skills and interests that the instructor adds to each group. Considering this diversity, it might seem surprising to find any common ground at all between these projects, yet the discussions above do all concur on one particular point. That is, for an input impoverished learning environment such as Japan, the traditional English classroom is insufficient. Teachers therefore need to think how they can supplement their classes with experiences that help students develop the skills needed to work with language independently. It is a sad reality for many students that when their formal language studies finish so does their language learning. As all the authors would agree, this doesn't necessarily have to be the case. Hopefully, teachers reading this article will be prompted to reflect on their own contexts and consider how they might expand the learning environment of their students and encourage them to become more autonomous.

References

Benson, P. (2001). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning.* Harlow, England: Pearson Education.

Deacon, B., Murphey, T., & Dore, P. (2006). Knowing our students through language learning histories. In K. Bradford-Watts, C. Ikeguchi, & M. Swanson (Eds.) *JALT 2005 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo, Japan: JALT.

Eckstein, G.T. (2007). A correlation of pronunciation learning strategies with spontaneous English pronunciation of adult ESL learners. *Unpublished MA thesis*. Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

Flege, J.E., Bohn, O.S., & Jang, S. (1997). Effects of experience on non-native speakers' production and perception of English vowels. *Journal of Phonetics*, *25(4)*, 437-470.

Ito, T. (2012). *The past of ISEC*. Unpublished document.

Kobayashi, Y. (1978). 英語特殊演習について. *OEA Newsletter, 17,* 2-3.

Masgoret, A.M., & Gardner, R.C. (2003). *Attitudes, motivation, and second language learning: A meta-analysis of studies conducted by Gardner and associates.* Language Learning, *53*, 167-210.

Murphey, T. (2003). Learning to surf. In A. Barfield and M. Nix (eds.) *Learner and teacher autonomy in Japan 1: Autonomy you ask*. Tokyo, Japan: The learner development special interest group of The Japan Association for Language Teaching.

Nation, I.S.P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Nation, I.S.P. (2008). *Teaching vocabulary: strategies and techniques.* Boston, MA: Heinle, Cengage Learning.

Norton, B. & Toohey, K. (2001). Changing perspectives on good language learners. *TESOL Quarterly, 35*(2), 307-322.

Oxford, R.L. & Green, J. M. (1996). Language learning histories: Learners and teachers helping each other understand learning styles and strategies. *TESOL Journal*, *6*(1), 20 –23.

Pavičić, V. (2008). *Vocabulary learning strategies and foreign language acquisition*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters, Cromwell Press Ltd.

Sheerin, S. (1997). An exploration of the relationship between self-access and independent learning. In P. Benson and P. Voller (eds.) *Autonomy and independence in language learning.* London, England: Longman

Stein, D. (2000). Teaching Critical Reflection. Myths and Realities No. 7. *ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Columbus, Ohio*, 2–4.

Stoller, F. (2006). Establishing a theoretical foundation for project-based learning in second and foreign language contexts. In G.H. Beckett and P.C. Miller (eds.) *Project-based second and foreign language education: Past, present, and future.* Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Wrembel, M. (2005). Metacompetence-oriented model of phonological acquisition: implications for the teaching and learning of second language pronunciation. In: *Proceedings of the Phonetics Teaching and Learning Conference PTLC2005*. London, England: University College London, 1-4.

Author's Biography:

George Higginbotham is a lecturer at Hiroshima Kokusai Gakuin University. His main research interests are in vocabulary acquisition and developing task-based learning projects.

Monika Szirmai at Hiroshima International University, has taught English in Hungary and Japan. Her research interests include corpus linguistics, CALL, lexicography, learner development, and pragmatics.

Ken Ikeda teaches in the Department of English at Otsuma Women's University, Chiyoda Campus. His research interests bridge Asian American matters and English language education.

Nathan Ducker is a lecturer at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. His research interests focus on speaking (such as WTC) and student actions (such as autonomy).

Masashi Nakamura, M.A. TESOL candidate (Temple University), is a teaching assistant at Meisei University International Studies. California study abroad experience has motivated his current research.

Bill Mboutsiadis, M.A.TESOL candidate (TC Columbia), Chair of CALL-Meisei University International Studies. Bill has taught academic preparation English at the University of Toronto since 1996.

Mathew Porter has been working with English learners in the US and Japan since 1999. He currently works at a self-access learning center as a learning advisor, which has inspired much self-reflection and growth.

Design and Practical Applications of University Courses Employing Extensive Reading

Glen A. Hill
Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine
hill@obihiro.ac.jp

Starting a reading program poses several questions, some based on student ability and interest and some based on the teaching situation and institution. This paper will describe how extensive reading has developed at a national university in Japan. Details will be provided on how to select student reading levels, course assessment techniques, and the amount of material to be read. Subsequently, I will show how language and content courses use graded readers at the same university. The article concludes with advice on ways to encourage students during and after courses that contain extensive reading.

多読を始めるにあたり提起される問題は、学生の能力や興味に関する事項と、指導体制や組織に関する事項である。本稿では国立大学における多読授業の展開について述べる。学生のマテリアルのリーディングレベルの選び方、評価方法、望ましい読書量について考察する。さらに、同じ学内の他の科目における多読の活用についても紹介し、最後に、多読の継続において学生をサポートするためのヒントも述べておく。

Keywords: curriculum design, extensive reading, graded readers, motivation

Introduction

Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine (OUAVM) is a national university with roughly 1,100 undergraduate students. The English Resource Center (ERC; Hill, 2012b, 2012c) houses about 2,300 publications, about 75% of which are fiction graded readers (GRs).

Students at OUAVM have only two majors—agriculture-based or veterinary medicine. Depending on their major, they may not need to take English language courses but instead opt for German or Spanish. The majority of students take all of their language courses in the first three semesters. OUAVM accepts a large number of students under the *suisen* (recommendation) system, which allows them to be accepted without a typical entrance exam, and teachers have found that they are among the lowest academically.

By third year, students have to attend special science seminar courses where they are required to read native English scientific journal articles and give monthly oral reports. Having seen samples of articles with roughly one-third of the text marked up with translations, I felt that focusing more strongly on reading skills as a separate course would be to everyone's advantage, especially since it was the only

Hill, G. A. (2013). Design and practical applications of university courses employing extensive reading. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 111-117). Hiroshima: JALT.

course dedicated to reading prior to their seminar year.

The English Reading Skills course[1] is dominated in number by first-year students. It has four sections of 40-45 students each, and 90-minute lessons are given once a week. There is only one teacher (me) for the entire course.

Surveys on first-year students at OUAVM have shown that they do not read much more than comic books (in Japanese) in their previous year. This is not surprising, since they are preparing for college entrance exams, and comics are a mainstay of Japanese culture.

With these points in mind, extensive reading (ER) was thought to be a necessary element in students' studies, and it was implemented in 2009 (Hill, 2012a). Initially, there were three major considerations incorporated into its design: (a) how much students should be asked to read; (b) how their English level should be determined to choose the right GRs; and (c) what would be done to assess their performance. Most of this paper will discuss the designs of the Reading Skills course, but data on the use of ER in other courses (language or content focused)are also shown.

Early ER Designs on Reading Progress – How Much to Read?

Because of the low English level of incoming freshmen, I began the 2009 ER program with a light requirement of five GRs per semester, like so many cautious teachers who feel they should ease their students into ER. They were assessed with a MoodleReader[2] quiz, or if that was not available, an easy book report[3]. Despite that, only 51% of 172 students did either (average = 3.4 books per student, for those who did read). Twice in the semester, students read silently about 20 minutes in class and gave positive survey feedback to this activity and length of time. At the beginning of the semester, students' reading levels were evaluated with the Penguin level tests (levels 2, 3, and 4). Most felt the assessed levels were appropriate ("Ok for me"), but despite such encouraging feedback, I wanted a more objective approach to the ER program.

Consequently, in 2010, student levels were assessed with the placement test created by the Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading (EPER, *n.d.*). The reading target was slightly higher (seven books), and 95% of the class (149/156 students) read books at an average of 5.2 books per student, with ER assessment limited at that time to book reports only. MoodleReader quizzes were not used because the reading level scheme did not match EPER's. Instead, a table was constructed with EPER grade levels versus publisher levels based on data from the Extensive Reading Foundation (ERF) Graded Reader Level Scale (*n.d.*), and students were told to follow that table when choosing books.

Determining ER Targets in More Recent Years

More research went into planning the 2011 course. The number of words in a GR varies considerably with book level (Table 1), font size, pictures, and publisher style (including exercises or supplementary material), so gauging student progress by page or book tally is not accurate, and grading book reports is time consuming and subjective. I decided to return to MoodleReader quizzes because they automatically provide word counts. However, students were on an honor system to choose appropriate levels because of the previously mentioned incompatibility with EPER's levels.

For 2011, students were required to read a minimum of 49,000 words for 15% of their course grade and 84,000 words for a maximum of 40% of their grade (Table 2). The starting point (49,000 words) was determined on the basis of students' average reading speed (average in 2009, 2010, and 2011 of 110-134 words per minute for a level 1 Penguin GR). Thirty minutes of in-class time was

Table 1
Average number of words in the lowest level GRs*

Publisher	Name/No. of lowest level	Average word count**
Cambridge	Starter	2242
Cengage Foundations	1-4	855
Heinle Cengage Page Turners	1,2	3880
Helbling	1	4167
Macmillan	Starter	702
Oxford Bookworms	Starter	1326
Oxford Dominoes	Starter	2494
Oxford Reading Tree	5	326
Penguin	EasyStart	942
Scholastic	Starter	1390
AVERAGE		**1832**

*Level 5 Oxford Reading Tree is lowest level that currently has a MoodleReader quiz.
**Determined from publisher information and Furukawa & Kanda (2010).

devoted to weekly silent sustained reading (SSR), so the average student could read about 100 x 30 = 3,000 words per week in class. With 14 weeks of reading in the semester, a student would be able to read 42,000 words. Since they are required to attend and could achieve this anyway, I added 7,000 words (5 minutes outside reading per week) to make a minimum target count.I determined the maximum word count target after reviewing research by three successful teachers. Takase (2004) showed that during 5 years, students in a private girls' high school completed 69,000 to 149,000 words per year. Her work with reluctant, low level university students showed that an ER program using very easy books still succeeded in students achieving 46,000 to 73,000 words in just one semester. Nishizawa et al. (2004) followed students at a Japanese college of technology from high school to early university years. From student logs, they determined that students read 250,000 words by the early second year. At his cram school in Japan, Furukawa (2006 and personal communication) has recorded junior high students annually completing 322,000 words (first year), 410,000 words (second year), and 360,000 words (third year) through the use of the Start with Simple Stories (SSS) concept.

Using those figures, I decided that OUAVM students should be able to read 100,000 words in a semester. If they could read half an hour in class per week and another 30 minutes outside class, that would mean at the end of 14 weeks, they could accumulate 84,000 words per semester. Rather than require the whole 100,000 word target, though, I felt that the slowest readers (70 wpm) would be at a physical as well as motivational disadvantage. With 84,000 they would have to read 3,000 words outside class (roughly 40 minutes) per week, which seemed reasonable. Partial points were given for intermediate word counts (Table 3).

The data from 2011 were impressive. The average student read more than 76,000 words (12 books), and 60% of the class achieved the 84,000 word target. About 14% read 90,000-100,000 words, and 7% read more than 100,000 words. The number of students who read nothing fell from 5% in 2010 to 3%.

Table 2
ER portion of course grades for 2011 based on total words read*

Word count	49,000	56,000	63,000	70,000	77,000	84,000
Part of course grade	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%

*These are not actually the total words read. Students may have read more, but if they failed a MoodleReader quiz, they did not earn the words associated with that book, so they are not included in these tallies.

Table 3
Percentage of course grade depending on amount of words read in 2011

Total target words per semester	Outside class ER per semester (words)	Outside class weekly effort needed (words)	Portion of course grade
49,000	7,000	500	15%
56,000	14,000	1,000	20%
63,000	21,000	1,500	25%
70,000	28,000	2,000	30%
77,000	35,000	2,500	35%
84,000	42,000	3,000	40%

*These are not actually the total words read. Students may have read more, but if they failed a MoodleReader quiz, they did not earn the words associated with that book, so they are not included in these tallies.

With this success in 2011, I opted to raise the bar on target words in 2012 to 100,000 and show students that it was possible to get over 84,000 words with the 2011 results. The data showed that 62% of students achieved or exceeded the course target word count. An additional 23% read enough to get partial points. The percentage that read nothing fell from 3% to 1.5% compared to 2011. The overall average number of books read was 11.3.

Comparing the number of books read in 2011 (12) and 2012 (11.3) and the average number of words read (76,000 in 2011 and 90,000 in 2012) may raise a question about the level or length of books. In fact, a 2012 student survey confirmed that most students (58%) read higher level books than they had been instructed to read (Table 4).

This was a little surprising because most students reported they thought the levels they were given were accurate (Figure 1). Perhaps they read higher level books for the bigger word count or the literary challenge. Also, a technical malfunction with MoodleReader may have discouraged students from reading in the early part of the semester and forced them to read higher level books later to compensate.

Other Courses using ER at OUAVM

ER is not a program that has to be limited to reading courses[4]. At OUAVM, the use of GRs has been applied to English language courses other than English Reading Skills, as well as to content courses (Table 5).

Since late 2011, the three foreign teachers at OUAVM in charge of the courses described in Table 5 have collaborated to decide how GRs can be used with the different grades of students. They

Table 4
Responses to survey on whether students read books only at their prescribed level

Responses*	Percentage
No, most books were higher level.	5
No, many books were higher level.	12
No, a few books were higher level.	18
No, 1-2 books were higher level.	23
Yes, all were at my level.	24
No, most books were lower level.	2
No, many books were lower level.	2
No, a few books were lower level.	5
No, 1-2 books were lower level.	2
I never checked levels.	6

*N=93 out of 129 students

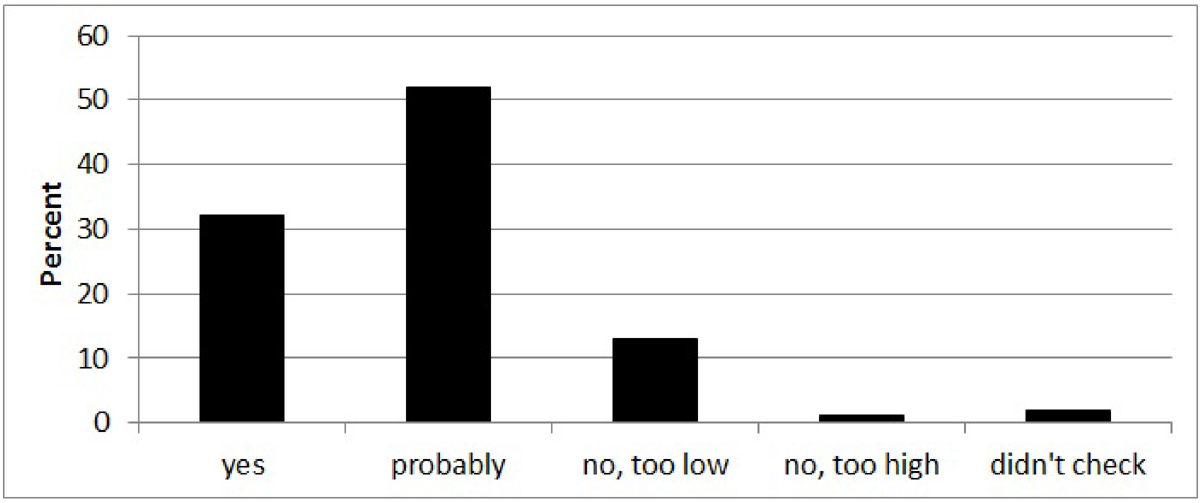


Figure 1. Responses to question whether their prescribed reading levels were accurate

have not all agreed on the strategies for using GRs, and conflicts exist with regard to assigning student reading level, teacher involvement, in-class reading, the best choice of books, and course assessment. These problems, coupled with low student motivation, have led to poor reading performance in most of the courses even though such courses had a much lower word count goal than the Reading Skills course. For example, 16 out of 21 students in the two-year basic agriculture course read nothing and failed the course. Although 47% of Current English I students reached their reading target with the Footprint readers (a non-fiction series with topics in science, nature, international culture, and sports), 38% read nothing or failed the few quizzes they took, and 42% reported the GRs for that course were difficult or too difficult.

Encouraging Student Motivation and Participation

MoodleReader provides teachers with data on student progress that can be presented to classes to encourage readers to keep up with classmates. Providing explanations in writing, whether in Japanese or English or both, can overcome a language barrier with students who cannot understand what the teacher explains orally. Handouts can give students information on grading schemes, the purpose of ER, weaknesses in reading and ways to overcome them, vocabulary related to literature (genre, plot, setting) for classroom discussion, publisher levels vs. student levels, and tips on choosing books.

A final note on encouraging students to participate in ER relates to teachers working together. At OUAVM, a recent survey of the science professors showed that the second-most important reason students have weak reading ability is that the university science course teachers themselves do not push students to learn to read in English (Hill, 2010). It is vital to join language and content teachers in a crusade to help students to understand how important reading is. If only the language teachers do it, students expect to hear the sales pitch and may be tempted to ignore it, but if they get the same message from content course teachers, especially ones who have acceptable English fluency themselves, the message may get through to more students.

Conclusions

Careful planning and execution of an ER program was shown to succeed in achieving greater word counts than in courses where such structure was not in place. Despite the use of non-fiction GRs that were thought to provoke interest from science majors in content courses, a large percentage of students read nothing, perhaps due to the differences in setting up the courses compared to the Reading Skills course, and to the difficulty of the GRs. More collaboration between teachers is needed to improve this situation and maintain ER beyond the first year of students' academic lives.

Table 5
Courses at OUAVM that require graded readers

Course name	Year of students	How GRs are used[a]
English Reading Skills	Mostly 1st-year	SSR[b] and outside class reading; 100,000 words/sem.
English Communication II	Mostly 1st-year	outside class reading; 10,000 or 15,000 word/sem.
Bekka (2-yr agriculture)	1st-year	outside class reading with Foundation readers; 10,000 or 15,000 word/sem.
Current English I and II[c]	Mostly 2nd-year	outside class reading Footprint readers; 10,000 word/sem.
International Cooperation Studies Debate[d]	3rd-year	outside class reading with Footprint readers and discussion; 6 books/sem.

[a] Unless specified, courses use GRs from all available publishers in the ERC. The debate course did not use MoodleReader quizzes.
[b] SSR = sustained silent reading (in class, 30 minutes)
[c] Topics presented in English on animals, agriculture, and environmental issues.
[d] Topics presented in English on worldwide agriculture and environmental issues.

Notes

1. OUAVM has just agreed to adding a second English Reading Skills course, to begin in October, 2014. The tentative syllabus centers around aspects of journal articles.
2. MoodleReader quizzes are available online via the Moodle course management software. Students must pass with 60% in a variety of ten questions which test comprehension of the books. See http://moodlereader.org/ for more information.
3. Book reports consisted of three questions to be completed in English. Contact the author for a copy.
4. Kyoto Sangyo University created MoodleReader (Claflin, 2009) and requires it as the basis for all English language courses in the Faculty of English, Faculty of International Culture, and Faculty of General Education.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank Ms. Mutsumi Shioda for translation of the English abstract into Japanese.

References

Claflin, M. (2009, July). The human side of a large MoodleReader ER program. Paper presented at the Extensive Reading in Japan Seminar, Kinki University Language Institute, Higashiosaka, Japan.

Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading.(*n.d.*). http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/english-language-teaching/courses/teacher-development/eper

Extensive Reading Foundation Graded Reader Level Scale. (*n.d.*).Retrieved from http://www.robwaring.org/er/scale/ERF_levels.htm

Furukawa, A. (2006). SSS extensive reading method proves to be an effective way to learn English. Retrieved from http://www.seg.co.jp/sss/

information/SSSER-2006.htm

Furukawa, A., & Kanda, M. (2010). *Eigo Tadoku Kanzen Guidebook* [The Complete Book Guide for Extensive Reading, third ed.]. Tokyo, Japan: Cosmopier.

Hill, G. (2010). Survey of teachers' perceptions toward reading English at a science university. *Research Bulletin of Obihiro University, 31*, 87-102.

Hill, G. (2012a). Design and practical applications of university courses employing extensive reading. Paper presented at 11th Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference, June 16, 2012, Hiroshima University.

Hill, G. (2012b). English Resource Center as a service group and self-access English learning facility. *Research Bulletin of Obihiro University*, *33*, in press.

Hill, G. (2012c). How we do it at Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine. *ER Journal, 5*(1), 8-11.

Nishizawa, H., Yoshioka, T., & Fukada, M. (2010). The impact of a 4-year extensive reading program. In A.M. Stoke (Ed.), *JALT2009 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo, Japan: JALT.

Takase, A. (2004). Effects of eliminating some demotivating factors in reading English extensively. *JALT2003 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo, Japan: JALT.

Author's Biography:

Glen Hill has been teaching since 1998. His research interests are ESP, ER, and academic writing, all for science majors.

Correlations Between BULATS Speaking/Writing and TOEIC® Scores

Michihiro Hirai
Kanagawa University,
mjhirai@beige.ocn.ne.jp

Amid growing concerns about the wide-spread use of the TOEIC® as a general measure of workplace English skills, the author analyzed correlations between its scores and those of a more globally accepted business English test – BULATS – among Japanese adults and found that their TOEIC Listening/Reading scores do not correlate as strongly with their BULATS Speaking or Writing scores (correlation coefficients of .58 and .55, respectively) as the general public tends to believe. Another major finding is that the majority of test-takers with TOEIC scores of 800 and above failed to exhibit the business English speaking and writing skills expected of competent international businesspeople.

職場の英語スキル測定指標としてTOEIC® 点数を使う傾向が広まっている中、筆者は、その点数と、世界でより広く使われているビジネス英語試験である BULATS の成績（ともに日本人成人）との相関を分析し、TOEIC リスニング/リーディング点数と BULATS スピーキングおよびライティング点数との相関が、一般に考えられているほど強くない（相関係数が .58 と .55）ことを発見した。また、TOEIC 800点以上の保有者の大半が、国際ビジネスパーソンに期待されるスピーキングおよびライティング能力水準に達していないことも判明した。

Keywords: test score correlation, TOEIC, BULATS, business speaking test, business writing test

Introduction

The accelerating trend toward globalization of the economy in recent years has led to a growing need to improve the English skills of corporate employees. As most Japanese companies depend heavily on the TOEIC Listening/Reading (hereafter "TOEIC LR") Test to assess their employees' English skills, concerns have been voiced about the appropriateness of this test as a measure of English skills – particularly productive (speaking and writing) skills – in actual business settings (Chapman, 2003; McCrostie, 2006; Childs, 1995; Hirai, 2002, 2008, 2009). To date, a rather limited number of reports have been published on how productive skills correlate with TOEIC LR scores, as outlined below.

Educational Testing Service (ETS®) published several research reports on the relationship between productive skills and TOEIC LR scores between 1982 and 2009 (see Hirai, 2009; Woodford, 1982). The credibility of their claims, however, has been called

Hirai, M. (2013). Correlations between BULATS Speaking/Writing and TOEIC® Scores. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 118-125). Hiroshima: JALT.

into question in independent studies (Chapman 2003 ; Hirai, 2002, 2008, 2009). Hirai reports, for instance, a correlation coefficient of .66 between BULATS Speaking levels and TOEIC LR scores (Hirai, 2009) and that of .69 between BULATS Writing levels and TOEIC LR scores (Hirai, 2008). (Note that BULATS is Cambridge ESOL's business English test as described below.) These correlation coefficients are considered lower than those found in ETS's reports and significantly lower than those initially claimed by ETS (Woodford, 1982).

In the meantime, in response to criticisms for the lack of productive skill tests, ETS upgraded the TOEIC in 2006 to extend its coverage optionally to speaking and writing skills, while offering some business flavor to a limited extent. It also published a research report on the correlation between TOEIC's LR, Speaking, and Writing Test scores (Liao, Qu, & Morgan, 2010) to better reflect the reality. They report an observed correlation coefficient (occ) of .64 and a disattenuated correlation coefficient (dcc) of .75 between TOEIC Speaking and LR scores. Note that dcc is calculated by calibrating occ with the reliability (alpha) coefficients of the two tests, the theory being that low test reliability tends to reduce occ. They also report an occ of .62 and a dcc of .70 between TOEIC Writing and LR scores. Both results are substantially lower than ETS's initial claims (Woodford, 1982).

Meanwhile Cambridge ESOL introduced the Business Language Testing Service (BULATS) suite in the mid 1990s, which is designed to evaluate all the four skills in business environments. One of the most important features of BULATS is that its scores are closely aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and hence can be interpreted in relation to this international standard, which is of great benefit to all the stakeholders. While it is not widely known in Japan yet, BULATS is one of the most significant business English tests outside Japan, particularly in Europe and some parts of Asia.

What the above observations point to is the growing awareness of three issues in the language education and testing community: (a) the meaningfulness of using scores of receptive skill tests in evaluating productive skills, (b) the meaningfulness of using a test originally designed to evaluate general (non-business) English skills in evaluating business English skills, and (c) the alignment of language skill evaluation with an international standard.

This report is intended to address (a) and (b) above, by analyzing how the BULATS Speaking and Writing test data relate to TOEIC LR scores using the most recent statistics, and to explain the gap that exists between how Japanese businesspeople actually perform on average in business settings (reality) and how they are perceived to perform by the general public based on their TOEIC (LR) scores (perception).

BULATS Speaking Test

Methods

The author analyzed the score data of 1,621 individuals (original sample) collected by The Society for Testing English Proficiency (STEP) who took the BULATS Speaking Test between April 1, 2005 and February 8, 2012 and also had at least one TOEIC LR test score. In compiling meaningful score data, to eliminate duplicate items and ensure reliability, the same care was taken as outlined in the previous report (Hirai, 2009). As a result of eliminating duplications and outliers, the score data of 1,584 test-takers was finally selected for this study. For the sake of statistical handling, the discrete levels of BULATS tests, 0, 0+, 1–, 1=, etc. to 5+, were converted to numerical values (for the procedure, refer to Hirai, 2009).

Results

Figure 1 illustrates how the BULATS Speaking level and the TOEIC score are distributed in two-dimensional space, with the two variables represented by the vertical and horizontal axes. The correlation coefficient was found to be .58.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of BULATS Speaking levels earned by the holders of TOEIC scores of 800 and above. The mean BULATS Speaking level was 2.86.

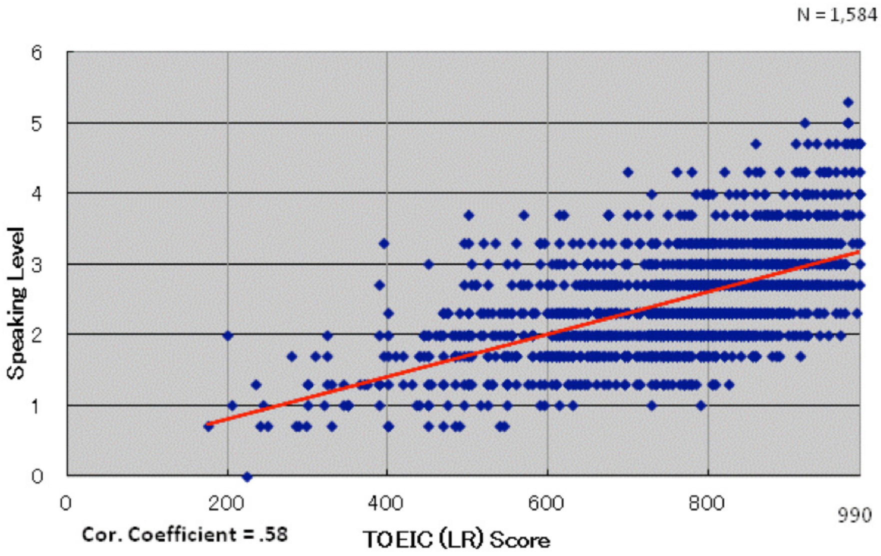


FIGURE 1. Correlation between BULATS Speaking Levels and TOEIC (LR) Scores

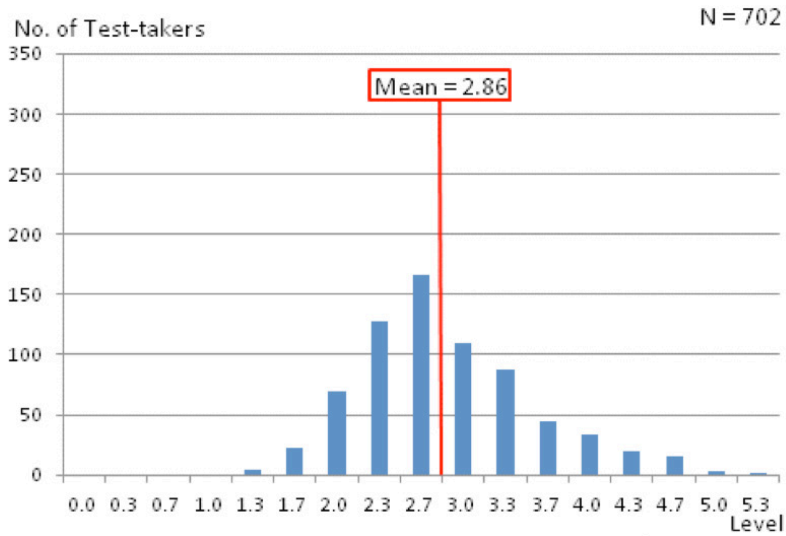


FIGURE 2. Speaking Level Distribution (TOEIC ≥ 800)

Analysis and Discussion

The correlation coefficient of .58 obtained between BULATS Speaking levels and TOEIC LR scores is somewhat lower than the .64 (occ) and .75 (dcc) reported by Liao et al. (2010). Business English generally involves some familiarity with workplace vocabulary and context, which is an additional factor that can negatively affect correlations between the productive skills exhibited in business-oriented tests such as BULATS and the receptive skills measured by more general-purpose tests such as the TOEIC. Compared with the BULATS Speaking test, whose questions and tasks represent typical business scenes (BULATS, 2005), the TOEIC Speaking test has a relatively small number of questions and tasks directly related to business. This difference in the degree of business orientation is considered to be one of the main reasons for the difference in correlation coefficient between the present study and that of Liao et al.

The correlation coefficient of .58 obtained is also somewhat lower than the .66 previously reported (Hirai, 2009). Whereas the test-takers' breakdown by job type remained relatively stable, their distribution by organization exhibited a significant change: The number of organizations represented by the test-takers increased 1.9-fold from 45 to 85. Note here that the term "organization" refers to a legal entity such as a company or a university and also that a company group consisting of a parent company and its subsidiary or affiliated companies is counted as one organization for the purpose of this analysis.

Because an organization's employee characteristics tend to remain the same over a period of time as short as three or four years, an increase in the number of test-takers within one organization would not significantly change its statistical properties. On the other hand, as the number of organizations increases, generally the test-takers diversify, i.e., a greater variety of people are involved, and almost by definition the correlation coefficient is expected to decrease. Thus, the drop in correlation coefficient, albeit small, can be primarily attributed to the shift in test-taker demography, particularly in terms of the number of organizations.

Figure 3 is based on Figure 1, with a horizontal solid line added at BULATS Speaking Level 3, which indicates the level desirable for international businesspeople. The regression line, which is also shown in solid in Figure 1, represents the center line around which the population of the sample is balanced, and thus can be considered, for any given value of one variable, to represent the average expected value of the other variable. It should be noted that the regression line has a significantly gentler slope than the diagonal dotted line connecting the lowest possible values to the highest possible values of the two variables (the BULATS Speaking Test level and the TOEIC LR score), which can be regarded as a hypothetical balanced performance line where speaking skills would be directly proportionate to receptive skills. Furthermore, this regression line is flatter than that reported previously (Hirai, 2009). It is clear from Figure 3 that the average speaking levels were significantly lower than those predicted from the balanced performance line, most notably among the test-takers with high TOEIC scores.

In Figure 3, the regression line intersects with Speaking Level 3 at the TOEIC LR score of about 930. Level 3 in BULATS corresponds to ALTE Level B2 (BULATS, 2007), which is generally regarded as the minimum desirable level for competent international businesspeople. This level typically enables the test-taker to "deal with clients and resolve most problems in their own field" (STEP, 2004). Figure 3 therefore suggests that even with a TOEIC score of 930, which is generally considered extremely high for Japanese, about half of the score holders are not at the desired level for competent international businesspeople. This fact is also mirrored in Figure 2, which indicates that the mean BULATS Speaking level was 2.86 (slightly lower than 3) for the holders

.

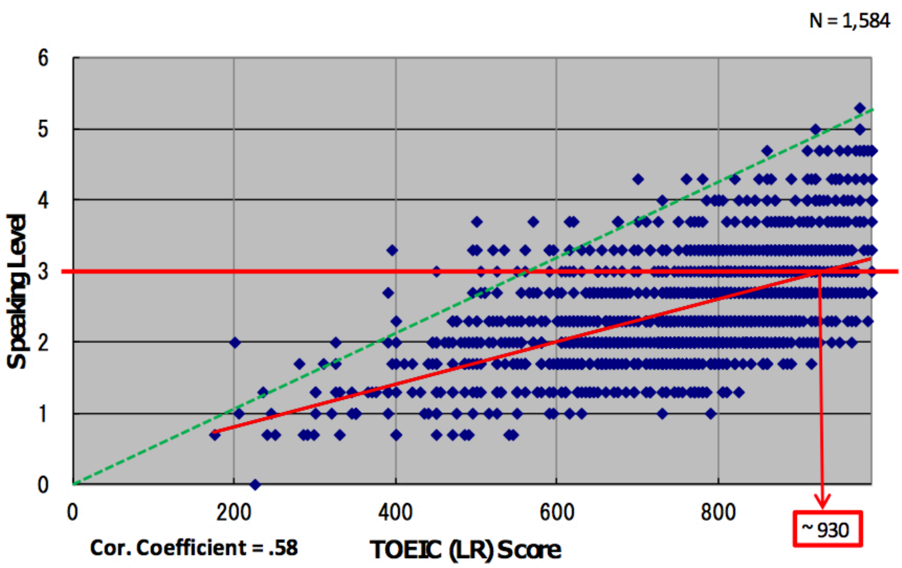


Figure 3. Finding the TOEIC (LR) score that meets the desirable speaking level

of TOEIC scores of 800 and above. In fact, a closer investigation of the score data has revealed that 56% of test-takers with TOEIC scores of 800 and above were rated below Level 3.

This tendency is attributed to the fact that business speaking is a composite skill involving a variety of subskills and kinds of language knowledge, such as logical thinking, rhetoric, organization, and a large active vocabulary. In addition, the BULATS Speaking Test places emphasis on task accomplishment, which is an important factor in real-life business and which calls for extra attention beyond mere language skills. Unfortunately Japanese businesspeople generally lack active business vocabulary and are relatively weak in logical thinking and rhetoric, which demand greater experience and/or ad-hoc training than the sort of receptive skills measured by the TOEIC LR.

BULATS Writing Test

Methods

The author analyzed the score data of 1,776 individuals (original sample) collected by STEP who took the BULATS Writing Test between April 1, 2005 and February 8, 2012 and also had at least one TOEIC LR test score. Duplicate and outlying score data were eliminated in the same manner as with the BULATS Speaking level analysis. As a result, the score data of 1,763 test-takers was finally selected for this study. The results of the BULATS Writing Test are reported on the same scoring scale as in the BULATS Speaking Test; thus, the same level-score conversion scheme was used.

Results

Figure 4 illustrates how the BULATS Writing level and the TOEIC score are distributed in two-dimensional space, with the two variables represented by the vertical and horizontal axes. The correlation coefficient was found to be .55.

Figure 5 shows the distribution of BULATS Writing levels earned by the holders of TOEIC scores of 800 and above. The mean BULATS Writing level was 2.52.

Analysis and Discussion

The correlation coefficient of .55 obtained between BULATS Writing levels and TOEIC LR scores is somewhat lower than the .62 (occ) and .70 (dcc) reported by Liao et al. (2010). The argument provided in an earlier paragraph discussing the BULATS Speaking Test basically applies also to the BULATS and TOEIC Writing Tests. In particular, the

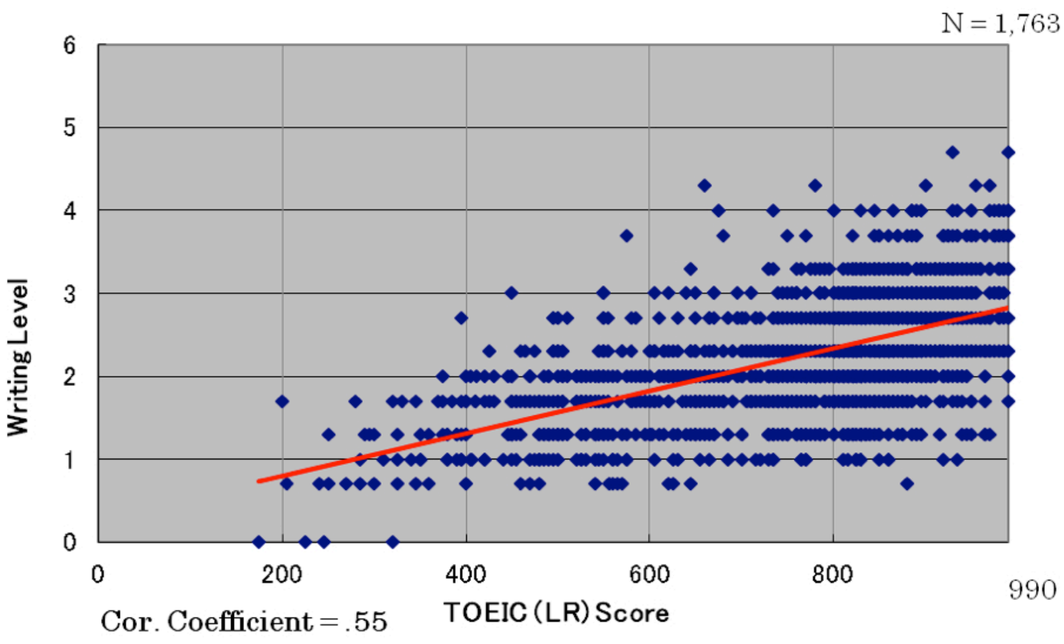


Figure 4. Correlation between BULATS writing levels and TOEIC (LR) scores

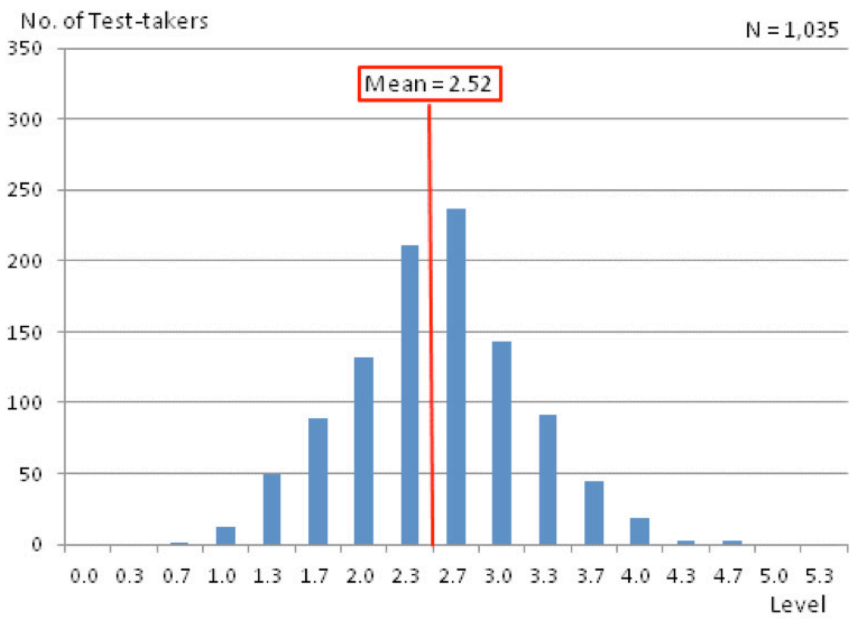


Figure 5. Speaking Level Distribution (TOEIC ≥ 800)

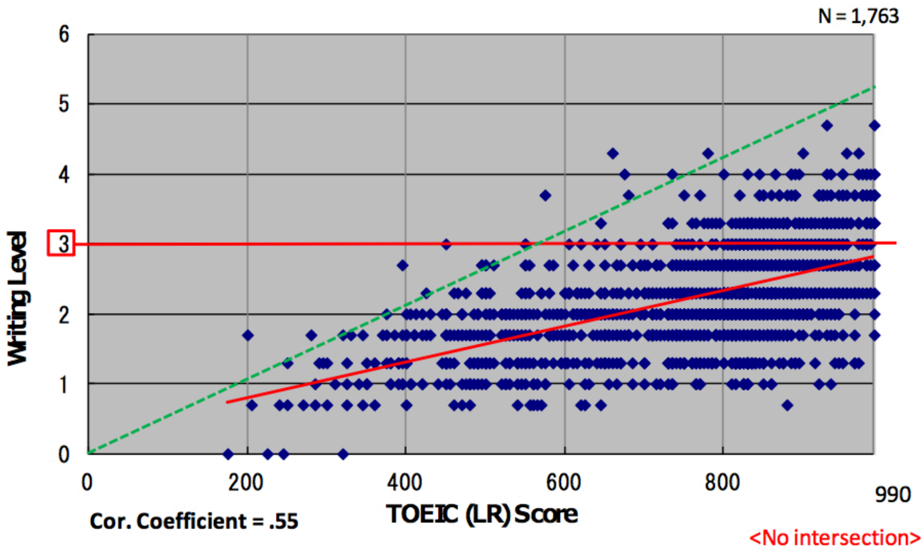


Figure 6. Finding the TOEIC (LR) score that meets the desirable writing level

BULATS Writing Test tends to include tasks which require a deeper insight or more experience than its TOEIC counterparts. Thus, this difference in the degree of business orientation can be considered one of the main reasons for the difference in correlation coefficient between the present study and that of Liao et al.

The correlation coefficient of .55 obtained is also somewhat lower than the .69 previously reported (Hirai, 2008). A demographic analysis has revealed that whereas the distribution by job type again did not show any major change that would explain the drop in correlation coefficient, the distribution by organization exhibited a significant change: The number of organizations represented by the test-takers increased 1.7-fold from 57 to 95. Thus, analogously to the argument on the BULATS Speaking Test, the drop in correlation coefficient can be attributed primarily to the shift in test-taker demography, particularly in terms of the number of organizations.

Figure 6 is based on Figure 4, with a horizontal solid line added at BULATS Writing Level 3, which indicates the level desirable for international businesspeople. As with the BULATS Speaking Test, the regression line, which is also shown in solid line in Figure 4, has a significantly gentler slope than the diagonal dotted line representing balanced writing performance. Further, this regression line is flatter than that reported previously (Hirai, 2008). It is clear from Figure 6 that the average writing levels were significantly lower than those predicted from the balanced performance line, most notably among the test-takers with high TOEIC scores.

As shown in Figure 6, the regression line does not intersect with Writing Level 3 at all, which is generally regarded as the minimum desirable level for competent international businesspeople. This means that even holders of the maximum TOEIC LR score (990) cannot on average reach BULATS Level 3. This fact is also mirrored in Figure 5, which indicates that the mean BULATS Writing level was 2.52 (lower than 3) for the holders of TOEIC scores of 800 and above. In fact, a closer investigation of the score data has revealed that 71% of test-takers with TOEIC scores of 800 and above were rated below Level 3. Basically the same argument as with the BULATS Speaking Test applies here, too.

Summary and Conclusions

BULATS Speaking and Writing levels were found to correlate only moderately with TOEIC LR scores, with the correlation coefficients of .58 and .55, respectively, which are a little lower than those reported by Liao et al. of ETS on the correlation between TOEIC Speaking/Writing scores and LR scores. These relatively small discrepancies are attributed to the difference in the degree of business orientation between the two tests. The drop in correlation coefficients from the author's previous study can be attributed to the shift in test-taker demography, i.e., the diversification of test-takers. In general, checking the correlations between productive and receptive skills and between general-purpose and specific-purpose (such as business) English skills is essential in determining the validity or meaningfulness of interpreting the scores of any test outside the scope and domain for which it is originally designed.

The present study has also revealed that Japanese people's business speaking/writing skills measured by BULATS are substantially lower than the levels the general public might expect of them from their TOEIC LR scores, highlighting a significant perception gap between the two. The author attributes Japanese people's inadequacy in productive skills to their lack of exposure to real-life business English as represented by BULATS.

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank the staff of the BULATS team at STEP for their valuable assistance and generosity in sharing the test data.

References

BULATS (2007). *BULATS candidate handbook*. Retrieved July 3, 2008, from http://www.bulats.org/handbook/index.php

BULATS (2005). *Speaking test sample question paper.* Retrieved June 7, 2005, from http://www.bulats.org/samples/index.php

Chapman, M. (2003). TOEIC: Tried but undertested. *Shiken: JALT Testing & Evaluation SIG Newsletter*, *12* (2) 2-7. Retrieved October 20, 2012, from http://jalt.org/test/cha_1.htm

Childs, M. (1995). Good and bad uses of TOEIC by Japanese companies. In J.D. Brown and S.O. Yamashita (Eds.), *Language Testing in Japan* (pp. 66-75). Tokyo, Japan: JALT

Hirai, M. (2002). Correlations between active skill and passive skill test scores. *Shiken: JALT Testing & Evaluation SIG Newsletter*, *6(3)*, 2–8. Retrieved June 12, 2008, from http://jalt.org/test/hir_1.htm

Hirai, M. (2008). Correlation between STEP BULATS Writing and TOEIC® scores. In T. Newfields, P. Wanner, & M. Kawate-Mierzejewska (Eds.), *Proceedings of 7th Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference*, JALT. Retrieved

July 8, 2009, from http://jalt.org/pansig/2008/HTML/Hirai1.htm

Hirai, M. (2009). Correlation between STEP BULATS Speaking and TOEIC® scores. In Eric Skier and T. Newfields (Eds.), *Proceedings of 8th Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference*, JALT. Retrieved July 12, 2012, from http://jalt.org/pansig/2009/HTML/Hirai.htm

Liao, C., Qu, Y., & Morgan, R. (2010). The relationships of test scores measured by the TOEIC® listening and reading test and TOEIC® speaking and writing tests. *TOEIC Compendium TC-10-13*, ETS, January 2010. Retrieved June 9, 2012, from http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/TC-10-13.pdf

McCrostie, J. (2006). Why are universities abandoning English teaching for TOEIC training? *On Cue*, 14 (2), 30-32. Retrieved January 7, 2010 from: http://jaltcue-sig.org/files/OnCUE/14.2content.pdf

STEP (2004). *Sekai kijun no bijinesu eigo nouryoku tesuto STEP BULATS* [Global-standard business English test STEP BULATS]. Tokyo, Japan: STEP

Woodford, P. E. (1982). *An introduction to TOEIC: The initial validity study*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service. Retrieved June 6, 2009, from http://www.ets.org/research/researcher/TOEIC-RS-00.html

Author's Biography:

Michihiro Hirai has an M.S.E. degree and a title of Professional Engineer in IT and is a member of JALT, JACET, and IEEE PCS.

Putting Communicative Literacy Into Conversation

Michael Iwane-Salovaara
Momoyama Gakuin University
mjsalo@andrew.ac.jp

For EFL students to communicate effectively they need to understand conversation is more than the sum of its parts. Communicative literacy, herein narrowly defined, is the understanding and practice of conversation as a unified communication event. The parts of which include an opening/closing, appropriate turn-taking, backchanneling, eye contact etc. as well as the absence of dysfluencies from the speakers first language (L1) such as kanaeigo, aizuchi, and content poor responses. I will give a brief overview of what constitutes a conversation and a teaching strategy which aims to make EFL students aware of conversation as a unified discoursal unit.

本稿では、コミュニケーション能力を会話の理解と実践という統合的コミュニケーションとして狭義に捉え、会話の構成要素やEFL(外国語としての英語)学習者が会話を統合的なものとして捉えるための教授方法についての考察を試みる。まず、EFLの学習者が効果的にコミュニケーションを行うためには、会話は部分的な要素というよりも、統合的なものであることと理解する必要がある。そして、会話における部分的要素とは、会話の開始部/終了部、　発話の順序交代、相槌のうち方、アイコンタクトなどがあげられる。また、カタカナ英語、相槌、返答の曖昧さのような母語からの影響を受けて起こる非流暢性の欠如も会話の構成要素のひとつとなる。

Keywords: Communicative literacy, conversation strategies, contrastive linguistics

English conversation in Japanese schools is often taught in discrete parts (grammar, functions & notions, vocabulary, and so on). While these discrete parts of ELT are, of course, important they can, for Japanese EFL learners, distort English conversation to such an extent that they see little connection to conversation in their own first language (L1). Knowing the overall framework of what a conversation is, and is not, is "one of the… cardinal rules of learning" (Noguchi, 1995 as cited in Maynard, 1998, p. 3).

Iwane-Salovaara, M. (2013). Putting Communicative Literacy Into Conversation. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 126-132). Hiroshima: JALT.

In my teaching situation I teach non-English majors, who are first & second year low to intermediate level students (250-270 TOEIC), compulsory English for 28 90-minute lessons over two semesters. There is, unsurprisingly, a wide range of motivation, ability, and maturity levels. My responsibility is to raise learner awareness about the similarities and differences between English conversation and Japanese conversation and then provide a platform or framework on which learners can build their English abilities.

I am going to sidestep the issue of whether or not teaching 'natural' English conversation in the classroom is even possible (see Seedhouse, 1996) because the focus seems to be misplaced. The goal in my classes is for the students to be better familiarized with 'natural' English conversation. If they are aware of a conversational framework, then they can work towards it. Like many contract and part-time teachers, I only have a limited time, a little over 40 hours a year, with my students. Therefore, I try to identify a set of skills, approaches and information that can help my students to build and improve their English if they so choose after they completed my course.

I will now discuss the main points I present to my students. I consider these to be a framework from which they can build their English conversation skills. I do not claim that these main points are exclusive or that the framework is the only one that would work, only that I use them and I find them effective in my teaching situation.

Similarities & Differences

There are similar conversation conventions that are present in both Japanese and English, which, when identified, can help the Japanese EFL learner better understand what is expected. Conversations typically have an opening, body, and ending; the use of back-channeling; and a recognized mutuality to highlight a few. There are also important differences, such as the role of silence, the amount of detail provided, and the role responsibility plays in communication, which are often lost on Japanese learners. While many of these aspects of conversation are taught, they are not usually contrasted with the Japanese learners' L1.

Similarities

Basic Framework

One of the surprises I have found in teaching English conversation is how most EFL learners (and many teachers) are unaware that conversation in any language has a basic framework, namely, a beginning, a body, and a closing. While quite simple and obvious once pointed out, many learners did not realize this framework, presumably because they were never taught it.

Teaching learners about this framework serves several purposes. First, it frames the conversation as a temporal and limited experience that is similar to their own L1 and therefore achievable. They can know where to begin or how to end once a conversation has been started. Second, this three-part framework can later help prime the learners to understand aspects of EAP or ESP, particularly presentations and essays.

Backchanneling/Aizuchi

Backchanneling is an interesting aspect of English and Japanese conversation. Both languages have backchanneling (相槌 *aizuchi* in Japanese) which helps to move the conversation along and contribute to it sounding more natural. However, there are two important differences: first, *aizuchi* is used much more in Japanese conversation than backchanneling is used in English conversation. In fact, the word *aizuchi* is an everyday Japanese word that even children know whereas backchanneling is a specialist word. Because of this difference of usage I use the term English *aizuchi* when talking to my students about backchanneling in the classroom. The second difference is that *aizuchi* and backchanneling have different sets of vocalizations (*etoh*, *eeeeeeeh* etc. in Japanese and um, er, ah etc. in English) and small words (*soka*, *honto*, *usoh* etc. and really, wow, that's too bad etc.).

Mutuality

As I discovered with my students, the mutuality of a conversation is often overlooked. What should happen in a conversation is the engagement of both speakers in what they are doing, namely, having a conversation on some topic. Indeed, when watching Japanese learners chat with each other in Japanese the mutuality is apparent. They are looking at each other, actively listening and responding with *aizuchi* or with some appropriate response. However, when speaking English the sense of mutuality is lost as they struggle to complete a series of tasks correctly. Tale-tell signs of this are the loss of mutual eye-contact, facing elsewhere (the ceiling, wall, floor, window, textbook etc.), long silences, little or no English *aizuchi,* responses not connected to what was said, and lapses into Japanese. Or put it another way, conversation often resembling a series of non sequiturs. The idea that an English conversation is a singular whole with two or more interlocutors rather than a prepared series of scripts for different situations is something that has to be explicitly taught. The simplest way to do that is to refer to how the learners converse in their L1.

Differences

Silence

The role of silence is one of the differences that is distinct between English and Japanese conversation. In this context I will define silence as a prolonged lack of response, which includes verbal as well body language.

Silence in a Japanese conversation may indicate that the interlocutor may be thinking of a response or may think that a response is not required. However, in English conversation silence can be a signal of disinterest or even hostility and thus needs to be avoided. Since English is often taught as a set of discrete skills to be mastered and evaluated, at times EFL learners lapse into long unfilled pauses trying to come up with answers spoken in "correct" English, even if in the end the responds is, "I don't know". While there are other reasons for silence, these examples illustrate the differences between English and Japanese. The point is that EFL learners are often not made aware of the different roles silence plays in the two languages.

Details

Related to silence is the amount of detail provided. An English conversation, where one or both of the interlocutors provide minimal response, will invariably end fairly quickly because minimal responses offer little for the listener to respond to. Also, minimal responses can be interpreted, like silence, as disinterest or hostility. In Japanese conversation the giving of details is not as important.

Responsibility

The reason details are important in English conversation has to do with the role responsibility plays in communication (Hinds, 1987). Responsibility for the receipt of the message is an important aspect of every language including English and Japanese. In English, the main, but not the exclusive, responsibility for the receipt of message is with the speaker (or writer). This responsibility is realized in several ways. First, the speaker provides enough information and detail so as to enable the listener to respond in kind and so on. Second, the speaker expects signals such as backchanneling and small words to indicate reception of the message. Long pauses and a lack of backchanneling are disruptive since they indicate a possible lack of reception, which the speaker must attend to before continuing. In Japanese, discourse responsibility is reversed and the listener (or reader) is expected to understand the context of what was said thereby receiving the message.

Dysfluencies

Dysfluencies are elements of conversation that hinder fluency and sometimes comprehension. They often come from the speaker's L1. In Japan they are long pauses, lack of eye contact, short or one word responses, Japanese *aizuchi*, and what I call *katakana eigo* (*kanaeigo* for short). Pointing out these dysfluencies to learners can help to improve their fluency and the overall quality of their conversation.

Eye contact with one's interlocutor is an important signal of being engaged in a conversation, as is providing content rich and relevant responses. Often English conversations echo the fragmented and formulaic conversations learners picked up from their textbooks and language lessons. Conversations are contextual and dynamic artifacts between two or more interlocutors and therefore should be taught as such.

The main difference between Japanese *aizuchi* and backchanneling (or as I call it in my classes: English *aizuchi*) is its higher frequency of use. Examples of *aizuchi* include the nasally *un*, the guttural *haw*, and mid-tonal *ehh*, as well as echoing one or two words the speaker has just uttered, for example:

A: I like ice cream.
B: Ice cream.
A: Chocolate is my favourite.
B: Chocolate.

Kanaeigo is the Japanese pronunciation of English words, for example: and-*oh*, from-*mu*, about-*oh*, house-*u*, etc. It most often occurs with lower level

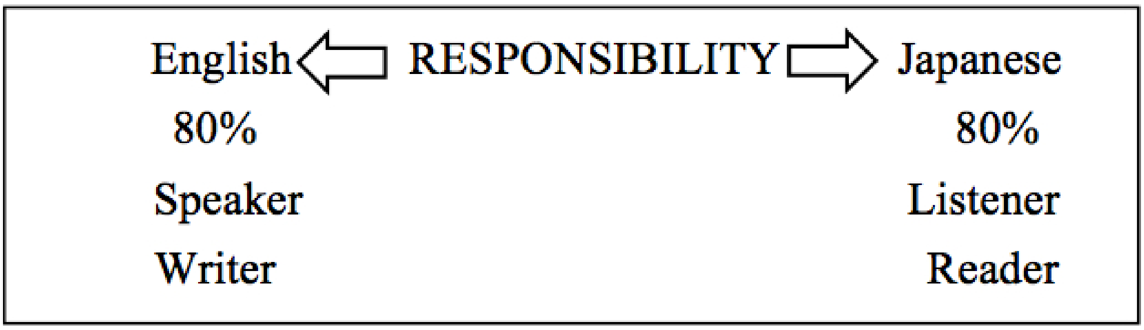


FIGURE 1. Illustration of how "responsibility" is boarded

learners who tend to speak one word at a time rather than in phrases or chunks. Making learners aware of this dysfluency can go a long way in improving their pronunciation and intonation because *kanaeigo* impedes progress in both areas. Also, learners can self-assess this aspect of their speaking development without the presence of a language teacher.

In making learners aware of their dysfluencies the language teacher can quickly focus on some of the major impediments to improved conversation. Also the learners gain greater autonomy by being able to self-assess their own progress.

Communicative literacy, in this context, is the understanding and practice of conversation as a whole and unified communication event. The following is a description of how I teach English conversation as a discoursal whole rather in discrete parts.

Summary of what I do in my classroom

Responsibility

I first talk to the students about responsibility (責任 *sekinin*) in communication and that in Japanese communication the responsibility for comprehension rests with the receiver (listener, reader) whereas in English it rests with the sender (speaker, writer) (Hinds, 1987). This contrast is illustrated on the board as shown in figure 1.Figure 1: I explain and demonstrate this by raising their awareness of how many times a native English teacher asks "Do you understand?", "Got it?" etc. or looks at his or her students for nods and facial expressions for indications that the message has been received (though not necessarily comprehended). Then contrast this with a Japanese teacher who does much less checking on whether or not the message has been received or comprehended.

Making students aware of how responsibility in conversation differs in English and Japanese is an "aha!" moment for many of them.

Expectations

Conversation is a series of met expectations. The listener expects the speaker to respond to what has just been said and to add more information and

Speaker expects the listener to:	Listener expects the speaker to:
Listen	Respond
Backchannel	Give details
Ready to respond	Eye contact

FIGURE 2. How to board expectations for EFL learners

details (comment, opinion, observation, question, request, etc.) and maintain eye contact, to name a few. Concurrently, the speaker expects the listener to maintain eye contact, backchannel (oral & body language), and to be ready to respond.

While I have talked to my students about expectations, I have not yet boarded it. In future I will include a visual like in Figure 2.

Opening-Body-Closing

I use this simple schema which can be later repurposed to teach essay writing and preparing presentations.

Length

The length of the conversation is determined by the number of turns. A turn is defined as one A/B exchange

A: {one turn}
B:

The length of the first conversation is 7 turns which includes the opening (1+ turn), the body (5+ turns), and the closing (1+ turns). Depending on the ability of the class the number of turns increase by 1 turn for each subsequent conversation.

Width

The width is determined by 3 parts: English *aizuchi*/thinking and response / "more". "More" can be realized by giving extra details or information, making a comment, giving an opinion, asking a question and so on. These terms are not academic sounding because they are geared to my students and they appear to understand and use them. Also these terms, and my configuration of them, are not exclusive and can be modified as required, particularly with more advanced students.

A: [statement]
B: *aizuchi/thinking* + *response* + *more*

Textbook or no textbook

For 1st year classes I use *Conversation In Class* (Richmond, Vannieu, Azra, & Torikawa, 2009) by Alma Publishing. A textbook is useful for low level students who still need to built their vocabulary and grammar. However, I am in the process of reconsidering using a textbook since it can reinforce the static and formulaic language my students learned in high school.

For 2nd year classes I don't use a textbook because I try to draw upon their individual and collective knowledge of English. After a couple of conversation exercises on everyday here and now topics I have them having content based conversations. The topics are taken from their majors. So sociology students take their topics from sociology, business students choose business topics and so on.

Evaluation/dysfluencies

The evaluation is done at the discourse level and not on the content or grammar of the conversation. Elements such as responses, extra information, and English *aizuchi* (back channeling) are noted. Also, I take note of any dysfluencies such as speaking Japanese, using *kanaeigo*, and long silences.

Efficacy

While I am still developing my approach to teaching English conversation at the discourse level, the response from students has been encouraging. I surveyed 179 students in 9 classes about various aspects of the course I taught them. Three of the questions were the most relevant concerning English conversation.

In the semester ending questionnaire 76% of the students indicated that their attitude toward English improved. This is significant because on the first day of class I did a quick hand survey of who liked and disliked English. While results varied from class to class I told my students that my goal for the semester was to improve their feelings towards English. Affective factors and motivation can have an effect on learner outcomes and placing this as a stated priority prepared the students to expect a change in their feelings towards English (see Figure 3).

When asked about their English speaking ability 70% thought their ability had improved in four

1. Have your feelings about English improved from April. 4月と比べて英語が上達した実感がありますか。	1	2	3	4	NR	Total
	7	36	98	38	0	179
	4%	20%	55%	21%	0%	100%

FIGURE 3. Question 1 of the end of semester questionnaire. 1=no, 4=yes

5. Do you think your English speaking ability has improved? 英語の会話能力があがったと思いますか。	1	2	3	4	NR	Total
	7	45	86	40	1	179
	4%	25%	48%	22%	1%	100%

FIGURE 4 . Question 5 of the end of semester questionnaire. 1=no, 4=yes

6. Do you think your understanding of the differences between Japanese conversation and English conversation has improved? 日本語の会話と英語の会話の違いについての理解が深まったと思いますか。	1	2	3	4	NR	Total
	5	41	89	44	0	179
	3%	23%	50%	25%	0.0%	100%

FIGURE 5. Question 6 of the end of semester questionnaire. 1=no, 4=yes

months. That this result is close to the improved attitudes towards English is interesting and in need of further examination (see Figure 4).

Finally, 75% thought their understanding of the differences between Japanese and English conversation had improved. Of the three questions, this one is the most important since it indicates a deeper understand of the mechanisms of conversations as well as the possible acquisition of conversational tools that support self-assessment and autonomy and from there confidence to engage in an English conversation that is dynamic and spontaneous (see Figure 5).

These results are preliminary but they do point to an overall improvement in the learner experience. By taking a pragmatic approach to teaching conversation at the discourse level I hope to improve learner conversational literacy by improving their understanding of various elements of conversation and how these work together. There is much more that can be said about this approach to teaching conversation. I have focused only on what I have done in my classes.

References

Hinds, J. (1987). Reader versus writer responsibility: A new typology. In Connor U, & Kaplan R, (eds), *Writing across cultures: Analysis of L2 text* (141-52) Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Maynard, Senko K. (1998). *Principles of Japanese discourse: A handbook*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Richmond, S., Vannieu, B., Azra, J., & Torikawa, T. (2009). *Conversations in class* (New Edition) Kyoto, Japan: Alma Publishing.

Seedhouse, P. (1996). Classroom interaction: possibilities and impossibilities. *ELT Journal*. Volume *50*(1), 16-24.

Author's Biography:

Michael Iwane-Salovaara is interested in teaching conversational English to Japanese English language learners. Related interests include pragmatics, conversational analysis, contrastive analysis, and corpus linguistics.

Benefits of Drama Techniques for Literacy Development in EFL

Aya Kawakami
Nanzan University
kawakami@nanzan-u.ac.jp

The term 'drama techniques', often considered by educators as synonymous with 'theater', implies to many teachers, a performance. These two terms are, however, in EFL, two completely different things, with very different objectives. In discussing widespread misconceptions that hinder the use of drama techniques, this paper seeks to eliminate many of the fears preventing educators from incorporating these tools into their teaching repertoire. Drama techniques, such as utilizing hot seating, people poems, and line omissions, are seen as vital tools which can provide several useful intermediate steps, particularly in the challenging realm of literacy, that can guide the student from the EFL classroom to the L2 world.

ドラマテクニック≫と言う用語は、しばしば教師達に≪劇団≫ー数多くの公演を伴うーと同義語とみなされている。しかし、第二言語・外国語教育においては、極めて異なった目的を持つ、二つの全く異なるものである。本稿では一般に広まっている、このツールの使用を阻む見当違いの考えについて論じながら、教師が指導方法の一つとして、ドラマテクニックを取り入れる事において抱いている危惧を払拭する方向を模索する。ドラマテクニックは幾つかの有効な中級ステップを提供できる重要なツールで有り、特に言語運用能力の分野において、学生をESLの教室から第二言語の世界へと導ける事が理解できる。

Keywords: drama techniques, teaching techniques

Introduction

Drama and theater–these words seem synonymous to many in the EFL world. In fact, the mere mention of "drama techniques" brings up visions of a daunting and time-consuming stage production that some teachers neither have the time, knowledge, or ability to do (Gaudart, 1990; Royka, 2002). It is no wonder that educators shy away from the idea of incorporating such techniques into their classroom repertoire. Teachers, particularly those from cultures where there is a more traditional view of education, often fear appearing foolish to the students, frivolous to the administration, and being seen as playing instead of teaching (Gaudart, 1990; Royka, 2002). The misconceptions about drama techniques, in addition to teachers' lack of knowledge of the range of activities available and their benefits, have been the primary hindrance to the widespread use of drama techniques in EFL (Gaudart, 1990). Many parallels exist between preparing actors for the stage and preparing EFL students for the L2 world, and it is

Kawakami, A. (2013). Benefits of Drama Techniques. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 133-139). Hiroshima: JALT.

precisely these parallels that make the incorporation of drama techniques vital. This paper aims to clarify the difference between theater and drama techniques in education, enumerate the benefits of using drama techniques in the EFL classroom, particularly in regards to literacy, and provide some examples of how to incorporate such techniques.

Misconceptions: Defining Educational Drama Techniques and Theater

Educators tend to assume that using drama techniques implies some type of performance (Gaudart, 1990; Royka, 2002). To put it simply, this type of performance is what is termed 'theater'. Drama techniques in education do not require a staged performance, but instead focus on the activities that traditionally are used to develop skills that actors need, and oddly enough, these match the skills needed by EFL learners. A drama activity is any activity that "asks the student to portray himself in an imaginary situation; or to portray another person in an imaginary situation" (Gaudart, 1990, p. 230). Therefore, "the developmental aspect of drama [is] stressed and emphasis [is] given as to how drama [can] be used to increase awareness, self-expression and creativity" (Gaudart, 1990, p. 230). Drama activities lend themselves easily to creating opportunities for exploration and analysis, aid the development of language accuracy, provide opportunities for practice in a safe environment, and aid in critical thinking and cultural competence (Gaudart, 1990). The focus is on group work and group interaction; performance is at the discretion of the teacher and dependent on whether the class desires it. Drama techniques are opportunities for introspection, analysis, creativity, interaction, spontaneity, intimacy, trust building, and self-expression; none of which require performance for validation.

Drama Techniques: General Benefits

As Dickson (1989) stated, "learning to use a second language is, in many ways, like learning to become a different person" (p. 300). Developing the L2 personality is no easy process and is an area that is difficult to address if educators utilize only the most traditional teaching methods in the classroom. The EFL classroom can be like a rehearsal space where students practice to prepare for the outside world. Students need a safe environment, a buffer area, where they feel comfortable to explore and make mistakes before going out onto the stage of the L2 world. Trust building, creating this buffering space both physically and mentally, and building empathy for others are all foundations of drama and some of the benefits that can be gained from using these techniques with EFL students (Paquette & Rieg, 2009). The benefits are endless and the key ones for EFL are examined below.

The primary benefit is that through the use of drama techniques, teachers can create an important intermediate step before learners step out into the L2 world, while at the same time maintaining authenticity of communication and a genuine need for students to use the language. Many teachers, particularly in countries where the immediate need for the L2 is not apparent, struggle to motivate students and give purpose to their activities (Gaudart, 1990; Pin-hsiang & Wen-chi, 2008). This is further aggravated when the L2 is forced upon students due to government policy, a common situation in secondary education (Gaudart, 1990; Pin-hsiang & Wen-chi, 2008).

Drama activities are problem solving in nature--they require students to work together towards a concrete goal that they can perceive easily, and through this process utilize the L2 in authentic types of communication, thus increasing motivation (Connors, 1986; Gaudart, 1990; Sam, 1990). A common conversation activity can easily be made more natural: rather than having students passively read and practice dialogues written in a textbook, an activity that is not readily purposeful to learners, teachers could utilize an omission exercise often used to aid actors in making their responses more natural to other people's lines. In an omission exercise, students only have their lines, not their partner's lines in a dialogue. By limiting the information available, students are forced to actively listen and pay attention to the content of their partner's speech, an act much closer to a real conversation. The situation is still greatly controlled as the students have their own lines in front of them, but suddenly they can no longer be passive. Further, it is also possible to implant an unexpected issue that must be resolved, a 'rupture' that the students must react to in a spontaneous fashion, such as a sudden problem like an order not having been placed or a relationship issue, once classes are more confident or proficient (Dickson, 1989).

Teachers can eventually move on to simulations where there is little to no coaching on the language to be used, taking away the artificial 'crutches', allowing the students to explore more independently (Dickson, 1989). As can be seen here, by utilizing such drama techniques, the activity of role plays becomes a more authentic communication act (Connors, 1986). As Chauhan (2004) states, "an attractive alternative is teaching language through drama because it gives a context for listening and meaningful language production, forcing the learners to use their language resources and, thus, enhancing their linguistic abilities." It can help to provide opportunities to focus on meaning and on life experiences rather than on the mechanics of language itself (Dickson, 1989).

There is, however, a key difference between experiential learning in the L2 environment and incorporating drama activities in the classroom. Unlike actual experiences in the L2, there is an additional advantage of these types of activities being able to provide slightly slowed down or phased versions of real experiences, catering to the level of the student, aiding in easing them into the L2 world (Royka, 2002). The removal of the 'crutches' is not immediate or jarring, but a steady process. Drama techniques are thus easily modified to suit the level of the EFL student. This counters another common misconception of drama techniques: that it is only meant for advanced, active, and outgoing students (Dickson, 1989; Hoyt, 1992). Activities can easily be modified and done in sequence to slowly challenge students and allow them opportunities for free and authentic language use (Dickson, 1989). This is, as previously mentioned, the ideal for the EFL classroom. As Kasper (2000) states:

> cognitive learning theory posits that in the process of acquiring literacy skills, students progress through a series of three stages, the cognitive, the associative and autonomous. Progression through these stages is facilitated by scaffolding, which involves providing extensive instructional support during the initial stages of learning and gradually removing this support as students become more proficient at the task." (p. 106)

Challenging the students in stages allows them to become more autonomous and able to use the L2 with confidence and independence.

The theory of multiple intelligences in EFL states that students have a variety of strengths and thus learn more effectively in differing ways—therefore, using a wide range of stimuli and teaching methods may, in fact, aid in L2 acquisition (Bas, 2008). It is a common occurrence for teachers of students with learning disabilities to use drama and art as ways to facilitate learning and while EFL students do not necessarily have issues with language learning, they can certainly benefit from using different approaches to learning (Jackson & Schneider, 2000). Students often have different learning styles and learning needs and thus it is not difficult to see how using TPR-oriented activities may help tactile or physical learners, particularly in regards to literacy, to gain understanding of abstract or difficult readings. As Hoyt (1992) explains, "transmediation…[the] process of moving information from one communication system to another… encourages learners to generate new meanings and to expand existing ones" (p. 581).

In addition to this, drama activities are great opportunities for cooperative learning--stronger or more confident students can help the shy or lower level students, creating opportunities for peer teaching and student-centered learning (Scarcella, 1978). The very negotiation needed during drama activities can be opportunities for socialization and communication in the L2, especially when students are given a degree of autonomy. Most activities are cooperative in nature and when students themselves are allowed the freedom to mold how the activity is done, they can decide who takes on the more prominent positions. This has the additional benefit of allowing students to take on roles according to comfort level. Incorporation of trust building exercises, particularly at the beginning of a course, can also ease students into drama activities and promote an atmosphere of comfort and safety that can aid in all aspects of the class (Chauhan, 2004; Dickson, 1989).

The role of the teacher is not a passive one, however--the teacher must set the tone, must participate as a guide and member of the group in order for there to be true trust (Dickson, 1989; Paquette & Rieg, 2009; Royka, 2002). The teacher must be sensitive to the level of comfort in the activity, as well as the cultural background and personalities of the students in order to ease them into more challenging activities in a systematic fashion (Royka, 2002). Gauging when to critique and when to encourage, to allow the students freedom to make mistakes without fear of being put on the spot or made an example of, are essential teacher skills (Paquette & Rieg, 2009). The students will sense the teacher's attitude and act accordingly--having a positive attitude and a belief in the benefits of the activities is key. Role plays that help to give students autonomy and learn cultural competence are highly beneficial but only so if the teacher provides a comprehensive set-up that is matched to the level of the students and if the teacher provides them with the cultural information needed to simulate the L2 situation (Dickson, 1989). Without proper set-up, students may revert to cultural stereotypes. Only by having enough information and the right amount of coaching can the students truly gain the full benefits of such activities--learning articulation and intonation, appropriate body language and facial expressions, common mannerisms and phrases, and many other aspects unique to the embodiment of the L2 culture.

Literacy and Drama: The Missing Link

The definition of literacy has evolved a great deal with the advent of internet technology to incorporate a wide range of skills needed to be considered literate (Kasper, 2000). For the purposes of this paper, however, focus is placed on the traditional definition of literacy, the reading comprehension and writing skills necessary to function in the L2 society, as well as critical thinking needed for discussion—areas that are notoriously difficult, particularly in countries where the L1 education does not focus on these skills in the same manner as the L2 culture. This cross-cultural difference in focus is particularly noticeable in the teaching of composition. This section focuses on the development of skills through drama techniques that are needed for success in L2 literacy and provides examples of how this can be achieved. The drama activities here again function as an intermediary step—a bridge from the skills students have in the L1 to the skills that are needed in the L2.

Reading and Reading Comprehension

The world of literature is a vast one, full of imaginative and creative stories that enlighten, entertain, and provoke discussion and introspection. Yet many teachers avoid stories or poems that they feel are too abstract for students to visualize from text alone. Guided imagery may be the answer--the students are asked to close their eyes while the teacher guides them through visualization of certain situations, feelings, or characters (Annarella, 2000). This allows teachers to provide information that aids in comprehension prior to students reading the text--teacher can set the time, mood, and mode in which the students will read the text. Having students do a *people poem* (Appendix A) or *description circle* (Appendix B) where students can brainstorm key words related to the theme of the text does not only help to teach vital vocabulary but helps students retain that knowledge through memorable, physical activity. Re-enactments of scenes in group work can help students gain a deeper understanding of the scene, particularly if the teacher aids in the development of the roles each student would play in the re-enactment through activities like *hot seating* (Appendix C). In fact, hot seating is an excellent tool to help the weaker students understand the characters and their motivations by having the students who have a better understanding of the text answer questions as if they were those characters. If the text is non-fiction and for discussion, having students play the people from the story with differing viewpoints could be extremely beneficial—it creates a buffer allowing the student to speak freely. Students feel liberated as they are not speaking their personal opinion, and this disassociation aids in more legitimate and fearless communication, while simultaneously creating empathy for different perspectives (Dickson, 1989). Drama activities also can stimulate imagination, a basic skill needed for making inferences and finding solutions to issues in text, particularly those with complicated and abstract themes (Jackson & Schneider, 2000; Dickson, 1989; Sam, 1990). Visual and physical learners can glean understanding before moving on to more traditional activities for reading comprehension.

Writing and Creative Writing

"Drama is a powerful learning medium because it also provides a context within which students may write for imaginative as well as functional purposes" (Wagner, cited in Jackson & Schneider, 2000, p. 38). Despite its benefits, writing can be a daunting activity for many EFL students. Many feel their lack of creativity or life experiences hinder them from effective writing (Annarella, 2000). Brainstorming tasks can often be a de-motivating and difficult process (Annarella, 2000). Again here, drama activities can serve as an intermediate step. Teachers can use set-up exercises like the *people poem*, the *description circle*, and *guided imagery* (Appendices A-C) to spark the imagination in a group context (See Appendix E for websites containing sample drama activities).

A text or story could also be the starting point for creative writing. Exploring a source text with activities like *hot seating* and *who? what? where?* (Appendix D) can lead to writing activities such as character histories or diaries, short scripted scenes based on the *who? what? where?*, and a mock newspaper report based on the text. Drama activities can even be incorporated into the class for extended periods of time as a binding theme for many different writing activities. For example, in a class introduced by Jackson and Schneider (2000), the teacher created a historical drama of immigrants in the United States. The students, in the roles of immigrants from different countries, were asked to create diaries, petitions, official documents, poems, and letters to home (Jackson & Schneider, 2000). While the writing was technically creative, the students had to do genuine research and write based on the information they gained (Jackson & Schneider, 2000). This is a creative way to motivate students to learn how to research and write, while keeping interest so they may move on to more academic writing. It is hard to deny that utilizing drama techniques can be an attractive and exciting buffering step that allows students to gain confidence in their writing skills before setting them off to do more independent work.

Conclusion

Drama techniques, by their very nature, are perfect aids to teaching a second language. Students learn team work, negotiation, and learn through peers. The use of these activities helps to create a safe environment where students can explore without fear and such activities can be a vital intermediate step, helping the students move forward with confidence. Drama techniques are not meant to replace but to augment the tools that the teacher already has and like any new tool, it will require time and patience to master. While the focus of this paper is to separate drama techniques in EFL from theater and performance, it by no means is meant to discount the amazing learning opportunities that theater provides. It merely hopes to clarify that drama and performance are not necessarily synonymous and that these drama techniques can be applied to a wide range of EFL classes and situations.

Acknowledgments

Many of the ideas regarding the role of theater and the activities given as examples for literacy development came about as part of the joint presentation done by Dawn Kobayashi, Jason White, and myself at the 2012 PanSIG conference

References

Annarella, L.A. (2000). Using Creative Drama in the Writing and Reading Process. (Eric

Document Reproduction Service No. ED445358)

Bas, G. (2008). Integrating multiple intelligences in ESL/EFL Classrooms. *The Internet TESL Journal*, *14*(5). Retrieved on July 23rd, 2012, from http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Bas-IntegratingMultipleIntelligences.html

Chauhan, V. (2004). Drama techniques for teaching English. *The Internet TESL Journal*, *10*(10). Retrieved on July 23rd, 2012, from http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Chauhan-Drama.html

Connors, C. (1986). Teaching ESL Through Creative Drama. *TESL Canada Journal, 3*(2), 73-75. Retrieved on July 20th, 2012, from http://journals.sfu.ca/tesl/index.php/tesl/article/viewFile/487/318

Dickson, P. S. (1989). Acting French: Drama techniques in the second language classroom. *The French Review, 63*(2), 300-311.

Gaudart, H. (1990). Using drama techniques in language teaching. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED366197)

Hoyt, L. (1992). Many ways of knowing: Using drama, oral interactions, and the visual arts to enhance reading comprehension. *The Reading Teacher*, *45*(8), 580-584.

Jackson, S. A. W., & Schneider, J. J. (2000). Process drama: A special space and place for writing. *The Reading Teacher*, *54*(1), 38-51.

Kasper, L. (2000). New technologies, new literacies: Focus discipline research and ESL learning communities. *Language Learning & Technology, 4*(2), 105-128.

Paquette, K. R., & Rieg, S. A. (2009). Using drama and movement to enhance English language learners' literacy development. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 36 (2)* Retrieved on July 26th, 2012, from http://www.freepatentsonline.com/article/Journal-Instructional-Psychology/204682056.html

Pin-hsiang, N. W., & Wen-Chi, V. W. (2008). Creating and authentic EFL learning environment to enhance student motivation to study English. *Asian EFL Journal, 10*(4)*, Article 11*. Retrieved on July 22nd, 2012, from http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/December_08_wcw.php

Royka, J. G. (2002). Overcoming the fear of using drama in English language teaching. *The Internet TESL Journal, 8*(6). Retrieved on July 22nd, 2012, from http://iteslj.org/Articles/Royka-Drama.html

Scarcella, R. C. (1978). Socio-drama for social interaction. *TESOL Quarterly, 12,* (2), 41-46.

Author's Biography:

Aya Kawakami teaches at Nanzan University, judges for the Aichi E.S.S. Drama Festival, and is program chair for the Speech, Drama, and Debate SIG.

Appendix A: People Poem

Students (Ss) generate a vocabulary list based on an anchor word. Ss come up with an object that is connected to this anchor word. In groups, they create a physical sculpture of the word together and incorporate the words they brainstormed in a creative recitation. For example, for the anchor word "anger," Ss brainstorm these words: fury, revenge, betrayal, violence, punching, fighting, etc. With their bodies, together they create a physical sculpture for anger: a tiger, a gun, a bomb, etc. Can be done in front of the class or in small groups.

Appendix B: Description Circle

Ss view a picture chosen by the teacher based on the lesson theme. Ss brainstorm adjectives/short phrases connected to the picture in groups. Teacher elicits ideas and puts them on the board. Ss then create descriptive sentences utilizing the vocabulary on the board. Teacher and Ss form a circle and take turns to speak one sentence about the picture. Ss eventually run out of preformed sentences but the teacher should encourage spontaneous responses inspired by the ideas from the circle.

Appendix C: Hot Seating

Ss first identify the different roles (characters) in the text. In groups, characters are assigned to different Ss. Arrange the groups so they sit in a circle or semi-circle with one chair in the middle. The Ss playing the characters will take turns sitting at the center while other members of the class ask questions about the character, place in the story, feelings, etc. of the person sitting in the chair in the middle of the circle.

Appendix D: Who? What? Where?

An improvisational activity--usually Ss will decide the answers in their groups but teachers can set the answer to fit the story the class is reading or the situation they are developing.

For example
Who? Romeo and Juliet
Where? Juliet's house
What? Juliet has just discovered that Romeo killed Tybalt, Romeo enters her room.

Elicit volunteers to enact the scene spontaneously Allow the scene to develop naturally. Other Ss can join in the improvisation if the scene demands it. This can be done in front of the class or in smaller groups. After the improvisation, elicit audience/group feedback. Repeat for post-activity feedback if desired.

Appendix E: Websites with Drama Activities

http://dramaresource.com/resources/features/drama-for-language-learning
http://www.freeeslmaterials.com/drama.html
http://www.slideshare.net/MLTANSW/drama-activities-for-language-teachers
http://www.eslflow.com/roleplaysdramatheatregames.html
http://esldrama.weebly.com/index.html

Oral Interpretation in the Language Classroom: Dramatic Activities for Non-Dramatic People

David E. Kluge
Nanzan University
klugenanzan@gmail.com

Many teachers realize that drama has great potential in the language classroom, but hesitate to implement it because of lack of the theater training that they feel they must have in order to implement it correctly. Many teachers also feel that theater is good for some students, but not their students (Gaudart, 1990; Royka, 2002). They feel that their students are not advanced enough, or not uninhibited enough, or lacking in some other necessary element, or too busy studying for important exams to waste time on theater. This paper proposes a way for language teachers to use drama in their classroom without years of theater training. It also proposes oral interpretation, also known as readers theater, as a way for students of a wide variety of language ability to reap the benefits of drama.

本稿では、演劇授業を考えてみる。多くの教師が、演劇(ドラマ)は語学の授業で大きな可能性があると認識しているが、演劇の経験が少なく、かつ正しく実践しなくてはいけないと考え、演劇を授業に取り入れることをためらってしまっている。また、一部の学生には効果があると感じているが、自身の学生に関しては考えてない (Gaudart, 1990; Royka, 2002)。つまり、自分の学生は上級レベルの英語力がない、自由に表現することができない、必要な力を十分に兼ね備えていない、受験などの勉強に忙しすぎて演劇には時間をかけられないと考えている。本稿では、演劇の訓練をつまなくとも、語学を教える教師が演劇を授業に取り入れることができる方法を紹介し、様々なレベルの学生たちが、演劇から語学を習得するための方法であるオーラルインタープリテーション(リーダーズシアターとも呼ばれる)も紹介する。

Keywords: drama, oral interpretation, readers theater, task-based learning

1 Introduction

Drama and theater activities have received a lot of interest lately in TESOL circles (Kao, Carkin, & Hsu, 2011; Moody, 2002; Wilson, 2008). Many teachers realize that drama has great potential in the language classroom, but hesitate to use it because of lack of the theater training they feel they must have to implement it correctly (Gaudart, 1990; Royka, 2002). Many teachers also feel that theater is good for some students, but not *their* students. They feel that their students are of too low a language level, are too shy, lack some other necessary element, or

Kluge, D. (2013). Oral Interpretation in the Language Classroom: Dramatic Activities for Non-Dramatic People. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 140-147). Hiroshima: JALT.

are too busy studying for important exams to waste time on theater. This paper introduces two ways for language teachers to use drama in their classroom without years of theater training: oral interpretation (OI) and readers theater (RT). The paper first defines OI and RT, then explains the benefits of OI and RT for language learning, and finally describes in a step-by-step manner how to do OI and RT as a way for students of a wide variety of language ability to reap the benefits of drama.

1.1 Definition of Oral Interpretation

Oral Interpretation has been called "the oralizing of literature" (Campbell, 1967), and has been an important aspect of education for centuries. It has been defined as follows:

> Oral Interpretation is the expression and sharing of literature with an audience. The function of the interpreter is to establish oneself as a liaison between the author who created the literature and the audience which responds to it. The goal of the interpreter should be influenced by the author's intention which can be discovered by investigation into the author's background, viewpoint and the time and conditions under which the selection was written. (Parker & Bradley, 2012, para. 1)

The key terms here are "to establish oneself as a liaison between the author who created the literature and the audience which responds to it." That is, the performer's role is to interpret the words for the audience, and like a foreign language interpreter, the focus is on the audience, and the interpreter is clearly another person and not the author or the characters portrayed in the piece.

OI has been confused with both the typical reading aloud activity done in language classes and with drama or theater—the putting on of plays. OI is distinguished from the typical reading aloud activity in that there is more of an effort to dramatize, to "interpret" the words on the page to a much greater extent than is usual with reading aloud. This dramatization includes the use of voice, facial expression, posture, gesture, and movement to communicate the author's intent. OI is different from drama in that there are minimal or no sets, costumes, lighting, or hand props; all performers hold the script in hand, there is often a narrator; and the performers usually face the audience, interacting more with the audience and not with each other on stage, the so-called "off-stage focus" which happens rarely or intermittently in drama (Asano, Kluge, & Kumai, 2012).

1.2 Descriptions of Oral Interpretation

The term "oral interpretation" is an umbrella term that includes three distinct activities called oral interpretation, readers theater, and chamber theater (Asano et al., 2012). Although this paper focuses on oral interpretation and readers theater, all three genre of oral interpretation are defined below. What all three activities have in common is the use of script in hand at the time of performance and a general off-stage focus. Under the umbrella term of oral interpretation are the performance categories of Interpretive Reading (sometimes called Solo Oral Interpretation or simply Oral Interpretation), Readers Theater (sometimes called Group Oral Interpretation or Interpreters Theater), and Chamber Theater (Asano et al., 2012). Each of these performance categories is described below.

1.2.1 Oral Interpretation/Interpretive Reading

Oral Interpretation (OI) is "the art of communicating to an audience a work of literary art in its intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic entirety" (Lee & Gura, 2005, p. 4). It usually consists of one person interpreting a piece of literature—a poem, song lyrics, an essay, a speech, a short story, or a selection from a novel. It usually excludes the reading of a play. The performer holds the script in hand or on a music stand while performing. (Asano et al., 2012).

1.2.2 Readers Theater

Readers Theater (RT) is similar to Oral Interpretation, but it includes two or more performers. This means that ensemble work is required and is evaluated by the judges. The performers hold the script in hand or on a music stand while performing, and often sit on high stools. Although it is called "theater," there are no costumes, sets, or props (Kelleher, 1997).

1.2.3 Chamber Theater

Chamber Theater (CT) was developed by Robert S. Breen at Northwestern University in 1949 (Breen, 1986). In CT performers are both characters in the story and narrators, meaning CT performances often happen in two time frames, one in which the story is happening, and the narrator's time, often occurring after the events of the story. Like OI and RT, CT performers use scripts during the performance. Like RT it is usually a group activity. Unlike OI and RT, CT uses minimal sets, lighting, costumes, and props (Asano et al., 2012). Because CT makes use of set, lighting, costumes, and props that require time, money, and effort to prepare, it will not be discussed further in this paper, as the focus of this work is to explain drama methods that do not require money or all the preparation necessary in "putting on a play."

2 Reasons for Using Oral Interpretation

Simply understanding the meaning and structure of OI may not be sufficient to convince teachers of its value in the language classroom. The issue of why use OI needs to be addressed as there are teachers who either do not see the value of drama/OI or who think that drama/OI has merit for students other than their own. Below are only a few of the reasons to implement OI in language classes. (For a more detailed discussion of the benefits of OI in language classes, see Asano et al., 2012).

2.1 OI and Cognitive Theory

Oller's Episode Hypothesis, a cognitive-based theory, relates to the benefit of using OI. Oller (1983) proposed that texts that have an episodic nature help second language acquisition because they make the texts easy to understand and remember (Asano et al., 2012). Since OI often uses texts that tell a story (episodic), it is easy to understand and remember the language and details of the piece.

2.2 OI and Strategies of Good Language Learners

Rubin (1975) listed six strategies used by good language learners:

1. The language learner is a willing and accurate guesser.
2. The good language learner has a strong drive to communicate, or to learn from a communication.
3. The good language learner is often not inhibited.
4. In addition to focusing on communication, the good language learner is prepared to attend to form.
5. The good language learner practices.
6. The good language learner monitors his own and the speech of others.

By using OI, the language learner is asked to participate in activities that help them become good language learners. In OI, the learner must guess the meaning of literature which is often purposefully vague (#1). The OI learner is "on stage" to communicate (#2). Good OI performers rid themselves of much inhibition through repeated practice and performance (#3). OI requires performers to learn good pronunciation and intonation (#4). OI requires large amounts of practice at home, in class, and at school outside of class (#5). Through the necessities of ensemble work, the OI performer is required to monitor individual speech as well as the speech of others in the group (#6). In these ways, OI helps students to become good language learners (Asano et al., 2012).

2.3 OI and Reading Improvement

Reading is an important part of language acquisition and OI helps improve reading fluency. Reading fluency is made up of "accurate reading of connected text at a conversational rate with appropriate prosody (expression)" (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2006, as cited in Hudson, 2006, p. 1). OI performers practice reading fluency throughout the process as they must accurately understand the piece in order to communicate it accurately, practicing

Table 1
Oral Interpretation Process

Order	Step	Activity
1	Selection of material	Selecting a piece to be performed, considering the performer's and audience's interests, maturity, language proficiency, etc. (by teacher or student)
2	Script making	Getting the material scripted for OI—indicating change of characters, narrator
3	Understanding	Understanding both implicit and explicit messages of the text
4	Practice/Rehearsal	Making arrangements for practice
5	Reading aloud	Getting a feel for the words, imagining possible ways to interpret the piece
6	Coaching	Learning/practicing prosodic features such as pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, pitch, rapidity, and volume that can match the interpretation
7	Staging	Planning where to stand and where to move to communicate some paralinguistic aspects of English
8	Performance	Performing the piece in front of an audience

Note: Adapted from Asano, K., Kluge, D., Kumai, W. (2012). An introduction to oral interpretation and its relation to Nanzan Junior College. *ACADEMIA Literature and Language*, *91*, p. 46.

to perform it at a conversational rate, and using appropriate prosody to dramatize the piece. In these ways OI helps improve reading fluency (Asano et al., 2012). In addition, Willcutt (2012) reviewed RT and reading fluency research that showed a positive link between RT and reading fluency, citing the work of LaBerge and Samuels (1974) and Samuels (1979), Keehn (2003), Martinez, Roser, and Strecker (1998/1999), Millin & Rinehart (1999), Rinehart (1999), and Tyler & Chard (2000).

3 OI Procedure

Now that it has been established that OI does confer benefits to language learners, it is time to show how OI can be implemented in language classrooms. Both OI and RT classroom procedure are explained below.

3.1 Oral Interpretation Procedure

What follows in Table 1 and its explanation is one of many possible procedures that could be followed to implement OI.

Step 1, Selection of material, is an important step because students will not be be motivated in doing a piece that is not interesting, aimed at a younger or older audience. For the workshop that this paper is based on, the piece selected for the OI portion was "IF You Hear a Thousand People Love You," by Guadalupe de Saavedra (2012):

> IF you hear that a thousand people love you
> remember... saavedra is among them
>
> IF you hear that a hundred people love you
> remember... saavedra is either in the first
> or very last row
>
> IF you hear that seven people love you
> remember... saavedra is among them,

Table 2
Readers Theater Process

Order	Step	Activity
1	Selection of material	Selecting a piece to be performed, considering the performers' and audience's interests, maturity, language proficiency, etc. (by teacher or students)
2	Script making	Getting the material scripted for RT—indicating each person's parts
3	Understanding	Understanding both implicit and explicit messages of the text
4	Practice/Rehearsal	Making arrangements for practice
5	Reading aloud	Getting a feel for the words, imagining possible ways to interpret the piece, with each person reading the part assigned in Step 2 above
6	Coaching	Learning/practicing prosodic features such as pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, pitch, rapidity, and volume that can match the interpretation
7	Staging	Planning where each person should stand and where they should move to communicate some paralinguistic aspects of English
8	Performance	Performing the piece in front of an audience

Note: Adapted from Asano, K., Kluge, D., Kumai, W. (2012). An introduction to oral interpretation and its relation to Nanzan Junior College. *ACADEMIA Literature and Language, 91*, p. 46.

like a wednesday in the middle of the week

IF you hear that two people love you
remember... one of them is saavedra

IF you hear that only one person loves you
remember... he is saavedra

And when you see no one else around you,
and you find out
that no one loves you anymore,
then you will know for certain
that....saavedra is dead

In this case Step 2, Scripting, was easy as there was only one character and no narrator, so no work on scripting was necessary. Step 3, Understanding, consists of the performer reading the piece and looking up unknown words for the explicit meaning, and discussing with the teacher the implicit meaning. Step 4, Practice/Rehearsal, was easy in this case as all the steps took place within an hour. In the case of the classroom setting, this step will certainly take more time, depending on the language level of the students and the time available. Step 5, Reading aloud, was done with students going to different places of the room and reading aloud by themselves. This could also be done by reading aloud in chorus. Step 6, Coaching, is usually done over the entire period of rehearsal, but in this case, the coaching was done before participants started reading aloud. Participants were taught they could change the following variables to make an interesting performance: volume (soft to loud), speed (slow to fast), tone (low to high), and style (smooth to staccato). They were given some guidelines: good things are usually soft, slow, high, and smooth; bad things are usually medium volume, slow, low, and staccato; and advice for a few other states, such as the future, past, happy, and angry. Step 7, Staging, can be done by the teacher or the student, but if the student does it, the teacher should look at it and make comments. Step 8, Performing, was done with a partner. A common observation by the participants was surprise at the wide variety of interpretations of a piece each thought had only one interpretation. One example is that while most people chose a romantic interpretation of the poem, one participant chose to portray it as a mother speaking to her child.

3.2 Readers Theater Procedure

What follows in Table 2 and its explanation is one of many possible procedures that could be followed to implement RT.

The steps look very similar to those for OI, but there are some important differences. The piece selected for the RT portion of the workshop was *Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen (1997), based on a popular camp piece:

> We're going on a bear hunt
>
> We're gonna catch a big one.
>
> What a beautiful day!
>
> We're not scared.
>
> Uh-oh. <u>Grass</u>.
>
> <u>Wavy grass.</u>
>
> We can't go over it.
>
> We can't go under it.
>
> Oh-no. We'll have to go through it.
>
> <u>Swishy swashy, Swishy swashy, Swishy swashy</u>

There are several iterations of the above, with the underlined parts replaced by the following:

> ". . .river,
A deep cold river
Splash splosh! Splash splosh! Splash splosh!"
>
> ". . .mud
Thick oozy mud
Squelch, squerch! Squelch, squerch! Squelch, squerch!"
>
> " . . .forest
A big dark forest
Stumble trip! Stumble trip! Stumble trip!"
>
> ". . . snowstorm
A swirling whirling snowstorm.
Hooo wooo! Hooo wooo! Hooo wooo!"
>
> " . . . a cave
A narrow gloomy cave
Tiptoe! Tiptoe! Tiptoe!"

In this case Step 2, Scripting, takes a lot more time and effort than with the OI piece, and can be done by the teacher, or better yet, by the students. Step 3, Understanding, consists of the performers reading the piece and looking up unknown words for the explicit meaning, and discussing with the teacher the implicit meaning. In this case, the onomatopoeic words would have to be explained. Step 4, Practice/Rehearsal, was again easy in this case as all the steps took place within an hour, but this step will take longer in the classroom. Step 5, Reading aloud, was done with students going to a large open space in the room and reading aloud together. Step 6, Coaching, is the second significantly different step from the steps for OI. Special care must be taken to ensure that the performers work closely together as a group, to create an ensemble. The basic coaching was done in the OI portion of the workshop, but in actuality, as in the classroom, one or two students came forward as the leaders/directors of the group and worked on both the Coaching and Staging steps. Step 7, Staging, is the third main step that is significantly different from the steps for OI: since there are several performers, planning where each person should stand and move to becomes a challenge to both use the space on the stage and to create nice "stage pictures," meaning that if a photo were taken at that exact moment, the composition of the photo would be artistic and pleasing to the eye. Step 8, Performing, was done at the end of the workshop. Common observations by the participants at the end of the performance were surprise at how much fun the process was (even for those teachers who use drama techniques in class) and pride in their performance.

An interesting special note: this particular piece was also done by a group of 36 high school students at a Ministry of Education-designated Super Science High School. Before this particular workshop, the teacher had stated that the English ability, especially listening, of the students was low, so she would have to translate much of the explanation and directions. It was not necessary—as a matter of fact, the teacher was surprised by the enthusiasm, creativity, and English use of her students and stated that on the basis of the workshop the school would have to re-evaluate the English curriculum and the role that OI and RT would play. She was most impressed with her students' active use of English and discovered that OI and RT were much more valuable English activities than the "frosting" (not the cake, but just the frosting) activities she apparently thought them to be.

4 Conclusion

This paper has described two dramatic forms, oral interpretation and readers theater, that can and should be used in the language classroom. It has shown the educational and linguistic bases for using them in language classes. And finally, it has demonstrated how teachers, even those without theater training, and students with low levels of language ability and motivation, could use these dramatic forms to improve learning in the language classroom.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the officers and members of the Speech, Drama, and Debate SIG for their support for this presentation.

References

Asano, K., Kluge, D., & Kumai, W. (2012). An introduction to oral interpretation and its relation to Nanzan Junior College. *ACADEMIA Literature and Language*, *91*, 39-63.

Breen, R. S. (1986). *Chamber Theatre*. Ellison Bay, WI: Wm Caxton Ltd.

Campbell, P. (1967). *The speaking and speakers of literature*. Belmont, CA: Dickenson Publishing Company.

de Saavedra, G. (2012). IF you hear that a thousand people love you. Retrieved June 1, 2012, from http://v-forvictory.blogspot.jp/2007/02/then-you-will-know-for-certain.html

Gaudart, H. (1990). *Using drama techniques in language teaching*. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED366197).

Hudson, R. (2006). Using repeated reading and readers theater to increase fluency. *Reading First National Conference 2006* . [Handout]. Retrieved June 1, 2012, from http://api.ning.com/files/cdrRaiYutgasXZ9XRwjO1o7Vu3j7yFBpQ*qPt5SrArLLAxmUasHKev5*VBebhrO25zHrOTt5FpHl3H AHvhowRHJnUXc5Oiou/hudson_using_repeated_reading_to_increase_fluency.pdf

Kao, S., Carkin, G. & Hsu, L. *(2011).*Questioning techniques for promoting language learning with students of limited L2 oral proficiency in a drama-oriented language classroom. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance, 16* (4), 489-515.

Kelleher, M. E. (1997). Readers' Theater and Metacognition. *The New England Reading Association Journal 33*(2), 4-12.

Lee, C, & Gura, T. (2005). *Oral interpretation.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Moody, D. (2002). Undergoing a process and achieving a product: A contradiction in educational drama? In G. Brauer (Ed.), *Body and language: Intercultural learning through drama.* (135-160). Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing.

Oller, J. W., Jr. (1983). Some working ideas in language teaching. In J. W. Oller, Jr. & P. A. Richard-Amato (Eds.), *Methods that work* (pp. 3-19). Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.

Parker, N. A. & Bradley, M. C. (2012). Retrieved June 1, 2012, from http://www.scsk12.org/STT99_WQ/STT99/Houston_HS/parkern3/TheatresWebPg/ POI.htm

Rosen, M. (1997). *We're going on a bear hunt.* Illustrated by H. Oxenbury. London, England: Walker Books Ltd.

Royka, J. G. (2002). Overcoming the fear of using drama in English language teaching. *The Internet TESL Journal, 8*(6). Retrieved July 22, 2012, from http://iteslj.org/Articles/Royka-Drama.html

Rubin, J. (1975). What the "good language learner" can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly*, *9*(1), 41-51.

Willcutt, J. R. (2007). *Arts for Academic Achievement: A Brief Review of Research on Readers' Theatre and Tableau in Literacy Instruction*. Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, University of Minnesota. Retrieved June 1, 2012, from http://www.cehd.umn.edu/carei/publications/documents/AAA-Tableau-and-Readers-Theatre-Lit-Review.pdf

Wilson, K. (2009). *Drama and Improvisation*. Oxford,England: Oxford University Press.

Author's Biography:

David E. Kluge has been involved in theater and oral interpretation for 45 years as a participant, a coach/director, and teacher.

Japanese L1 Transfer in Refusals in English

Kimiko Koseki
Denenchofu Futaba Junior and Senior High School
koseki@myad.jp

Japanese high school students' flat refusals and polite refusals were collected with Discourse Completion Tasks and were compared with Americans' refusals. Americans used a negative willingness strategy to clearly communicate their unwillingness in their flat refusals while they used gratitude and/or statement of positive opinion strategies to mitigate possible offense to the interlocutor in their polite refusals. On the other hand, many lower-level Japanese students used a "regret + excuse" strategy both in their flat refusals and in their polite refusals. Furthermore, even though no Americans gave an excuse in their flat refusals, many Japanese students, regardless of their English proficiency, gave an excuse. These phenomena could be the Japanese students' negative first language (L1) transfer. Therefore, their awareness of intercultural differences in refusals should be raised. Finally, since refusing flatly and appropriately seemed to be difficult even for high-level students, both types of refusals should be taught in second language (L2) classrooms.

本稿は、高校2年生の英語会話の授業の中で行った「断り」に関する談話完成タスクの結果（年間得点率上位10人、中位10人、下位10人）とアメリカ人10人に対して実施した同じ談話完成タスクの結果を比較したものである。その内容は、他人に個人情報を聞かれてはっきり断るという課題（課題1）と、仲の良い友人の誘いを相手の気持ちに配慮して断るという課題（課題2）の2つについて実施し、分析方法は、Beebe et al.（1990)の論文の分析方法を用いた。結果は、課題1において、アメリカ人は1人も言い訳をしなかったのに対し、日本人学生は、英語力に関わらず多くの学生が言い訳をし、また、成績下位の日本人学生の多くは、課題1と2のいずれの場合も「"I'm sorry."＋言い訳」の方略を使った。この現象は、日本人学生が日本語の「断り」の表現方法を転移したためであると思われる。日本人学生にとって英語で適切にはっきり断ることの難しさが示され、双方のタイプの「断り」の指導が期待される。

Keywords: pragmatics, English refusals, flat refusals, Japanese high school students, L1 transfer

Introduction

Yule (1996) defines pragmatics as "the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or a writer) and interpreted by a listener (or a reader)" (p. 3). Research has shown that pragmatics is integral in understanding people's messages as well as in appropriately communicating their intention (Lakoff, 1973; Leech, 1983). However, what makes matters complicated is that this pragmatic meaning could be socio-culturally specific (LoCastro, 2003), and to understand it, shared knowledge in the given speech community is required (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). Going against this socio-cultural expectation

Koseki, K. (2013). Japanese L1 Transfer in Refusals in English. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 148-154). Hiroshima: JALT.

could be interpreted as being inappropriate or even rude (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Nelson, Carson, Al-Batal, & El-Bakary, 2002). Thomas (1983) indicates that even though grammatical errors show that the speaker is not a proficient language user, pragmatic failure could reflect badly on the speaker as a person. Therefore, pragmatic instruction to second-language (L2) learners is necessary.

This study investigates the speech act of refusals collected with Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) implemented prior to teaching refusals in an English conversation course for second-year high school students. Speech acts are defined as a functional unit of communication (Nelson et al., 2002) or the way in which people fulfill a specific social function (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). Refusals are a speech act which could cause serious offense to the interlocutor because they are a Face Threatening Act (FTA) and clearly go against Brown and Levinson's (1987) *positive want*, defined as human beings' basic desire to be approved by others. DCTs are an assessment tool to elicit participants' pragmatic ability (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). In a DCT, participants are given a situation and an incomplete conversation. The participants are then required to complete the conversation with what they would say in that situation.

Methods

Participants

The participants were 64 female Japanese students in their second year of senior high school. Their English proficiency ranged between TOEIC 350 to 850. One student had just come back from studying in the U.S.A. on American Field Service (AFS) Intercultural Programs for one year.

The comparison group consists of 10 American women who are native speakers of English and live in the U.S.A.. All are college educated with at least a BA degree. In the current study, only female native speakers were collected for a comparison group because the target students are all female and one of the DCTs was deemed gender-biased (as explained in the following section).

Discourse Completion Tasks

Two DCTs were introduced to the Japanese students and the Americans: one was intended to elicit flat refusals and the other was designed to collect polite refusals which intended to mitigate possible offense to the interlocutor (See Appendix A). Both DCTs were developed based on the target students' possible language use domain even though most of them have no experience to use English outside of the classroom. The DCT which was intended to elicit flat refusals was developed based on one of the students' actual experience. She had a hard time refusing an English-speaking man's request for her phone number. Even though she could successfully avoid giving out her personal information, she wished she had known how to refuse in English in such a situation. In the other DCT, participants were asked to politely refuse their close friend's invitation to a party because the refuser would not know anyone except the friend at that party.

Procedure

To keep a consistency between 10 Americans' responses and the Japanese students' responses, 10 upper-level students, 10 middle-level students, and 10 lower-level students were determined based on their total exam scores through the course. Then, the responses from both Japanese students and Americans were cut into semantic formulas and were coded based on Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz's (1990) categorization. Finally, the results of the analysis were compared between each group of Japanese students and Americans respectively.

Results

Flat Refusals (Situation 1)

Table 1 shows the result of the DCT in Situation 1, which was intended to elicit a flat refusal. As can be seen, the most frequently used set of semantic formulas among Americans was "*statement of regret* (Regret) + *negative willingness/ability* (Negative Willingness)" such as "I'm sorry, but I don't feel comfortable giving out that information." Similarly, about a half of both the upper-level and the middle-

Table 1
Analysis of Flat Refusals (Situation 1)

Set of Semantic Formulas	A	U 10	M 10	L 10
Statement of Regret + Negative Willingness/Ability	6	5	4	1
Negative Willingness/Ability + Statement of Alternative	3	0	0	0
Criticize the Request/Requester	1	0	0	0
Statement of Regret + Excuse	0	3	3	6
Excuse	0	8	6	6
Negative Willingness/Ability + Excuse	0	2	1	0
Negative Willingness/Ability (only)	0	0	2	1
Statement of Regret + Postponement	0	0	0	1
Call for help + "No"	0	0	0	1

A=Americans; U 10=Upper-level students; M 10=Middle-level students; L10=Lower-level students.

level students used this strategy whereas only one lower-level student used this strategy. Other American responses used "Negative Willingness + *statement of alternative* (Alternative)" strategy such as "I don't feel up for helping you at this time. There are many resources around if you need them, try looking online." The other American used "*criticize the request/requester* (Criticize)" strategy such as "Are you serious?". However, none of these strategies were found in Japanese responses.

On the other hand, a frequently used set of semantic formulas among Japanese, specifically among lower-level students, was "Regret + excuse." Furthermore, quite a few Japanese students, regardless of their English proficiency, gave an excuse even though no Americans gave an excuse in their flat refusals. In addition, what deserves attention here is that about two thirds of Japanese excuses, regardless of their English proficiency, were unavailability of their cell phone such as "I don't have a cell phone." or "I have lost my cell phone." despite the fact that this excuse sounded fictitious because 90% of Japanese high school students have their own cell phones (Igarashi, Motoyoshi, Takai, & Yoshida, 2008).

Another notable finding is that all American responses except one included "Negative Willingness" such as "I don't like to", "I can't.", or "I don't feel comfortable." Therefore, this semantic formula seems to be important to clearly communicate unwillingness. Considering Japanese responses, seven out of ten refusals given by both upper-level students and middle-level students included this semantic formula. However, only two lower-level students used this strategy.

Polite Refusals (Situation 2)

Considering polite refusals intended to mitigate possible offense to the interlocutor, Americans used various strategies as shown in Table 2. Their typical response was "*gratitude/appreciation* (Gratitude)" or "*statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement* (Positive Opinion) + excuse." All American responses included "Gratitude" or "Positive Opinion." Similarly, two thirds of both the upper-level and middle-level students used it. However, only one lower-level student used this strategy. On the other hand, as shown in Table 2, many middle-level and lower-level students used a "Regret" strategy such as "I'm sorry." even though only a few Americans and upper-level students used this strategy. In fact, all

Table 2
Analysis of Polite Refusals (Situation 2)

Set of Semantic Formulas	A	U 10	M 10	L 10
Gratitude/Appreciation OR Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement	10	7	6	1
Gratitude/Appreciation	5	4	4	0
Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement	5	3	4	1
Statement of Regret	3	4	7	8
Excuse	7	7	5	5
Negative Willingness	3	5	5	2
Postponement	2	0	0	0
Promise of Future Acceptance	2	2	1	0
Pause Fillers	2	2	1	0
Attempt to Dissuade Interlocutor (Negative Consequences)	1	3	2	1
No Answer	0	0	0	2

A=Americans; U 10=Upper-level students; M 10=Middle-level students; L10=Lower-level students.

lower-level students except two who gave no answer to this task began their refusals with “I'm sorry.” In addition, no Americans gave an unspecific reason, but a small number of Japanese, regardless of their English proficiency, gave an unspecific reason such as “I'm busy that day.”

Finally, another interesting finding is that two Americans used a “postponement” strategy such as “I'm not sure if I will be able to make it. Let me check my calendar and get back to you.” One of them gave a further comment such as “then, e-mail and say I can't make it.” That is, she would avoid refusing face-to-face on the spot and then would refuse by e-mail later.

Discussion

Flat Refusals (Situation 1)

Considering flat refusals, two major differences were found between Americans' refusals and Japanese students' refusals. One was that most Americans used “Negative Willingness” strategy while only two lower-level students used it. This “Negative Willingness” strategy seems to be important to clear communication of unwillingness. Therefore, the lack of this strategy among lower-level students could obscure their message. In fact, one lower-level student responded, “Sorry, I think about it.” Ignoring her grammatical mistake, her utterance could be interpreted as having a possibility of acceptance even though the participant intended to refuse flatly.

The other difference is that no Americans gave an excuse in their flat refusals while many Japanese students did regardless of their English proficiency. Furthermore, the lower their English proficiency was, the more students used “Regret + excuse” strategy even though no Americans used this strategy in their flat refusals. Kanemoto (1993) discusses that Japanese refusals have three characteristics: (1) avoiding a clear refusal, (2) mentioning a third party as an excuse, (3) giving a fictitious reason for their excuse. As Kanemoto indicates, the aforementioned Japanese apologetic attitude seems to show their desire to avoid clear communication of refusals even when they want to refuse flatly. Similarly, Kanemoto's second and third indication could explain the Japanese students' typical excuse which is, for example, the unavailability of their cell phone. Therefore, both Japanese students' unclear communication of unwillingness and their apologetic attitude in their flat refusals could be their negative first language (L1) transfer.

Another notable finding was that some Japanese students seemed to misunderstand that it may be okay to be impolite when the situation requires a flat refusal, for example "I don't want to tell my number to a stranger like you.", "Sorry, I don't want to make friends with you." Therefore, communicating unwillingness clearly and resolutely but not impolitely seems to be difficult for Japanese learners.

Polite Refusals (Situation 2)

On the other hand, regarding polite refusals which intended to mitigate possible offense to the interlocutors, most findings agreed with Beebe et al.'s (1990) findings. For example, the Americans' major strategy was "Gratitude" and/or "Positive Opinion" and many Japanese students began their refusals with "Regret."

Another finding was that Japanese students' English competence seemed to impact on the appropriateness of their refusals. Even though research has found that it is quite difficult even for advanced-level learners to acquire pragmatic competence without explicit instruction in an ESL environment (Kasper, 1997; Kasper & Rose, 2002), language competence might still influence learners' pragmatic performance significantly in an EFL environment. However, more research in an EFL setting is needed for more conclusive findings.

The other interesting finding on polite refusals was that two Americans avoided refusing face-to-face and would refuse later (i.e. via email). "Postponement" strategies such as "I'll think about it." are in Beebe et al.'s (1990) categories, and using e-mail seems to be an extension of this strategy.

Conclusion

Considering the implications on teaching refusals, the following could be suggested. We should teach Japanese learners of English that they need not give an excuse in flat refusals in English. On the other hand, regarding polite refusals, students should be encouraged to communicate a positive attitude, for example by expressing gratitude and/or positive opinions/feelings. They should also be instructed to use various strategies to mitigate possible offense to the interlocutor as well as to use specific reasons in their excuse.

Therefore, both how to mitigate possible offense to the interlocutor in polite refusals and how to flatly and appropriately refuse should be taught to Japanese learners of English because both types of refusals seem to be difficult for them. In fact, even though the situation which was used to elicit a flat refusal in this research was how women might refuse a man's request for her personal information, a skill of appropriately refusing to disclose specific information is important for both men and women. Therefore, both types of refusals should be taught in L2 classrooms.

Finally, negative L1 transfer was found in Japanese students' responses. Therefore, we should raise our Japanese students' awareness of cross-cultural differences in refusals because many of them are not even aware that cross-cultural differences exist in people's language use.

Reference

Beebe, L. M., Takahashi, T., & Uliss-Weltz, R. (1990). Pragmatic transfer in ESL refusals. In R. Scarcella, E. Andersen, & S. D. Krashen (Eds.), *Developing communicative competence in a second language* (pp. 55-73). New York, NY: Newbury House.

Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Igarashi, T., Motoyoshi, T., Takai, J., & Yoshida, T. (2008). No mobile, no life: Self-perception and text-message dependency among Japanese high school students. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *24*, 2311-2324.

Ishihara, N., & Cohen, A. D. (2010). *Teaching and learning pragmatics: Where language and culture meet.* Harlow, England: Person Education Limited.

Kanemoto, M. (1993). A comparative study of refusal assertion in the United States and Japan. *Ryudai Review of Language and Literature, 38*, 199-212.

Kasper, G. (1997). The role of pragmatics in language teacher education. In K. Bardovi-Harlig and B. Hartford (Eds.), *Beyond methods: Components of second language education* (pp. 113-136). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Company.

Kasper, G., & Rose, K. R. (2002). *Pragmatic development in a second language*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Lakoff, R. T. (1973). The logic of politeness; or minding your p's and q's. In *Papers from the ninth regional meeting of the Chicago linguistic society* (pp. 292-305). Chicago, IL: Chicago Linguistic Society.

Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics.* Edinburgh, Scotland: Longman.

LoCastro, V. (2003). What is pragmatics? In V. LoCastro (Ed.), *An introduction to pragmatics: Social action for language teachers*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Nelson, G. L., Carson, J., Al-Batal, M., & El-Bakary, W. (2002). Cross-cultural pragmatics: Strategy use in Egyptian Arabic and American English refusals. *Applied Linguistics, 23*(2), 163-189.

Thomas, J. (1983). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics*, *4*(2), 91-109.

Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Author's Biography:

Kimiko Koseki received her MA in TESOL from Teachers College, Columbia University. She has been teaching at Denenchofu Futaba Junior and Senior High School since 1998.

Appendix A: Discourse Completion Task

Situation 1

You are a female high school student. A stranger who you have talked with while waiting for a bus asks you for your cell phone number. You don't want to give it to him. How would you refuse his request?

Man: Can I have your cell phone number? You speak good English and I have no friends in Japan. So it would be nice if you could help me when I am in trouble, you know.

You:

Situation 2

A close friend is hosting a party and she invites you. You don't know anyone at the party besides the friend, so you don't want to go. How would you refuse her invitation?

Friend: Hi. I'm arranging a Christmas party on December 17. It will be from 6:00 p.m. at Shibuya. Most attendants will be exchange students like me and business people I know from my part-time job. Why don't you join us?

You:

Read all About it! Studying can be a Social Activity

Joël Laurier
Gunma Kokusai Academy
waldolaurier@gmail.com

Ethan Taomae
Tokyo Metropolitan University

Machiko Asakawa
Yokohama Futaba Jr. and Sr. High School

Ayako Kanamaru
Caritas Jr. and Sr. High School

Chie Shiramizu
Kyoei University in Saitama

Reading classes in Japan tend to focus on vocabulary and complex grammatical points in a teacher-centered approach which often leads to superficial understanding of texts. To improve literacy skills, students must be able to go beyond the sentential level and acquire more than just a literal comprehension of texts. One way this can be accomplished is through the use of Cooperative Learning (CL) tasks which help to create more interaction and in turn provide more learning opportunities for deeper understanding of texts. This paper gives on overview of the CL workshop presented at the 2012 Pan-SIG conference and describes how high school English teachers in Japan can use CL structures to design interactive reading tasks which promote deeper comprehension and higher achievement in reading. This paper will introduce the principles behind CL and give examples of CL tasks that teachers can use in their own classes.

本稿では、日本の高校英語の授業を対象とした協同学習のストラクチャーについて論じる。現状を鑑みると日本の中学・高等学校におけるリーディングの授業は、語彙や複雑な文法の解説を中心に訳読法で進められることが多く、生徒達の内容理解が表面的なレベルにとどまると懸念されている。リテラシースキルの上達のためには、文法や構造を理解するだけではなく、筆者の意図や論旨を読み解くことが重要である。生徒達の読解力を高める効果的な教授法のひとつとして、協同学習のストラクチャーが挙げられる。それにより、生徒達の相互交流を促進し、協力してタスクを完成させ内容理解を深めることができる。また、英語学習に対するモチベーション向上や、授業の活性化にも効果があると考えられる。本稿では、先に述べたとおり、日本の高校英語の授業を対象とした協同学習のストラクチャーについて考察し、協同学習の理論や技法を紹介した後、これらの理論・技法を活用したアクティビティを提案する。

Keywords: Cooperative learning, Team building, Interactive reading, PIES analysis

Introduction

Many junior and senior high school English reading classes still use the *yakudoku* translation method to teach reading. The problem that arises is an over-focus on accuracy, resulting in a lack of authentic language use. Furthermore, this translation method tends to focus on the sentential level of comprehension and fails to develop higher order analytical thinking skills. It is thus the responsibility of the English teacher to expose students to teaching styles that will foster engaging and purposeful learning opportunities with the aim of further developing

Laurier, J., Taomae, E., Asakawa, M., Kanamaru, A., & Shiramizu, C. (2013). Read all about it! Studying can be a social activity. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 155-161). Hiroshima: JALT.

critical thinking skills. The use of cooperative learning (CL) is now being recommended by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology- Japan (MEXT) to develop critical thinking skills (Commission on the Development of Foreign Language Proficiency, 30 June 2011).

For various reasons, many teachers are reluctant to shift to a new pedagogy. One of the biggest concerns of implementing new strategies is that it requires more time and effort to re-formulate aims, rewrite lesson plans, re-learn new techniques, etc. One way teachers can adapt lessons to develop higher order thinking skills without having to completely revamp their system is through the use of CL structures.

For the most part many language teachers already use some form of group work. While group activities are more communicative and interactive, they offer significant drawbacks in that they help foster unbalanced interactivity. Evidence of these pitfalls is the opting out of some students and the monopolizing of the conversation by others. Group work without structure does little to help students demonstrate their knowledge. This is what differentiates it from CL.

This paper aims to show how teachers can incorporate CL into their current reading classes to develop deeper comprehension. It is a detailed overview of the *Read all about it! Studying can be a social activity* hands-on workshop delivered at the pan-SIG 2012 Conference. We detail the presentation's main steps and demonstrate how we, as EFL teachers in Japan, can use CL as a resource to develop more in-depth thinking skills in our students, particularly in reading. First, we introduce the essential principles that differentiate CL from basic groupwork. Secondly, we give an example of a CL reading structure using a MEXT-approved high school English textbook.

Team-Building

CL works best when members are comfortable working together and help each other to learn. The cohesion of the team is important as teams that work well together are able to achieve group goals more easily. Team-building exercises are one way of developing the relationships between team members and aiding the learning process. Getting individual members to feel like a single unit is needed for effective teamwork to exist. According to Kagan and Kagan:

> Creating powerful learning teams has many aims. There's the social component. We want students to know, like, and trust the participants who they will be working with. And there's the task component. We want participants to be able to work well together, take turns, share, communicate well, and make team decisions (2009, p. 10.1)

The workshop was run utilizing CL structures so attendees were divided into groups of four and each member was given a letter of A, B, C or D. To have participants feel more comfortable with their team members, we led them in a Kagan team-building structure called Round Robin. This structure starts with member A providing a response to a prompt followed by members B, C and D sharing their response in turn. In the first round, each participant introduced themself, named their teaching institution and offered one more piece of information about themselves. The second round started with participant B completing sentence 1 (see below). For every new sentence a new participant started the round.

1. My favorite place to travel is ___________.
2. The last movie I saw was ______________.
3. Cooperative Learning is _______________.
4. I hope to learn ______________________.

Introduction to the Principles of Cooperative Learning

In order to introduce the principles behind CL, workshop participants were led through a series of cooperative activities. The first was a jigsaw highlighting the principles behind Kagan's structural approach, known as "PIES". PIES stands for positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation, and simultaneous interaction. These are the key principles that make CL successful as a teaching strategy. Participants were divided into groups of four and each participant read about one of the four concepts, as follows:

(P) stands for Positive Interdependence. In order to create positive interdependence, tasks need to be organized so that participants are on the same side and working toward the same goal. Furthermore, they should be structured so that it is easier for participants to complete the tasks together rather than individually.

(I) stands for Individual Accountability. The success of the individual participant is very important. All participants need to be responsible for their own performance and contribute toward the goal of the team. An effective team does not allow some members to opt out of the tasks being tackled. This follows the concept of a chain being only as strong as its weakest link.

(E) is for Equal Participation. It is important for participation to be equal if all participants are going to achieve gains in learning. Some ways for teachers to ensure equality in effort and opportunity is through turn-taking, time allocation, and distribution of roles.

(S) stands for Simultaneous Interaction. Multiple participants performing the task at the same time are more productive than one participant at a time. Simultaneous interaction ensures that a higher percentage of participants are actively engaged in learning.

After reading about the concepts, participants created a visualization of their concept (i.e. they drew a picture and/or created a diagram to represent their understanding of that idea). After creating the visualization, participants gathered with the members of the same concept (e.g. all the P's got together). In pairs, each participant had one minute to explain their visualization to their partner. At this point, participants could change their visualization based on their discussions. Finally, participants returned to their original team and described it to their home group in a Round Robin style; each participant was given one minute to explain their visualization.

The task of creating a visualization as well as describing it to their classmates helped participants gain a deeper understanding of the concepts. Kagan and Kagan (2009) have found the use of multiple intelligences to be effective in helping students understand:

> … we can say with certainty that the teacher who uses a wide range of cooperative learning methods provides a greater number of students greater access to the curriculum through their preferred styles and intelligences. This explains in part why cooperative learning boosts achievement. In short: The more ways we teach, the more students we reach. (p. 4.19)

PIES Analysis

The purpose of the next task was to have participants solidify their knowledge of the principles that define a CL task by having them apply what they had learned in the visualization task (i.e. the PIES principles). Participants read a list of five sample activities and had to decide whether they were actually CL activities or just group work based on whether the activities implemented the PIES principles. Here are the five activities:

1. The teacher asks participants in teams of four to discuss what they think about the reading.
2. Participants work in pairs in an information gap activity.
3. Each participant is assigned an area of expertise and must teach it to their group.
4. Participants work together to solve a worksheet of problems.
5. Participants are given 2 minutes each to share their response to a discussion question.

Participants spent three minutes reading the examples and deciding whether these activities incorporated CL principles or not. Next, they were paired with their shoulder partners and took turns sharing their answers. One partner explained their reasoning and the other responded in agreement or disagreement. The goal of this task was to have participants inductively reason how CL tasks differed from regular group work. To make it explicit here, CL tasks are much more structured in their set up than group work. This is done in order to create positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation, and simultaneous interaction. Research has shown that by fostering these individual principles, teachers can eliminate some of the problems associated with group work such as free-loading or one member taking control of everything (Kagan & Kagan, 2009). Teachers can do this in their own task design by creating roles, giving time constraints, structuring gaps in information, etc.

Interactive Reading

The second part of the workshop demonstrated a CL reading activity using a senior high school MEXT-approved textbook. The reading passage was taken from Crown English Course I and is titled "When I was Sixteen". It retells the story of Michio Hoshino, a Japanese professional nature photographer, and his journey to the US as an adolescent. The demonstrated activity is used in the second part of a unit focusing on this reading passage. In the first part, students are expected to have read the passage as a homework assignment, so are familiar with the vocabulary and the content of the story. Since the participants in this workshop had not read the text yet, they were given three minutes to read it.

The goals of the reading activity were: 1) to comprehend the content of the text, and 2) to enhance students' comprehension of the text by utilizing higher order thinking skills (e.g. connecting what is written in the text with the participants' own experiences and opinions).

For step 1, participants were grouped in teams of four and assigned a letter (A,B,C or D), as in the previous activities. They were given three minutes to read the two-page passage. After that, each participant was assigned one part of the story. Participants were then placed into new groups, joining other participants with the same assigned letter. The As with the As, the Bs with the Bs, and so on. Within this new group, participants worked together to ensure comprehension of the assigned part by creating a summary of their section.

For step 2, participants individually made two questions pertaining to their assigned part. The first was a WH question whose answer could be found directly in the text. (i.e. "When he was hitchhiking, why did the family pick him up?"). The second question was a personalized question that drew on readers' comprehension of the text as well as their outside knowledge. For example, "If you were Michio's father, would you have let him go to America? Explain." Participants were then asked to write their questions and an answer to those questions on a graphic organizer (see Appendix A). After filling out the organizer, participants were instructed to fold the paper so that the answer column was hidden.

In the second part of the activity, participants returned to their original groups with each group member having the organizer with their two questions on the assigned part. The next step required each member to answer each question on the other group members' organizer. This was done in three rounds. In the first round, each member passed their organizer one place to the left so Participant B answered the questions written by A; C answered B's; D answered C's and A answered D's. Each round lasted three minutes and after writing their answers, group members had to fold the paper back so their answers were hidden. They then passed the organizer once more to the left. This continued for two more rounds until each member had answered all other members' questions. In this way, when participants had rotated worksheets four times, they would get their original organizer back.

Once participants received their own completed organizers with other members' answers, they unfolded the paper and corrected the other group members' answers. After this, they shared the findings from the personalized question in a Round Robin style starting with participant A and rotating until all members had presented.

Self-Assessed PIES Analysis

This next section will show how the previous activity incorporated PIES. The activity utilized a jigsaw reading structure as well as a Round Robin. Participants needed to work together in order to complete the task, thereby creating positive interdependence (P). This activity also ensured individual accountability (I) as each participant was responsible for making questions, checking answers and sharing ideas with their team members. Equal participation (E) could be found in the activity as the amount of responsibility and workload each participant had was the same. Furthermore, both structures used turn-taking to ensure each member had an equal amount of time. Finally, simultaneous interaction (S) was clearly present as all members were interacting with each other and working at the same time, when making questions and sharing answers. Even when answering the questions and rotating the papers, participants were simultaneously interacting by responding to each other using the graphic organizers.

In addition to the tasks presented in our workshop further extensions and variations are possible. For example, in the workshop, participants created two comprehension questions. The number of questions can be increased or reduced according to the actual classroom situation or participants' level. Moreover, the types of questions they create can be modified, varying from fill-in-the-blank to inferential and personalized types of comprehension. According to Nation, the focus of comprehension questions typically cover the following: "1) literal comprehension of the text, 2) drawing inferences from the text, 3) using the text for other purposes in addition to understanding, and 4) responding critically to the text" (Nation, 2009, p. 34). Depending on the levels of the participants, it would be effective to change the question forms and the foci of those questions. It would also be beneficial, when sharing the answers and responding in groups, to have participants who wrote wrong answers articulate how they arrived at such answers. This helps participants discover why they have the wrong answer. Another possible suggestion is to have participants summarize their assigned parts to the team members using the jigsaw structure, after the rotation activity. As Anderson (1999) argues, summarizing requires the ability to distinguish levels of importance in information in the text such as main ideas, supporting ideas, and details. Therefore, summarizing can help participants improve their comprehension skill. Moreover, the questions made by participants can be utilized in in-class quizzes or term tests. This will encourage the participants to form good questions and to help them increase their motivation.

This activity is highly effective and suitable to deepen participants' comprehension in a variety of contexts. Reading itself is often considered to be a passive individual activity. However, reading can be interactive with classmates and also with the text. Grabe (1991) argues that reading is interactive in that "the reader makes use of information from his/her background knowledge as well as information from the printed page" (p. 378). In this sense, by working together and interacting with their classmates, participants' interaction with the text can become more meaningful and effective.

CL structures such as jigsaw and Round Robin require some time for participants to get accustomed to. However, once students are used to engaging in CL tasks, their set up will require minimum set-up time and have students ready to break into discussion quickly. This results in reduced task implementation time. Making use of these structures can obviously help move away from the *yakudoku* method.

Conclusion

While more and more teachers are incorporating Cooperative Learning structures in their reading classes in Japan, it is still true that grammar translation and rote-memorization are frequently used in English classes. We strongly recommend that Cooperative Learning structures be utilized more in classrooms in order to maximize participants' learning opportunities.

University entrance exams in Japan exert a huge influence on high school English teaching, making reading comprehension a fundamental skill to develop. The use of group work to have students develop these skills is important. The more structured tasks used in CL help eliminate the problems associated with group work such as students opting out and unequal participation. CL is an effective way to design interactive reading tasks that result in deeper comprehension and can be implemented in the EFL context in Japanese high schools.

References

Anderson, N. J. (1999). *Exploring second language* *reading.* Boston, MA: Heinle Cengage Learning.

Grabe, W. (1991). Current developments in second language reading research. *TESOL Quarterly, 25*, 375-406.

Kagan, S. & Kagan, M. (2009). *Kagan cooperative learning*. San Clemente, CA: Kagan Publishing.

Nation, I. S. P. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL reading and writing.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology – Japan, Commission on the Development of Foreign Language Proficiency. (2011). *Five Proposals and Specific Measures for Developing Proficiency in English for International Communication*. Retrieved from website: *http://www.mext.go.jp/component/english/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2012/07/09/1319707_1.pdf*

Authors' Biographies:

Joël Laurier teaches at Gunma Kokusai Academy. He is co-recipient of the 2011 John F. Fanselow Scholarship awarded by Teachers College, Columbia University.

Ethan Taomae teaches at Tokyo Metropolitan University and at Japan College of Foreign Languages. He has an MA in TESOL from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Machiko Asakawa is an English teacher at Yokohama Futaba Junior and Senior High School. She has an MA in TESOL from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Ayako Kanamaru is an English teacher at Caritas Junior and Senior High School. She has an MA in TESOL from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Chie Shiramizu teaches TOEIC at Kyoei University in Saitama. She has an MA in TESOL from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Appendix A - Reading Comprehension Table

Part (   )   Name: _______________

Question	Member's Name ______________	Member's Name ______________	Member's Name ______________	Answer
Q1 Wh question				
Q2 Personalized Question				

Better Reading Through a Better Understanding of Punctuation

Margaret Orleans
Seinan Jo Gakuin University
tommysibo@yahoo.com

Most of the questions raised by the author's first-year university Intensive Reading students about the 300- to 500-word passages in their textbook concern the meaning and use of words and phrases. When the definitions and/or examples of terms are actually contained within the passages themselves, they are signaled by the presence of dashes, colons, and parentheses. However, students often do not know how to use this punctuation to answer their own questions about meaning. The author looks at the reasons behind this phenomenon and ways to empower students through explicit instruction and scaffolded exercises.

本稿では、リーディングで言葉の定義や例を理解するために必要不可欠なダッシュやコロン、括弧の使い方を考えてみる。著者の大学の一年生の精読クラスで使用しているテキストに出てくる、300字から500字の作品の一節に関する学生の質問の殆どは、単語や句の意味 と使い方に関するもので、それらは、ダッシュ、コロンや括弧があることで分かるようになっている。しかし、学生のとっては自己の質問の答えを導き出す句読点の使い方が、難しいようだ。そこでこの事実の背後にある原因解明や、明確な指導と基礎固めとなる練習を通して、学生に力をつける方法を考察する。

Keywords: reading comprehension, dash, colon, parenthesis, intra-textual relationships, direct instruction, images, contrasting punctuation marks

Discovery of the Problem

In my experience as a teacher of Intensive Reading, otherwise capable university students struggle to understand non-fiction passages because of a lack of understanding of colons, dashes, and parentheses. For example, the very students who asked penetrating questions like "If the vowels often change in Greek and Latin roots while the consonants stay fairly consistent, is 'muscle' related to 'masculine'?" and "Can you teach us more phrases like 'beefcake' to talk about men's bodies?" also asked questions about seemingly simpler passages from their textbook: "The United Nations University (UNU) invites you.…" and "…but machines can—and do—go wrong." They wanted to know the meanings of "UNU," "can-and," and "do-go," none of which appeared in their dictionaries.

Orleans, M. (2013). Better reading through a better understanding of punctuation. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 162-165). Hiroshima: JALT.

Reasons Behind the Problem

An informal survey of 50 junior and senior high English teachers by a former colleague and me confirmed what I had suspected: punctuation beyond the period, comma, question mark, quotation marks, and possibly the semicolon is not taught in this country. Why? Reasons varied from "It's not in the textbook" to "I don't understand English punctuation very well myself." A quick search of several standard junior and senior high English textbooks showed the former claim to be accurate.

In addition, the Japanese and English punctuation systems don't parallel each other exactly. As a result, students fail the recognize the significance of capital letters because they do not exist in Japanese, and they overuse quotation marks because Japanese quotation marks have to do the work of capital letters and italics as well as that of English quotation marks, a phenomenon that is discussed in at least one on-line translators' forum (Philondra, 2008). Students also confuse similar-looking punctuation that does not exist in Japanese or they just ignore it altogether. Aljets (1980) concluded in his survey of editors' views on Japanese errors in writing English reports that most of the punctuation errors are the result of unfamiliarity with the conventions of English punctuation; the same seems to be true of reading errors.

Direct Instruction—a Limited but Necessary Solution

So how can students learn how to use punctuation to answer their questions about meaning? The level at which these low-intermediate first-year university students do their extensive reading (mostly fiction) will not expose them to enough usage of the punctuation marks in question. Dürrenmatt (2011) points out that the overuse of some punctuation marks, notably exclamation points, question marks, and dashes, in early English-language comics makes their use salient to students, but comics as a genre rarely use quotation marks or colons. Students like mine write relatively short compositions in which they do not experiment with such punctuation, so in the face of little exposure or opportunity for productive use, some direct instruction concerning punctuation marks seems necessary.

On the other hand, the effectiveness of direct instruction is limited because the students do not know (or want to know) a lot of grammatical terms (even in Japanese). They are interested in the meaning of the passages they are studying, but their eyes glaze over when they hear technical terms, including the names of punctuation marks, even though they are English majors. As Jeffries (1985) pointed out, native English speaking university students, studying a second language, are in a similar situation. They do not have a sufficient grasp of grammatical terms to understand explanation that contain a lot of terminology, nor is it useful to teach them such terms. Now that my students have passed the ultimate goal of getting into a university, I can hardly claim that punctuation facts will be on any high-stakes exam, though relating punctuation comprehension to TOIEC success might be a helpful motivator.

In light of the situation outlined above, my goals for my students' understanding of punctuation beyond the period and comma comprise three modest and long-range steps: first, to notice the punctuation; second, to understand its function; and third, to use it to help themselves discover the meaning of unknown words in a given passage. No class has managed to reach the fourth step of appreciating the nuances behind the choice between several punctuation options in a given context (dashes versus parentheses, for example) in the course of a year's instruction.

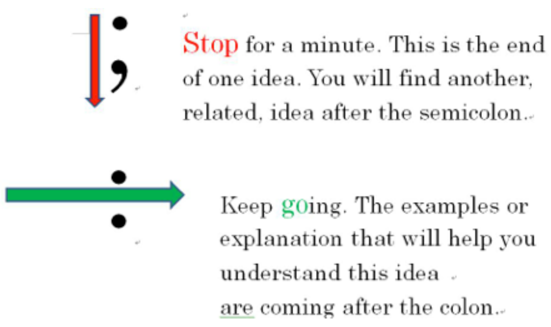
Telling students something they do not want to know can be a rather futile business. A good first step in teaching punctuation is to arouse students' curiosity. Therefore, two days before the class in which we will discuss a particular passage, each student is required to e-mail me five questions about the assigned passage that she was unable to resolve with a dictionary. As a result, questions that could be answered with a knowledge of punctuation, but not questions about the punctuation marks themselves, inevitably arise. Alternatively, I can get the ball rolling with a task such as asking students to look through the pages of the textbook we have already covered and to decide which punctuation marks always appear singly, in pairs, or in series, and to assign them a spot on a Venn diagram, with examples to justify their decisions.

A Four-pronged Attack

Once students are wondering about specific punctuation marks, it is possible to use one of four strategies: contrasting specific marks with similar (and more familiar) marks, providing powerful visual images for the use of the punctuation, extrapolating from contexts in which students are already familiar with the punctuation, and—that old favorite high school teachers' technique—giving students a perfect example to memorize.

Information is best retrieved from memory when there are multiple routes through which it can be accessed, and neuroscience is proving that a picture really is worth a thousand words (Fine & Minnery, 2009). Furthermore, contrast and extrapolation can, if presented graphically, also provide instant bottom-up saliency for learners. Angelillo (2006), in addressing ways to teach L1 punctuation at the elementary school level, also suggests aural input—the dramatic "reading" of punctuation—in order to heighten students' awareness of it and its functions.

Thus, for example, a colon might be contrasted with the more familiar semicolon. While a semicolon (apparently constructed by placing a period atop a comma) generally tells readers to pause at the end of a complete idea before going on to another—closely related—complete idea, a colon (with nothing hanging down to remind readers to stop; see the figure below) is a sign to read ahead to find a rewording or some examples of the idea they just read about which will help them understand it better.



Dashes can be usefully contrasted with hyphens. Students usually realize that hyphens connect words that are split at the end of a line of text or serve as compound adjectives (*5-year-old brother*), so an image of a hyphen as a harness on a service dog, keeping the animal in close contact with its human, serves as a sharp contrast to a dash. The latter can be likened to an animal control pole, which holds a vicious dog away from the handler, while still maintaining a connection between them.

In the case of the extrapolation strategy, students are usually familiar with colons after the names of speakers in a dialogue, so this idea of reading on to see what that character has to say can be expanded to the role of a colon within a sentence of nonfiction pointing ahead to examples or rephrasing.

How might we apply the four strategies to direct instruction about parentheses? For North Americans, a salient example for parentheses might be a telephone number: in (801) 555-1212, the digits in parentheses are necessary only in certain circumstances. But Japanese telephone number conventions are different. Some students are familiar with Felix the Cat, and for the others, his bag of magic tricks can be likened to Doraemon's magic pocket, so they can imagine the handles of that open bag as parentheses; the information inside should be accessed when the reader finds herself on the spot. Ears look a bit like parentheses, too. Parenthetical information can be usefully compared to unspoken information we hold in our mind (between our ears) until that information is necessary for clarification. In junior high textbooks, parentheses generally signal the options from which the student must choose the correct answer, so students can extrapolate to the optional/expansive nature of parenthetical information in non-fiction.

Once students see the benefit of using punctuation to uncover meaning, other tasks can be set. For example they can be asked to identify all the proper nouns within a passage and list what punctuation, if any, helped them locate explanations of those nouns. They can be challenged to write a list of "how-to" steps for next year's class, when tackling an unknown word in a passage. They can also try to predict whether the explanations for future unknown words will come before or after the words themselves.

Conclusion

I am still exploring the possibilities, but through cycles of tasks (sorting, hypothesis testing) and direct instruction through contrast, images, expansion, and memorable examples, I hope that, for my students, punctuation moves from invisibility through mysteriousness to a recognizably useful tool for tackling unknown phrases in a reading passage.

Acknowledgments

The author appreciates the help of Takashi Inomori of Meiji Gakuen Junior/Senior High School in surveying junior and senior high English teachers.

References

Aljets, M.G. (1980). Writing Reports in English: A comparison of Japanese and American writers' problems. *Osaka Women's Junior College Departmental Bulletin*, pp. 73-82. Retrieved October 30, 2012, from http://ir-lib.wilmina.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/10775/291/1/KC11_073.pdf.

Angelillo, J. (2006). A Study Guide for *A Fresh Approach to Teaching Punctuation.* Scholastic. Retrieved October 30, 2012, from http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/scholasticprofessional/authors/pdfs/SG_Fresh_Punctuation.pdf

Dürrenmatt, J. (2001). From invisibility to visibility and backwards: Punctuation in comics. *Visible Language, 45* (1/2), pp. 21-43.

Fine, M.S . and Minnery, B.S. (2009) Visual Salience Affects Performance in a Working Memory Task. *The Journal of Neuroscience.* 29(25): 8016-8021. Retrieved October 30, 2012, from http://www.jneurosci.org/content/29/25/8016.full

Jeffries, S. (1985). English grammar terminology as an obstacle to second language learning. *Modern Language Journal,* 69(4), pp. 385-390.

Philondra, (2008, December 25). [LANGRAGE] The "overuse" of quotation "marks" [Msg 1]. Message posted to http://molotov.net.au/forums/ viewtopic.php?f=39&t=4970

Author's Biography:

Margaret Orleans has over 40 years' experience teaching at the secondary and tertiary levels in the U.S., China, and Japan.

Developing Professional Literacy to Enhance Career Fluency

Michael Parrish
Kwansei Gakuin University
Language Center
mmparrish.japan@gmail.com

Richard Miller
& Ryan Richardson
Kansai University

Zane Ritchie
Rikkyo University
College of Community Welfare

Professional literacy is the ability to read and write (understand and produce) documents in a field of employment. As professional college and university educators in Japan, there are many types of documents that we need to deal with to function fluently. This forum discussed how to develop the professional literacy that is considered essential for educational careers in Japan. A non-inclusive list of these skills includes: reading Japanese job postings, creating a Japanese rirekisho, creating an academic CV, writing cover letters and application essays, and getting published. The forum audience was encouraged to contribute their ideas on what professional literacy means in the Japanese university context.

本稿では、日本の大学で仕事をするために不可欠であるプロフェッショナル・リテラシーについて論じる。まず、プロフェッショナル・リテラシーとは雇用の場で必要な書類の作成や読み書きの才能である。日本の大学に勤務する講師には、適切に処理しなければならない書類が多々ある。そこで、本稿では、日本の大学が要求する能力を如何に養うかを考えてみる。具体的には、日本語での募集要項の把握と日本語で履歴書作成、英語の場合は詳細な履歴書の作成方法と応募書類につける手紙や応募動機の書き方を紹介し、研究などの出版方法などにも焦点を当てる。

Keywords: academic CV, higher education employment, rirekisho, employment applications

The Academic CV

When beginning a serious job search, or setting out a long term career path in Japan, the first thing that a person should do is to take stock of where they are with respect to their career, and in which areas they are lacking or need to improve. The best and most effective way is to first write a complete academic curriculum vitae (CV), then step back and use a balanced scorecard approach (outlined below) to effectively look at the academic CV to systematically list the areas that need improving, and then begin to take the steps to improve them. In contrast to a typical business résumé, we define the CV as a complete view of one's professional life; as it is an *academic* CV, it is only concerned with what you have accomplished in your academic life. While a résumé would be a one or two page sales tool, an academic CV might run 15 or 20 pages, listing all your accomplishments in factual language (in other words, without adjectives) categorized

Parrish, M., Miller, R., Ritchie Z. & Richardson,R., (2013). Developing Professional Literacy to Enhance Career Fluency. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 166-174). Hiroshima: JALT.

into education, service (such as memberships, extra-curricular professional activities, or volunteering), classes taught and presentations/publications. Such a list might take some time to compile, but it should look something like the following:

First list your name, address and contact details (very similar to a résumé) with the academic qualifications closely following, beginning with the highest attained. Next are the presentations that have been given and then publications (both in reverse chronological order starting with the most recent) and brief abstracts. After that is professional experience, starting with the most recent academic year, and including the classes taught, with the name of the university and the number of students.

After taking inventory of your teaching career, it is then time to take stock of those areas that need improving. This can be easily illustrated with the use of a balanced scorecard approach. This term is taken from a corporate governance tool and applied here in the context of teachers' professional development. The areas that are the centerpieces of academia become the main areas included in the academic balanced scorecard. Academic qualifications, publications and presentations, work experience and service are all areas that should be reflected upon in order to identify where one's weak areas are. Keep in mind that, just as with the academic CV, only those areas that are directly related to academic work, or somehow relevant to an academic career need to be considered. This would mean that jobs outside of teaching would not normally be included, although editing and writing might be.

This first set of tools should be helpful in setting you up to start looking introspectively at where you stand in your career and how to increase your academic career credentials and marketability. There are a number of ways that you can improve your CV, so an interesting and helpful exercise is to write down how you plan to improve your CV in the next 90, 180 and 365 days.

Japanese & the Japanese Curriculum Vitae for Academic Job Applications

The importance of submitting a CV in Japanese and having a little knowledge of Japanese should not be underestimated when applying for a job at an academic institution in Japan. First, we will examine what we term the Japanese Academic Curriculum Vitae (JACV), before emphasizing the importance of having even a basic working knowledge of Japanese, which will come in useful should you get to the interview stage.

The first and foremost thing to remember is to submit a JACV along with your English one, *even if it is not requested*. There are several reasons for this. An obvious one is that it will give you a big advantage over the competition by showing that you are making an effort to stand out from the rest, and are actually interested in Japan and Japanese culture. In addition, your CV will almost certainly be circulated among various committees, and if there is no Japanese version, somebody will have to translate it, which entails a whole set of new problems. It is better to save them the trouble and avoid possible errors by submitting your JACV in advance; you know that everything is correct and to *your* liking. A third reason is that having a CV in Japanese puts you at an advantage when it comes to applying for other jobs as well, since a lot of them require you to submit your CV in Japanese in addition to your English one. So, instead of struggling to prepare one in Japanese in a hurry while trying to meet a deadline, why not have a JACV prepared in advance? You can then modify it slightly depending on the needs of the different institutions you will be applying to. Finally, should you actually be selected for the interview, be aware that it may be possible that some members of the panel speak little or no English and asking them to wade through your English CV means there is always the potential for misunderstandings, something you want to avoid at all costs.

Before we examine exactly what should be included in the JACV, it should be noted that in general a traditional Japanese curriculum vitae places emphasis on social abilities, whilst a typical Western one will emphasize individualistic values, competitive spirit, initiative and passion for personal challenges, and critical thinking abilities. Keep this in mind as you prepare your JACV.

Now, let's discuss some of the basics of the JACV. First, since it is a specialist document, you won't find a "traditional" form. In addition it won't be necessary to handwrite it. Indeed, in this day and age, if you *do* handwrite it you might get strange looks! Instead, it is essential to prepare your curriculum vitae in Japanese and submit it as a PDF document (if submitting materials by email), or print it and add it to your application along with your English CV. Next, as per the traditional Japanese CV, remember to write your JACV in chronological order, which differs from an American CV, which is in reverse chronological order. The JACV may require more personal information than a typical Western CV, and furthermore it should be tailored to the individual institution, since the institution will want to know how well you are going to fit into their organization.

The JACV can be broken into five parts: *personal information, education*, *work experience*, *memberships and associations*, and *research and publications*. Let's examine each of these in detail. For your reference, there is a sample JAVC in the appendix, complete with example entries. The first part is personal information. In addition to your name and current address, it is compulsory to include your birth date, age and gender. Phone numbers (including your cell-phone) and an email address are mandatory (see Appendix Section A).

The second part is education (Appendix Section B). Here you list in chronological order all the schools you have attended from university onward. For an academic job, it will not be necessary to include schools you attended before university. You may enter the starting year on one line and the finishing year on another for each institution, or you may enter the finishing dates in brackets on the same line (see the appendix for samples of both). Just remember to keep it consistent. As part of this, there is a section called 学位 (Appendix Section B-2).

The third part is work experience. Here you list places you have worked with the dates in chronological order, and include starting and finishing dates (Appendix Section C). In the fourth part, memberships and associations (Appendix Section D), you enter any associations you belong to or any volunteer activities you participate in.

The final part is research and publications. In this part, similar to the English version, you should have the full titles of presentations or publications, names of all authors/presenters (indicating whether the publication/presentation was single- or co-authored), where the article was published (including page numbers) or where the research was presented (See Appendix Section E).

If you are invited for interview, it will be a perfect opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the Japanese language; submitting your CV in Japanese as well as English will have helped you stand out enough to be selected for interview. In an interview at a Japanese institution there can be no denying the importance of being able to converse in Japanese, to some degree. After all, you are to be employed at a Japanese institution where the day-to-day administration is usually carried out in Japanese. If you can successfully demonstrate your Japanese language ability, and your ability to fit in, you'll certainly impress those on the interview panel. So, where to begin? At minimum, you should have a self-introduction prepared. Practise it a few times before the interview, so you are able to put your message across in a confident and fluent manner. You should also prepare to be asked questions, particularly on the content and length of past employment, other places you have lived or worked in Japan, and a little about your home country. Being prepared to talk a little bit about your hobbies and interests would also be of value. Finally, good luck, and remember that you need not be fluent in Japanese (that is not what the panel is looking for), but you should be able to demonstrate that you are interested in the language, culture and people. After all, you are in Japan, so be sure to at least show some interest.

The benefits of having a Japanese curriculum vitae and showing some knowledge of Japanese actually extend beyond the job-hunting phase. If you get the job, many universities have very few staff members who are fluent in English and therefore day-to-day business matters will necessarily be conducted in Japanese. In addition, ability in Japanese will help you to discuss more important issues with students, and to communicate with other non-English speaking faculty members. As Miller and Parrish (2012) point out, if you move up the university hierarchy the requirements for Japanese language become even more demanding, and it becomes essential that you are able to contribute in meetings, and even write documents in Japanese.

Publications

When seeking employment at institutions of higher learning in Japan today, one of the more important sections of a professional CV is the publications section. Publications have grown in importance over the past few years with very nearly all listings for jobs stating that publications are a basic requirement for job placement (see JACET, 2012; JALT Publications, 2012; JREC-IN, n.d.). A variety of factors need to be taken into consideration based primarily on the kind of job one is applying for, but whatever the job, publications are likely to play a big part in whether or not an applicant gets that all important chance to interview for the job they want.

Anecdotally, in interviews or discussions with people at various institutions in the Kansai area, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Monbusho or Monkasho) requirements have been cited as the cause of the recent increase in calls for publications. However, no evidence has been found to suggest that this is the case (Higher Education Bureau, 2009). Instead, discussions with people connected with hiring at major universities in the Kansai area have suggested that the "requirement" is more of a "suggestion" from Monbusho and that the publications section is being used as a kind of sorting or gate-keeping mechanism. With large numbers of applicants sending in résumés and CVs for many jobs, those including no publications are frequently being disregarded at the initial stage. While constituting a relatively simple mechanism for limiting the number of CVs reviewed, it may be seen to increase the prestige of the university by ensuring that all instructors have publications. It may also be seen as a superficial way of finding teachers who are more enthusiastic about the profession, as they are contributing to the professional dialogue in areas related to language teaching in Japan.

One of the key issues that often comes up in planning and discussing publication requirements is considering what counts as a publication. As with most areas of the professional or academic CV, what is useful in any particular area is dependent upon what institution is being applied to and for what type of position. For many jobs, at many universities or colleges, any publication may be useful for part-time or even limited-term teaching positions. Such publications may include book reviews, short articles similar to the *My Share* articles in *The Language Teacher,* which have a 700 word limit (JALT Publications, n.d.), conference proceedings and other peer-reviewed works. For tenured or other similar positions the requirements appear to be stricter, with some institutions indicating that papers less than 15-20 pages will not be counted toward the basic minimum needed to have the CV reviewed. In most cases, of course, a Master's or Ph.D. thesis will each count as one publication whether or not they have been published.

The topic on which to get published is also an important point that needs to be taken into consideration when applying for work. Many listings for language teachers are not specific about what kind of publications are needed, though others call specifically for publications in areas related to language teaching or applied linguistics. Though this may seem limiting, the requirement for "language teaching" or applied linguistics related publications should, in most cases, be read quite broadly, so a variety of topics could be included. Topics could include in-class activities or practices, trends in language teaching in Japan, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and much more. Some jobs today, especially with the "Global 30" project officially underway (MEXT, 2012), may require publications more focused on a specific subject area. However, the availability of such jobs appears likely to remain limited compared with language-teaching focused jobs, at least for the next few years.

Another important concern that many teachers have is where they should get published. Again anecdotally, many seem to think that publications in major foreign journals are all that count. This, of course, is not the case overall, but again will be influenced by the kind of job one is applying for. Many Japanese institutions view Japan-based publications favorably, not necessarily over the major publications overseas, but a Japanese publication of almost any kind will be recognized more favorably than many overseas publications. A university-based publication, especially if it happens to be at the university to which one is applying, is often viewed far more positively than many foreign instructors realize. As a result of this misunderstanding, many non-Japanese teachers fail to take advantage of this publishing opportunity. University-based journals often publish in a shorter period than a professional journal and though some are reviewed quite strictly, the entire submission/editing/publishing process often takes far less time than many other professional journals.

Publishing is a key aspect of the academic CV and, more importantly, of almost any successful search for a job teaching at a Japanese university. Though publications may not officially be required by Monbusho, there is pressure in this direction from this government ministry, and as we have explained above, having publications is a way of getting your academic CV/résumé past the initial review stage. When planning to get published, what to publish and where often requires a bit of strategic thought; keep in mind that there are a variety of options open to most teachers if you dig a little beneath the first layer of big name journals. Efforts should be made a year or two ahead of the job-hunting period to identify what kind of publications might be needed and when. The simplest rule to keep in mind is that better jobs will require better and longer publications. In any case, a list of varied academic publications should serve any teacher well in their job hunt, and will at the very least get them the chance to interview, which otherwise qualified teachers without publications may be denied.

Essential Documents for Academic Job Applications

The core of the application package for an academic job is the academic CV, its Japanese counterpart, and copies of three to five major publications, but there are a few other documents that are commonly required, as well. Sometimes these documents can be difficult to obtain quickly and cause applicants to miss application deadlines or have their applications delayed or even rejected. The documents required fall into three main categories: documents related to academic and working credentials, documents demonstrating your teaching abilities, and documents evaluating your abilities and character.

Academic Credentials

The basic requirement for all university-level teaching jobs is a Master's degree in any field, but preferably in a field related to TEFL/TESOL or Linguistics. If your degree is not in a field closely related to language education, then teaching experience or supplemental credentials such as a Cambridge CELTA may help. Most universities require a copy of the original diploma to prevent fraud. Others request official university transcripts as an additional assurance of authenticity. Transcripts can take some time to order and arrive, so having two copies on hand (one sealed and one opened, for photocopying) is recommended. You may also be required to show copies of your alien registration and passport to prove your eligibility to work or facilitate the university's visa sponsorship process.

Teaching Ability

Another important area to document is your teaching and professional ability. Although not always explicitly required, such documentation is helpful in presenting a complete picture of you as a professional educator. The ways to demonstrate teaching ability vary by institution; for example, one Kansai university requires a video of your teaching, while others typically require you to teach a model lesson during the interview (JALT-Jobs Available, 2012). Preparing a quality video or lesson plan is time consuming, so the sooner you start the better. Other types of documents include actual or proposed syllabi or lesson plans. Keep syllabi for different types of classes you have taught (reading, writing, listening, communication, EAP, or content-based) to help you remember what you have done. Also keep a few detailed lesson plans for particularly successful activities or lessons (these could also be published as *My Share* articles to serve double duty).

Evaluations

The third type of documentation is related to what others think of your abilities and character. It typically takes the form of a reference from a colleague or supervisor. Sometimes only contact information is required, but often an actual letter is required. In any case, keep a list of potential referees with their updated contact information, including snail and email addresses and telephone numbers. Do not assume that someone will give you a good evaluation – confirm that your potential referee is willing to speak to your experience in a positive and informed way. It can take time to write a letter of recommendation and your referees are busy people, so allow at least one week. It is also kind to remind your referees of all the good things you did while working together and describe any particular things you think should be emphasized in your specific application for a particular job. Keep in touch. Thank the referees for their help, let them know how the application went (even if it is bad news). Keep abreast of changes in contact information. People change departments, institutions, or retire, so you need to update their information.

Another source of evaluation is from your students, in the form of student satisfaction/teacher evaluation surveys. Schools generally require students to complete teacher-evaluation surveys; these can serve as evidence of your popularity and effectiveness. You can also administer more personalized surveys at the end of the course to get in-depth information from your students.

A third kind of evaluation is a peer teaching observation, allowing a colleague to monitor and critique your class. Some referees (including one of the authors' current supervisor) require this kind of observation before consenting to write a letter of recommendation. This kind of evaluation is useful both for the job search and overall professional development, but it takes time and planning.

Conclusion

Remember, application materials (CV, JACV, copies of your M.A., publications, et cetera) will not guarantee you a job. They are simply what will keep your application out of the shredder. Search committees often separate applications into two piles from the start: complete and incomplete. The best way to make the first cut is to include everything requested in the initial posting together in one package. Seemingly insignificant requests, when heeded, make the process of hiring you easier for those in charge. Think of your application's completeness as a given, not a goal—that is how universities see it (Miller & Parrish, 2012).

The suggestions outlined in this paper to improve your academic scorecard seem straightforward, but are not always easily followed all of the time. However, just beginning the process will improve your understanding of your career strengths and weaknesses and put you on the road to professional fluency.

Best of luck in your pursuit of your next academic position!

References

Higher Education Bureau. (2009). *Quality Assurance Framework of Higher Education in Japan*. Retrieved from: http://www.mext.go.jp/english/highered/1307524.htm

JACET (2012). *Job openings*. Retrieved from: http://www.jacet.org/kobo/index.html

JALT Publications (2012). J*obs available*. Retrieved from: http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/job-info-centre/jobs

JALT Publications (n.d.). *Guidelines: Publishing in My Share*. Retrieved from: http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare/guidelines

JREC-IN (n.d.). *Job information search*. Retrieved from: http://jrecin.jst.go.jp/seek/SeekJorDetail?fn=0&ln=1&id=D112071672&ln_jor=1

MEXT (2012). *The "Global 30" project to invite 300,000 international students to Japan.* Retrieved from: http://www.uni.international.mext.go.jp/global30/

Miller, R. & Parrish, M. (2012). Preparing yourself for employment success. *The Language Teacher 36*(1), pp. 96-97.

Authors' Biographies:

Richard Miller has taught English in Japan since 1995. He also edits the Job Information Centre column in JALT's The Language Teacher.

Zane Ritchie has been teaching and studying at the university level in Japan since 1995. He currently teaches a content-based syllabus in comparative social-welfare systems.

Ryan Richardson has taught at various educational institutions since 1994. He is a Ph.D. candidate in Psychology researching student motivation post-study abroad.

Michael Parrish has taught foreign languages (English, Spanish) since 1990. He serves as the coordinator for the Job Information Centre at the JALT National Conference.

Appendix: Sample Japanese Academic CV

A. Personal Information

1. Name (in Roman characters with katakana reading above)
2. Gender (circle one 男 male・女 female)
3. Signature (or "hanko" seal)
4. Photo
5. Date of birth (and age)
6. Place of birth
7. Address
8. Phone number (Home) (Mobile)
9. E-mail address

写真はノリで添付せず クリップで止めてください。 写　真 **4.**	ジョンズ　ジョン **1.** Jones, John	男・女 **2.** 印 **3.**
	1982 年　10　月　4　日生 （満　30　歳）**5.**	本籍地 **6.** イギリス
ふりがな　オオサカフオオサカシキタクウメダ 現住所 〒（530－0013 ） 大阪府大阪市北区梅田３丁目１－２ **7.**		電話番号 **8.** 家　（ 06 ）6347-0111 携帯　090-1111-2222 メールアドレス: JJJones@gmail.com **9.**

B. Education

1. Schooling
2. List of degrees

A. Start/End dates on one line
B. Start/End on two lines

年	月	日	**1.** 学　歴
1996	3	1	○○大学文学部日本語学科日本語専攻・史学副専攻　入学
2001	2	28	○○大学文学部日本語学科日本語専攻・史学副専攻　卒業
2001	3	1	○○大学院文学研究科日本語専攻・史学副専攻博士前期課程　入学（2006 年 3 月 1 日修了） **A.**
2003	2	28	○○大学院文学研究科日本語専攻・史学副専攻博士前期課程
2009	3	1	○○大学大学院文学研究科 TESOL 専攻博士前課程　入学　**B.**
2011	2	28	○○大学大学院文学研究科 TESOL 専攻博士前課程　修了
			2. 学　位
2003	2	28	文学修士（○○大学）
2011	2	28	TESOL 修士（○○大学）

Kanji note: 入学＝start date of a university course (grad/post grad)
卒業 = graduation (undergrad course); 修了=graduation (Master course)

C. Work Experience

1. Employment history A. Beginning/Ending on two lines B. Beginning/End dates on one line

年	月	日	**1.** 職 歴
2001	4	1	○○文学部　非常勤講師（2006 年 3 月末まで）
2003	3	31	契約期間終了につき退職 **A.**
2004	4	1	○○文学部　非常勤講師（2006 年 3 月末まで） **B.**
2006	4	1	○○大学常講師（英語）（現在に至る）

Kanji note: 現在に至る＝currently 契約期間終了につき退職 ＝resigned at end of contracted term.

D. Memberships and Associations

1. Academic/professional associations and community activities/service (volunteer work)

年	月	日	**1.** 学会ならびに社会における活動
2008	4	1	JALT 全国語学教育学会　会員（現在に至る）
2010	4	1	College University Educators (CUE) Tokyo（学術団体）委員会　委員（現在に至る）

E. Research and Publications

1. Title or theme of article or academic publication
2. Date of publication/presentation
3. Place of publication/presentation
4. Publications
5. Academic presentations

著書および学術論文目録			
著書名または学術論文題目 **1.**	発行または発表年月 **2.**		発行所・発表雑誌等または発表学会等の名称 **3.**
著書 **4.**	年	月	
Jones, J. & Paul, K (2010). Using content-based learning in first-year college courses. In XX and YY (Eds.) (共著)	2010	10	*Pan-SIG 2010 Conference Proceedings*. Kyoto: JALT. pp. 11-35
My Share: Using Fairy-tales to motivate learners(単著)	2009	7	*The Language Teacher*. 33:4, pp.10-12
学会発表等 **5.**			
Using content-based learning in first-year college courses (共著)	2010	5	Pan-SIG. May 24, Osaka Gakuin University
Blended Learning: are we wasting our time?　(単著)	2008	5	JALT, Hamamatsu chapter, Professional Development seminar

Kanji note: 共著：joint publication/presentation; 単著＝single author/speaker

Using Rasch Analysis to Evaluate an Achievement Test

Judith Runnels
Hiroshima Bunkyo Women's University
jrunnels@h-bunkyo.ac.jp

Rasch-based analyses are frequently used to evaluate tests by providing arguments toward the validity of the assessment and by highlighting items that produced unexpected response patterns. Rasch analysis estimates the probability of a specific response according to person ability and item difficulty parameters, placing both on an interval scale. In the current study, an 82 item multiple-choice English vocabulary achievement test was administered to first-year non-English majors at a Japanese university. Rasch analysis produced precise information that could be used by the test developers or educators to modify potentially problematic test items, with the ultimate goal of improving the precision of the measurement capabilities of the assessment. This article outlines the process for using Winsteps® (Rasch analysis software) outputs to analyse and evaluate a test.

本稿はテストを分析評価する為のWinsteps（ラッシュ・モデルの為のコンピューターソフト）を使用するプロセスを説明する。ラッシュ・モデル(Rasch model)は、最近ではテストの妥当性に対する議論を提供し、予期しない答えのパターンを生み出す項目を強調することにより、テストを評価するために使用されている。具体的には能力値と項目難易度を間隔尺度にかけて、それぞれの項目による特定の反応の確率を推定するものである。更に、その最終目的は、テストのような評価媒体の正確さを改良することで、潜在的に問題のあるテスト項目を修正するためにテスト開発者や教育者が使用出来る情報を生み出している。本研究では、82の多肢選択英語語彙テストが英語専攻ではない日本の大学一年生に実施された。

Keywords: Rasch analysis, fit statistics, validity, assessment evaluation, variable map

Many vocabulary tests, such as the Vocabulary Levels Test (Nation, 1990) and the Eurocentres Vocabulary Size Test (Meara & Buxton, 1987) aim to measure a language learner's vocabulary size and are frequently used as a placement tool (Nation, 1990). Evaluation of such tests has recently been done with Rasch-based approaches (Royal & O'Neill, 2011; Yumoto & Stone, 2011). Rasch analyses use probability to determine the relationship between a raw score and a person's ability on an item-by-item basis (Bond & Fox, 2001; Eckes, 2011). Since vocabulary items are discrete, this type of analysis is argued to form a better representation of a test taker's vocabulary knowledge than more traditional deterministic statistics which provide a less accurate measure of ability since the knowledge of one word does not necessarily predict the knowledge of another (Beglar, 2010; Schmitt, Schmitt & Clapham, 2001). Rasch-based analysis takes into consideration both item difficulty and test-taker ability while assuming

Runnels, J. (2013). Using Rasch analysis to evaluate an achievement vocabulary test. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 175-180). Hiroshima: JALT.

all test-takers and items to be independent (Wright & Stone, 1979). A test-taker's raw test score is converted into a ratio of success to failure and then into the logarithmic odds that the response to an item will be correct – this is known as a logit (Eckes, 2011; Smith, 2000; Rasch, 1980). The same procedure is also applied to each of the items on the test. All logits are plotted on a single scale that is used as an estimate of ability for a test-taker and difficulty of an item (Wright & Stone, 1979). For vocabulary tests in particular, this framework of test evaluation has been used by Wolfe and Smith (2007), Beglar (2010), Beglar and Hunt (1999), Schmitt, Schmitt and Clapham (2001), Bond (2003) and Smith (2001), among others.

The current study was designed to evaluate a newly developed multiple-choice question (MCQ) vocabulary achievement test for English learners at a university in Hiroshima, Japan. Rasch analysis provides information about item difficulty, item functioning and test-takers' individual responses and ability. It is hoped that the analysis will identify any test-takers (in this instance, students) or items that exhibit unexpected response patterns and that the results will provide useful evidence in the form of preliminary validity arguments in the evaluation of this test (Messick, 1995).

Method

Participants

The test takers were 323 first year non-English majors (aged 20 and 21) from Hiroshima Bunkyo Women's University, a private university located in Hiroshima City, Japan. The test-takers were in 13 different mixed-major classes. All test-takers' first language (L1) is Japanese and second language (L2) is English.

Materials

The test, administered in July 2011, consisted of 82 MCQs of 4 types: gap fill, both L1-L2 and L2-L1 translations, and picture definition (see Nation, 2001). The questions were based on a 250 word study list provided at the start of the semester. All words and all sentences in the test items were taken directly from lesson materials.

Procedures

The test was taken in the students' usual class time and in their regular classrooms. The test was administered using www.classmarker.com®, an online testing site which randomizes response and distractor order. Classmarker.com® requires a response before a test-taker can proceed to the following item, and in doing so guarantees no skipped items. Winsteps® Rasch software Version 3.72.4 (Linacre, 2008) was used to analyse the results of the test. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha and Rasch measures were calculated.

The Rasch measure is the probability of a person correctly responding to a given item and is related to their ability and the difficulty of the item (Rasch, 1960). It is calculated with the following formula:

$$\log[\,p_{ni}/(1 - p_{ni})] = B_n - D_i \quad (1)$$

where B_n is the ability of a person n and D_i is the difficulty of item i.

In addition, a person-item map of difficulty and ability, point-measure correlations and fit statistics are all calculated. The point-measure correlations, which refer to whether the responses to the item align with the abilities, should be positive so as to indicate a positive correlation with the average score of the other items (Wolfe & Smith, 2007). A negative correlation indicates that the item is functioning in direct opposition with the variable being measured (Churchill, 1979). Fit statistics are used to check for any items that are causing strange response patterns. Fit statistics consist of mean-square values (MNSQ) and z-standardized scores (ZSTD) for both infit and outfit. MNSQs measure how well a test taker's response patterning matches the predictions of the model, or in other words, the size of the misfit (Smith, 2001). The standardized z-score (ZSTD) indicates the significance level of the misfit (Bond & Fox, 2007). According to Linacre (2007), acceptable values for low-stakes multiple choice tests for MNSQs range from 0.7 to 1.3 and -2.0-2.0 for ZSTDs.

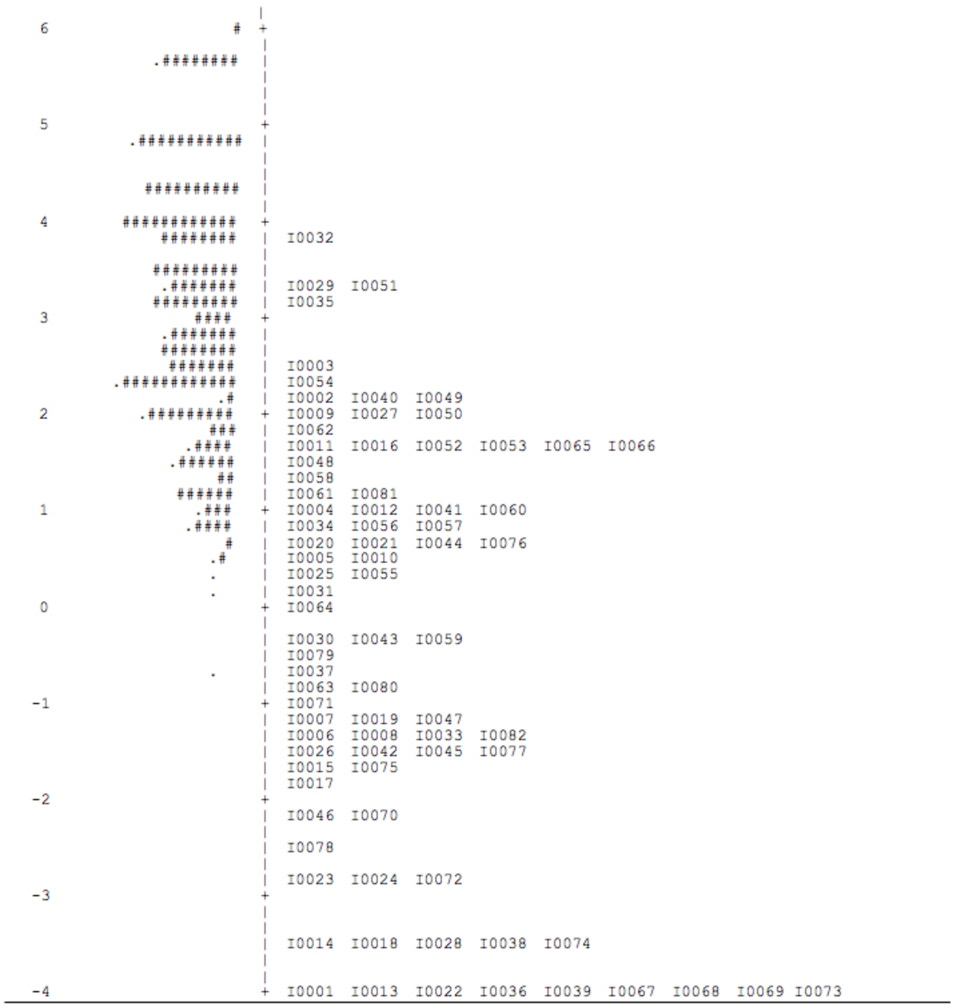


Figure 1. Person-Item Variable Map for all item and person measures

These analyses are essentially flagging questions that produced unexpected response patterns.

Results

For the 323 tests, the average test score was 86.4% (*SD* = 10.4%). Cronbach's alpha was 0.90. The Rasch analysis person-item variable map is shown in Figure 1. On the right of the y-axis are items, on the left of the y-axis are persons and to the far left are the Rasch linear measures in logits. One '#' represents 4 test-takers, while '.' represents 1-3. The '#' nearest the top represents the 4 most abled test-takers while the uppermost item (I0032) refers to the most difficult item (Figure 1). When a person aligns with an item, this indicates that the person has a 50% chance of success on that item. Several clusters of persons do not correspond to any item or difficulty level. Most of the items on the test have fallen below the clusters of people (Figure 1).

The results of the Rasch analysis with Winsteps® for most items are shown in Table 1. The items are arranged from most difficult to easiest. The first column, 'ENTRY NUMBER', corresponds to the test items (82 in total). 'TOTAL SCORE' indicates the total number of correct responses. 'TOTAL COUNT' is the total number of attempted responses and the 'MEASURE' column is the Rasch measure for this item (the difficulty in logits) followed by the standard error. The infit and outfit statistics are in the next two columns, which show the MNSQ (mean square) and the ZSTD (standardized z-score). Point measure correlations are shown in the eighth column. Any item that has a point-measure correlation of 0 (whereby in this case, 100% of test-takers responded correctly) has been removed from the output. A further 28 additional items with infit and outfit

Table 1

Rasch Analysis for All Test Items

ENTRY	TOTAL	TOTAL		MODEL	INFIT		OUTFIT		PT-MEASURE		
NUMBER	SCORE	COUNT	MEASURE	S.E.	MNSQ	ZSTD	MNSQ	ZSTD	CORR.	EXP.	Item
29	145	323	3.27	.13	1.29	4.6	1.42	4.1	.32	.51	I0029
51	145	323	3.27	.13	1.23	3.7	1.30	3.1	.37	.51	I0051
35	156	323	3.09	.13	1.18	3.1	1.32	3.4	.38	.51	I0035
3	194	323	2.44	.13	.73	-5.1	.65	-4.0	.67	.50	I0003
54	200	323	2.33	.13	.81	-3.5	.69	-3.3	.62	.49	I0054
27	214	323	2.08	.14	1.22	3.4	1.61	4.5	.31	.48	I0027
66	234	323	1.70	.14	.84	-2.5	.68	-2.5	.57	.45	I0066
48	247	323	1.43	.15	1.19	2.4	1.26	1.5	.30	.43	I0048
81	259	323	1.15	.16	.88	-1.4	.69	-1.7	.49	.41	I0081
41	264	323	1.03	.16	.91	-1.0	.69	-1.6	.47	.40	I0041
60	268	323	.92	.16	.85	-1.6	.60	-2.0	.50	.39	I0060
34	269	323	.90	.16	1.17	1.8	1.60	2.3	.25	.38	I0034
57	269	323	.90	.16	1.15	1.6	1.34	1.5	.28	.38	I0057
56	272	323	.82	.17	1.13	1.4	1.72	2.6	.25	.38	I0056
76	275	323	.73	.17	.92	-.8	.70	-1.3	.43	.37	I0076
20	279	323	.61	.18	1.18	1.6	1.61	2.0	.22	.35	I0020
25	287	323	.34	.19	1.18	1.4	1.50	1.5	.19	.33	I0025
55	289	323	.26	.19	1.05	.4	1.33	1.0	.27	.32	I0055
64	295	323	.02	.21	.86	-.9	.57	-1.3	.39	.30	I0064
30	303	323	-.39	.24	1.13	.7	2.53	2.8	.14	.26	I0030
43	303	323	-.39	.24	.85	-.8	.39	-1.8	.37	.26	I0043
59	303	323	-.39	.24	.81	-1.0	.38	-1.8	.39	.26	I0059
79	306	323	-.58	.26	.84	-.8	.35	-1.9	.37	.24	I0079
63	310	323	-.88	.29	.86	-.5	.31	-1.8	.33	.21	I0063
80	310	323	-.88	.29	.96	-.1	.44	-1.3	.28	.21	I0080
7	313	323	-1.17	.33	.98	.0	.68	-.5	.21	.19	I0007
19	313	323	-1.17	.33	.93	-.1	.41	-1.3	.27	.19	I0019
33	314	323	-1.28	.35	.91	-.2	.46	-1.1	.25	.18	I0033
82	314	323	-1.28	.35	1.05	.3	1.43	.9	.12	.18	I0082
6	315	323	-1.41	.37	.97	.0	.40	-1.2	.22	.17	I0006
8	315	323	-1.41	.37	.99	.1	.42	-1.2	.21	.17	I0008
42	316	323	-1.55	.39	.92	-.1	.30	-1.5	.24	.16	I0042
45	316	323	-1.55	.39	.95	.0	.47	-1.0	.22	.16	I0045
77	316	323	-1.55	.39	.89	-.2	.28	-1.6	.26	.16	I0077
75	317	323	-1.72	.42	.97	.1	.32	-1.4	.21	.15	I0075
46	319	323	-2.14	.51	.97	.1	1.77	1.2	.08	.12	I0046
70	319	323	-2.14	.51	.95	.1	.67	-.4	.15	.12	I0070
78	320	323	-2.44	.59	.98	.2	.25	-1.5	.16	.11	I0078
23	321	323	-2.85	.71	.98	.2	.22	-1.6	.14	.09	I0023
24	321	323	-2.85	.71	1.00	.2	.36	-1.1	.11	.09	I0024
72	321	323	-2.85	.71	.99	.2	.28	-1.4	.13	.09	I0072
18	322	323	-3.56	1.01	1.02	.4	3.73	2.9	-.02	.06	I0018
28	322	323	-3.56	1.01	.98	.3	.16	-2.0	.11	.06	I0028
38	322	323	-3.56	1.01	.97	.3	.13	-2.2	.12	.06	I0038
74	322	323	-3.56	1.01	1.00	.3	.26	-1.5	.09	.06	I0074

statistics within the acceptable range have also been removed. Only one item exhibited a negative point-measure correlation (I0018). For infit statistics, none of the items exhibit an MNSQ outside of the acceptable range. For outfit, 43 items (52.4% of total) fall outside of the acceptable range, 13 (15.9% of the total) of which have significant ZSTDs. Summarizing these analyses provides a list of 14 items (Items 3, 18, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, 38, 54, 56, 60, 66) that require further exploration due to their negative point-measure correlations or statistical misfit.

Discussion

Overall, although test-takers appear to have performed well on the test (with a mean of near 90%) the high number of outfit statistics outside of the acceptable range indicates that this test did not act as an effective measurement tool. The person-item variable map (Figure 1) showed that there was a mismatch between clusters of test-takers and item difficulty – most items fell below the abilities of test takers. This represents a low precision of measurement and is known as an item-targeting problem (Wright, Mead & Ludlow, 1980). Gaps in the spread of items potentially indicate that some domain of the assessed variable is not being measured by the test and that the content validity of the assessment tool is questionable (Baghaei, 2008). In the current case, this means that there were not enough questions of high enough difficulty to assess the acquisition of the original 250 word study list and that this test was likely partly measuring another dimension; for instance, pre-existing knowledge of many of the words. Gaps in the person-item map may mean that the items on the test are not appropriately representative of the content being tested (Baghaei & Amrahi, 2011; Smith, 2001). The gaps may also mean that the items on the test are not appropriately representative of the content being tested (Smith, 2001). Fit statistics were used to check the relevance of test content since mis-fitting items are suggested to be measuring a different construct although in this test, the infit statistics were generally within the acceptable range (Baghaei, 2009). However, over half of the test items exhibited misfitting outfit MNSQ values, which could mean that either able students were getting easy questions incorrect, or less-abled students were getting difficult questions correct. These items certainly require further exploration to determine which was the case, and how this might be addressed. Nonetheless, it is the mis-fitting infit statistics that are a greater threat to measurement precision than outfit (Linacre, 2007). The responses to the 43 items with all outfit statistics outside of the acceptable ranges, 13 of which are significant, most likely represent an issue with particular test-takers' responses rather than the item itself, especially since none of the items fell outside the abilities of the test taking population.

In terms of the potentially problematic items, there are several options for follow-up: elimination of the item, adjusting some or all of the distractors or modifying the question stem. Any of these processes would likely require a distractor analysis beforehand, which determines whether the test taker is being meaningfully distracted or if the distractor is contributing to the measurement (Andrich & Styles, 2011; Baghei & Amrahi, 2011). It would also ensure test takers are engaged with the items by providing evidence for how well the distractors are causing responses that match the cognitive processes for which the distracters were developed to engage (Wolfe & Smith, 2007). Factor analysis is also lacking from the current study (which could determine the uni-dimensionality of the test to confirm that there are not several different constructs being measured) as are comparisons with scores from other forms of English assessment (oral assessment, overall course grade) for the sake of predictive validity and generalizability. While further investigation is certainly required, monitoring and modification will likely contribute to the validity arguments for future versions of the test.

Conclusion

Despite test items falling well within the abilities of the test takers, the results of the Rasch analysis provided an initial evaluation of the validity of items on an achievement vocabulary test for beginner English learners. While some of the items on this test require further analysis, the results here show the value of evaluations of tests using Rasch. These types of analysis can provide a useful tool for educators working towards increasing the validity of their assessment, ultimately providing a better picture of where students' abilities lie.

References

Andrich, D., & Styles, I. (2011). Understanding Rasch Measurement: Distractors with Information in Multiple Choice Items: A Rationale Based on the Rasch Model. *Journal of Applied Measurement*, *12*, 67-95.

Baghaei, P. (2008). The Rasch model as a construct validation tool. *Rasch Measurement Transactions*, *22*, 1145-1146.

Baghaei, P. (2009). A Rasch-informed standard setting procedure. *Rasch Measurement Transactions*, *23*, 1214.

Baghaei, P., & Amrahi, N. (2011). Validation of a Multiple Choice English Vocabulary Test with the Rasch Model. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *2*, 1052-1060.

Beglar, D. (2010). A Rasch-based validation of the Vocabulary Size Test. *Language Testing*, *27*, 101-118.

Beglar, D., & Hunt, A. (1999). Revising and validating the 2000 Word Level and University Word Level Vocabulary Tests. *Language Testing*. *16*, 131-162.

Bond, T. G. (2003). Validity and assessment: a Rasch measurement perspective. *Metodologia de las Ciencias del Comportamiento, 5*, 179-194.

Bond, T.G., & Fox, C.M. (2001). *Applying the Rasch Model: Fundamental Measurement in* *the Human Sciences*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Churchill, G.A., (1979). A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *16*, 64–73.

Eckes, T. (2011). *Introduction to Many-Facet Rasch Measurement*. Frankfurt, Germany: Peter Lang.

Linacre, J. M. (2007). A user's guide to WINSTEPS-MINISTEP: Rasch-model computer programs. Chicago, IL: winsteps.com.

Linacre, J. M. (2008). Winsteps Rasch Measurement Computer Program. Chicago: winsteps.com.

Meara P., & Buxton, B. (1987). An alternative to multiple choice vocabulary tests. *Language Testing*, *4*, 142–154.

Messick, S. (1995). Validity of psychological assessment: Validation of inferences from persons' responses and performances as scientific inquiry into score meaning. *American Psychologist*, *50*, 741–749.

Nation, I.S.P. (1990). *Teaching and learning vocabulary*. New York, NY: Newbury House.

Nation, I.S.P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Rasch, G. (1980). *Probabilistic models for some intelligence and attainment tests*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Royal, K., & O'Neill, T.R. (2011). Explaining Discrepancies Between the Sum of Subtest Scale-Scores and Total Scale-Scores. *Rasch Measurement Transactions*, *25*, 1338.

Schmitt, N., Schmitt, D., & Clapham, C. (2001). Developing and exploring the behaviour of two new versions of the Vocabulary Levels Test. *Language Testing*, *18*, 55–88.

Smith, E.V. (2000). Metric development and score reporting in Rasch measurement, *Journal of Applied Measurement*, *1*, 303–326.

Smith, E. V. (2001). Evidence for the reliability of measures and validity of measure interpretation: A Rasch measurement perspective. *Journal of Applied Measurement, 2*, 281-311.

Wolfe, E. W. & Smith, E. V. (2007). Instrument development tools and activities for measure validation using Rasch models: Part II-validation activities. *Journal of Applied Measurement, 8*, 204-234.

Wright, B.D. & Stone, M.H. (1979). *Best test design*. Chicago, IL: MESA Press.

Wright, B.D., Mead, R.J., & Ludlow, L.H. (1980). KIDMAP: Person-by-item interaction mapping. *Research Memorandum No. 29*. MESA Psychometric Laboratory, Department of Education, University of Chicago.

Yumoto, F., & Stone, M. (2011). Comparing Item Calibration Estimates using Winsteps and RUMM2010. *Rasch Measurement Transactions*, *25*, 1329.

Authors' Biographies:

Judith Runnels is lecturer in the Global Communication Department of Hiroshima Bunkyo Women's University. Her research interests include language testing and evaluation.

Communicative Competence for Listening Comprehension

Yukie Saito
Dokkyo University
ty-saito@yacht.ocn.ne.jp

Acquiring communicative competence has been considered as the ultimate goal in communicative language teaching. Although the importance of acquiring communicative competence has been mainly emphasized in terms of the instruction of speaking, it can also be applicable to the instruction of listening. In Japan, recently the instruction of listening has been recognized as one of the major components in English education. However, it seems that English teachers lack clear guidelines on how to instruct listening skills. Therefore, in the paper, adopting the definition of communicative competence in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, I will attempt to reconsider communicative competence as a comprehension framework for listening comprehension.

コミュニケーション能力の取得はコミュニカティブ·ランゲージ·ティーチングにおける究極の目標として考えられてきた。コミュニケーション能力を獲得することの重要性は、スピーキング指導の観点から強調されてきたが、それはまた、リスニングの指導にも適用が可能である。日本では、リスニング指導法には明確なガイド導最近になってリスニング指導は英語教育における主要な要素の一つとして認識されてきている。しかし、それは英語教師にとって、リスニングスキル指導法に関しての明確なガイドラインが欠けていると考えられる。したがって、本論文では、ヨーロッパ言語共通参照枠のコミュニケーション能力の定義を採用して、リスニングのための理解の枠組みとしてコミュニケーション能力を再考を試みる。

Keywords: Listening comprehension, communicative competence, pragmatics, sociolinguistics

Currently, one of the most commonly accepted methods in language teaching is communicative language teaching, in which the desired goal is to help English learners acquire communicative competence (Brown, 2001, p. 42). The importance of acquiring communicative skills has also been emphasized in English education in Japan. According to Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) (2003), the overall objective of foreign language teaching is to develop students' basic practical communication abilities. Though the importance of acquiring communicative competence for speaking has been mainly emphasized, acquiring communicative competence can be helpful for listening comprehension. One of the major goals of foreign language teaching in Japan proposed by MEXT is to accustom and familiarize students with listening to English. Also, English language proficiency tests such as TOEIC and EIKEN, which are widely taken English proficiency tests, and the

Saito, Y. (2013). Communicative Competence for Listening Comprehension. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 181-186). Hiroshima: JALT.

National Center Test, a test taken by third grade high school students, include listening sections which require various types of knowledge for listening comprehension. Recently, many researchers (Brown, 2001; Field, 1998; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Gilbert, 1995; Mendelsohn, 1995; Rost, 2002; Vandergrfit, 1999; Yumitani, 2005) have proposed the adoption of listening strategies or skills for listening comprehension. However, it seems there is no systematic and comprehensive guidance on how to instruct listening to Japanese EFL learners. Thus, a comprehensive and effective teaching of listening, which can be applied to a wide spectrum of Japanese EFL learners who need to communicate in English or take English proficiency tests such as the TOEIC or EIKEN tests, is crucial. Communicative competence may offer some suggestions on how to address the need for the instruction of listening comprehension in English education in Japan.

Hymes defines communicative competence as what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Canale proposed four comprehensive theoretical frameworks of communicative competence: grammatical competence, socio-linguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence (as cited in Kitao, 1993). Backman's model of language competence consists of organizational competence and pragmatic competence (1990). Organizational competence is composed of grammatical competence: the knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and phonology; and textual competence: the knowledge of the conventions for joining utterances together to form a text. Pragmatic competence is composed of illocutionary competence: the knowledge of speech acts as language function and sociolinguistic competence: the knowledge of the conventions of language use determined by the features of the specific language use context. Recently under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CERF) the learning, teaching and assessment of communicative competence was reevaluated (Council of Europe, 2001). CEFR is a framework of reference and it was designed to provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency (Council of Europe, 2001). Communicative competences, which CEFR presents, are composed of linguistic competences which include lexical, phonological, syntactical knowledge and skills and other dimensions of language as a system, sociolinguistic competences which refer to the sociocultural conditions of language use, and pragmatic competences which are concerned with the functional use of linguistic resources such as the production of speech acts. In this paper, using the model of communicative competence given by CEFR, it will be demonstrated how linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences can form a comprehensive framework for listening comprehension.

Linguistic Competence for Listening Comprehension

Linguistic competence is lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic and orthopedic knowledge (Council of Europe, 2001). Flowerdew and Miller (2005) point out that a listener needs the knowledge of the role of syntax. The knowledge of syntax is a part of grammatical knowledge (Council of Europe, 2001). This knowledge is essential for Japanese EFL learners because the structures of English and Japanese are different. For example, the knowledge of syntax will enable listeners to predict that a verb comes after a subject in declarative sentences, not an object or a complement as in Japanese. Semantic knowledge of the meanings of the relations between the words in a sentence is also helpful in listening comprehension (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005).

Recently, the importance of phonological knowledge, such as the knowledge of phonemes, stress, tone groups as a basic unit of information and sound change like assimilation and elision for listening comprehension has been emphasized by many researchers (Brown, 2001; Gilbert, 1995; Mendelsohn, 1994, 1995; Rost, 2002; and Yumitani, 2005). Understanding the difference betweem stress on content words and stress on function words is beneficial to listening. Content words such as nouns or the main verbs are usually stressed while function words such as articles and conjunction are not usually stressed (Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 1996). This knowledge is helpful because it enables listeners to focus on content words in listening. Since a number of differences exist in phonemes and stress pattern between English and Japanese, the knowledge needed for listening mentioned above should be seen as basic and structural knowledge for listening comprehension, thus it should be introduced from the early stages in the instruction of listening.

Sociolinguistic Competence for Listening Comprehension

Sociolinguistic competence is related to the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language use (Council of Europe, 2001). Understanding register differences and politeness conventions are a part of sociolinguistic competence (Council of Europe, 2001). English native speakers can choose appropriate expressions from informal ones to formal ones depending on context. For instance, they may use "Close the widow, please." for a request to a friend and "May I ask you to close the widow?" for a request to someone whose position is higher than their position. They may also use more indirect expression, such as "its cold in here", as a request to close the window. However, it is difficult to understand the intention of the indirect request as a non-native English speaking listener. Native speakers also try to avoid face threatening acts, to mitigate refusals and to adopt different uses of refusal strategies including fillers such as "well", regrets such as "I'm sorry" and gratitude such as "Thank you" (Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990). Listeners need to understand not only language but also contextual meaning including the social status and interpersonal relationships in the language use and the intentions of the speakers (Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). In one of the proficiency tests which has been widely used, the TOEIC, the listening section includes various types of indirect expressions such as indirect requests, suggestions, offers, apologies and refusals (Saito, 2012). Therefore, listeners need to become accustomed to indirect expressions not only for conversations but also for listening comprehension of such language proficiency tests.

Pragmatic Competence for Listening Comprehension

Pragmatic competences are related to the user / learner's knowledge of the principles and include functional competence such as production of speech acts, discourse competence and design competence (Council of Europe, 2001). It can be said that it is the knowledge of how to use and respond to different types of speech acts. In order to understand a basic unit of communication, listeners need to understand speakers' intentions in different speech acts such as requests, suggestions, promises, apologies and questions. Murcia and Olshtain (2000) mention that higher-level organizing elements such as adjacency pairs in conversation structure are all crucial to the listener. Adjacency pairs are the relation of the first pair parts and the second pair parts such as a question and an answer and they are at least two turns in length (Psathas, 1994). The knowledge of adjacency pairs and speech acts will help listeners to predict appropriate responses such as an answer to a question and an acceptance or a refusal to a request. Discourse competence is the knowledge of cohesiveness in form and coherence in meaning in both spoken and written text (Barron, 2003). As an example of cohesiveness in form, understanding different pronouns and what certain pronouns refer to in spoken text can be helpful in listening comprehension. The knowledge of topic shift which refers to the knowledge about when to change a topic, the knowledge of turn taking which refers to how interlocutors take turns at speaking, and the knowledge of back channeling which are signals a listener uses to show that he/ she is attending are all important for listening (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005). In order to understand how discourse is structured, the knowledge of discourse markers can be also beneficial to listening to a conversation (Mendelsohn,

Beginner	**Linguistic Competences**
	(lexicon, morpholpogy, syntax, semantics, phonology)
Intermediate	**Sociolinguistic Competences**
	(register difference, politeness convention, indirect expressions)
Advanced	**Pragmatic Competence**
	(Speech acts, topic shift, turn-taking, back channeling, discourse marker)

Figure 1. Framework for Communicative Competence for Listening Comprehension

1994). The knowledge of discourse markers such as "however" as contrast, or "moreover" as addition will enable listeners to understand structures of long monologues. This knowledge can be helpful in listening to speeches and lectures. The knowledge of topic shift, turn taking and discourse marker, which make spoken text into meaningful sets of utterances, is essential in order to be able to listen to spoken texts with larger structures.

Suggestions

In the previous sections, it was discussed how linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and discourse competence in communicative competence of CEFL can be useful knowledge for listening comprehension. Figure 1 shows a summary of the instruction of listening using communicative competence as a comprehensive framework.

Grammatical knowledge such as lexicon and syntax in linguistic knowledge is essential for listening comprehension. Also, phonological knowledge such as phonemes, stress, tone group and sound change like assimilation and elision can be beneficial for Japanese EFL learners since there are significant phonological differences between Japanese and English. For instance some differences of phonemes between /f/ and /h/ are difficult for Japanese EFL students (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992). Not only linguistic competence but also sociolinguistic competence is essential for listening comprehension. Teachers are expected to instruct different indirect expressions such as indirect requests using different linguistic forms depending on different contexts, which enable listeners to understand speaker's intention in indirect expressions. Pragmatic competence such as the knowledge about how to use and respond to different speech acts and the knowledge to understand larger spoken texts will also enables listeners to understand intentions in different speech acts and understand contents of larger spoken texts. Framework as proposed above from linguistic competence for beginner level students to discourse competence for advanced students is the suggested framework. About when to teach linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and discourse competence does not have to be so clear cut and for instance some knowledge of discourse competence can be introduced at any stage of learning. However, all of the competences of linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence are essential competences and they should be introduced in the instruction of listening. Thus, this framework can be a useful framework for the instruction of listening.

Conclusion

In this paper, it was demonstrated how communicative competence can be a comprehensive framework for listening comprehension using the definition of communicative competence of CEFR. As discussed, linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences in communicative competence can be important knowledge for listening comprehension. Using the framework discussed above, it is possible for teachers to instruct students about the knowledge necessary for listening comprehension depending on students' levels. Some of the competences looked at in this framework such as phonology and even basic speech acts can be introduced to young learners. It is hoped that the proposed framework of communicative competence for listening comprehension can give some suggestions about what needs to be taught in the instruction of listening to English educators.

References

Avery, P. & Ehrlich, S. (1992). *Teaching American English*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Backman, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Barron, A. (2003). *Acquisition in interlanguage pragmatics: Learning how to do with words in a study abroad context.* Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Beebe, L. M., Takahashi, T. & Uliss-Weltz, R. (1990). Pragmatic transfer in ESL Refusals. In R. Scarcella, E. Anderson, & S. D. Krashen (Eds.)*, Developing communicative competence in a second language* (pp. 55-73). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Brown, A. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy.* New York, NY: Pearson Education.

Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Field, J. (1998). Skills and Strategy: Toward a new methodology for listening. *ELT Journal 52*(2), 110-118.

Flowerdew, J., & Miller, L. (2005). *Second language listening: Theory and practice*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Gilbert, J. B. (1995). Pronunciation practice as an aid to listening comprehension. In D. J. Mendelsohn & Rubin (Eds.), *A Guide for the teaching of second language listening* (pp. 97-109). San Diego, CA: Dominie Press.

Kitao, S. (1993).*Communicative competence in English: Teaching about functions.* Kyoto: Doshisha Women's College. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 3712614)

Mendelsohn, D. J. (1994). *Learning to listen: A strategy based approach for the second language learner*. San Diego, CA: Dominie Press.

Mendelsohn, D. J. (1995). Applying learning strategies in the second / foreign language listening comprehension lesson. In D. J Mendelsohn & Rubin. (Eds.), *A guide for the teaching of second language listening* (pp. 97-109). San Diego, CA: Dominie Press.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (2003) *The course of study for foreign languages.* Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/english/shoutou/ 030301.htm

Murcia, M.C., Brinton, D. M, & Goodwin, J.M. (1996).*Teaching pronunciation: A reference for teachers of other languages.* Cambridge, Engaland: Cambridge University Press.

Murcia, M.C., & Olshtain, E. (2000). *Discourse and content in language teaching*: *A guide for language teachers.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Psathas, G. (1994). *Conversation analysis: The study of talk in interaction.* London, England: Sage Publications.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Rost, M. (2002). *Teaching and researching listening.* Essex, England: Longman.

Saito, Y. (2012). Sociolinguistic competence for listening comprehension: Speech act analysis of TOEIC Part 2. *The modern English circles collections of papers, 6*, 19-42.

Yumitani, Y. (2005). Phonetic instruction is useful for listening. *The English Teachers' Magazine, 54*(10), 22-24.

Author's Biography:

Yukie Saito has been working for Dokkyo University since 2012. She has been interested in pragmatics, particularly its application in second language listening practice and second language listening.

The Challenge of English Sentence Subjects (*Shugo*) to Japanese Learners

Nobuko Trent
Aoyama Gakuin University
nobuko@trent.net

Japanese learners of English in colleges, especially basic level students, tend to have difficulties in determining the proper sentence subject even after years of formal instruction. This problem of sentence structure could seriously hinder their development of English skills because in English sentences, the sentence subject is said to be the most important and powerful element controlling all grammatical elements in the sentence. Japanese sentences are also supposed to have a sentence subject, *shugo*. On the surface, however, Japanese sentences do not always have a subject, but scholars simply consider this an abbreviation of an understood subject. However, error analyses of Japanese learners of English suggest that the learners may not have correct understanding of sentence subjects in either language. This study presents an analysis of this particular syntactical problem, relates the issues to the theories of Japanese syntax, and proposes solutions to improve English education.

文法的に正しい英文を構築できない初心者レベルの大学生の比率は年々高くなる傾向にある。特に適切な文主語を設定できない学習者が多く、英文では主語が文全体の形態を決定するのでこれはスキルの向上を大きく妨げている。初級学習者の多くは日本語を英文に変換しているので、実際に使われている日本語文に主語がないことが英語の主語の問題に影響しているのではないだろうか。現在の教育では日本語に主語があるとされているが実際には使われない場合が多い。英語学習者のエラー分析の結果、学習者はどちらの言語でも正しい文主語の概念を持っていないのではないかと疑われる。この文主語の問題は英語、日本語がそれぞれの話者にどのように言語脳内で認知されているかにも関連があるという学説もあり、統語論、外国語教育を含む様々な領域に関連している。このリサーチは文の構造学の中で特に主語についてのエラー分析に基づき英語教育への提案も試みている。

Keywords: EFL, pragmatics, Japanese syntax, English syntax, sentence subject

Although we tend to assume that sentence subjects are obligatory in most languages, apparently, this is not the case. According to Matsumoto (2006), the group of languages that structurally require sentence subjects is smaller than the group in which a subject is not obligatory. A limited number of languages belong to the former group including English, German, French, Romansh, Dutch, and some Scandinavian languages (Pelmutter, 1971 quoted in Matsumoto, 2006, Tsukimoto, 2008). Whether or not Japanese

Trent, N. (2013). The challenge of English sentence subjects (*Shugo*) to Japanese learners. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 187-195). Hiroshima: JALT.

sentences have a syntactical subject has been a controversial issue in academia. Considering the long history of Japanese literacy, it is puzzling that scholars started energetically debating this issue a mere 50 years ago. Even more disturbingly, this impedes the foreign language learning processes for Japanese students. One of the reasons for the confusion is that the Japanese subject issue includes both syntactical and semantic aspects. Since this study deals with a Japanese learners' problem with English sentence structure, especially the sentence subject, the study's focus is with the Japanese syntactical sentence subject (subjective case).

Method

Eight hundred ungrammatical English sentences written by 95 basic and 74 intermediate level Japanese learners of English were categorized into 13 major error types. Among them, errors related to sentence subjects were analyzed and contrasted with corresponding Japanese sentences. Learners were also asked how often they translate from Japanese to English when they create English sentences, and which English grammar issues they have difficulties with (see Appendix).

Learners' Problem with English Sentence Subjects: A Type of Negative Transfer?

Language transfer from a learners' native language can occur when learners think in their native language, and transfer its unique features to their target language. Figure 1 shows how often, students claimed, they translate Japanese sentences to English. Among 187 students, fewer than 10% answered that they think in English and do not translate. The rest of the students translate from Japanese to English 50 to 100% of the time. This process most likely causes negative transfer from Japanese structure to English.

Figure 2 shows the numbers of actual errors in different grammar items found in students' writing. The most frequent errors are with general syntax, verb/verb phrases, sentence subjects, and articles. Thus, sentence subject-related errors are a serious problem. However, when students were asked what grammar points are most difficult, their answers (Figure 3) did not conform to the results in Figure 2. Learners are not aware they have problems with English sentence subjects. As a matter of fact, after semesters of instruction to pay attention to English sentence subjects, a great proportion of learners never make significant progress; they keep writing subject-

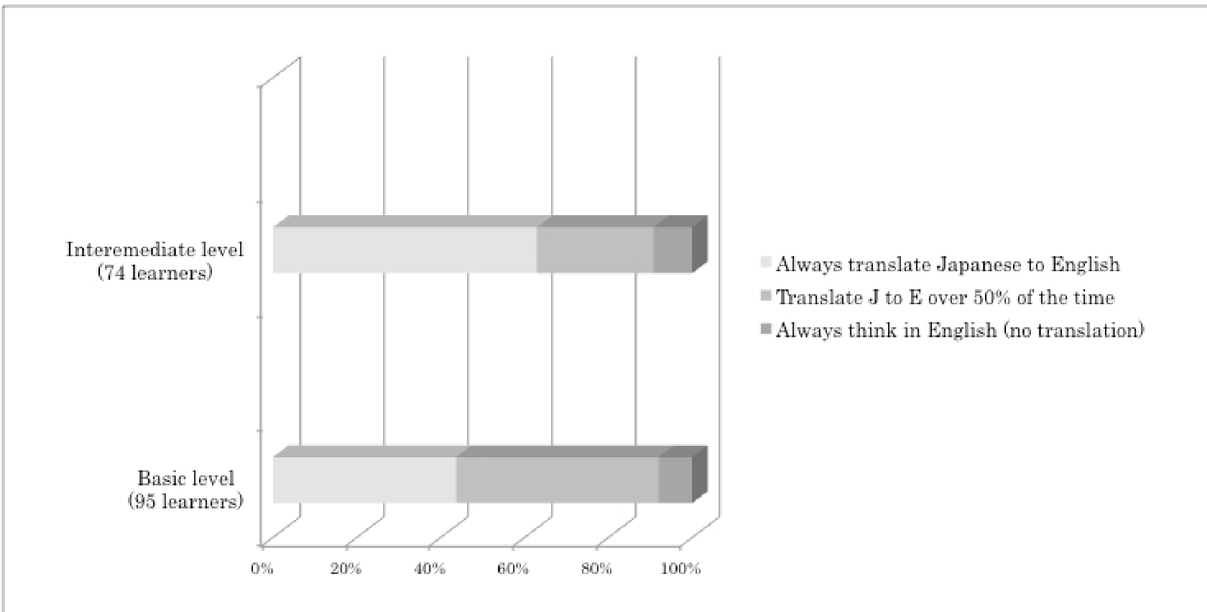


Figure 1. How often students translate from Japanese sentences to English.

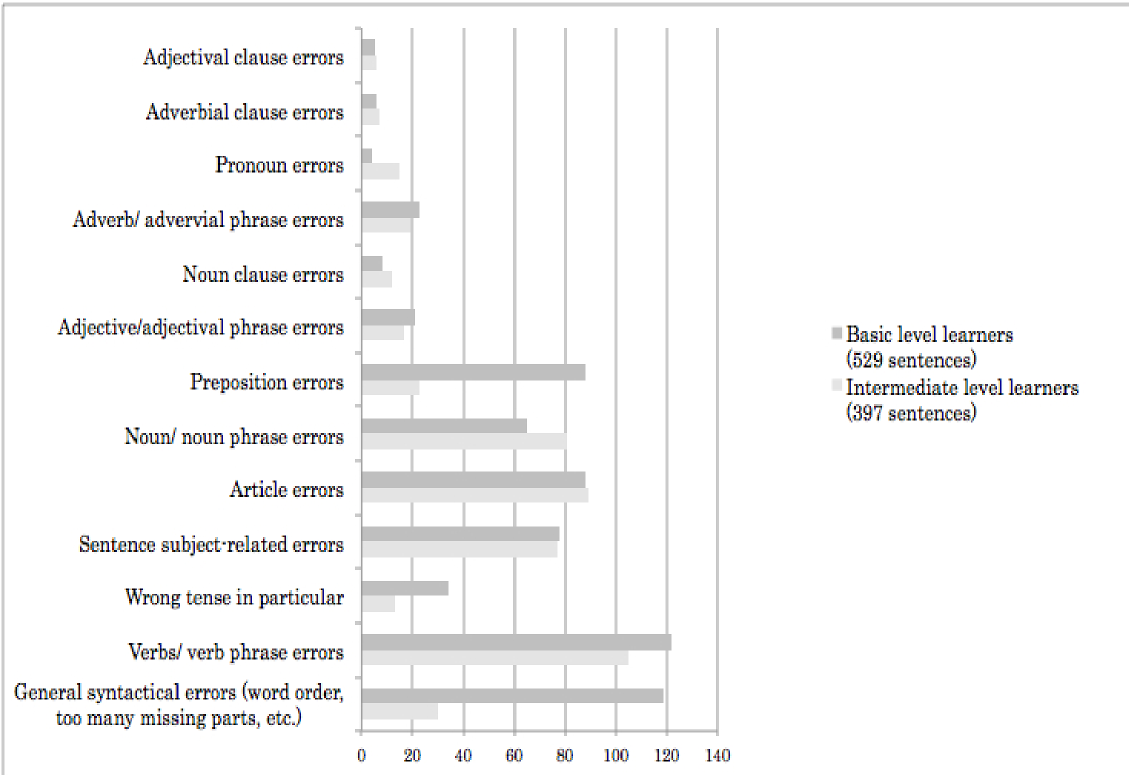


FIGURE 2. Number of actual errors in different grammar items

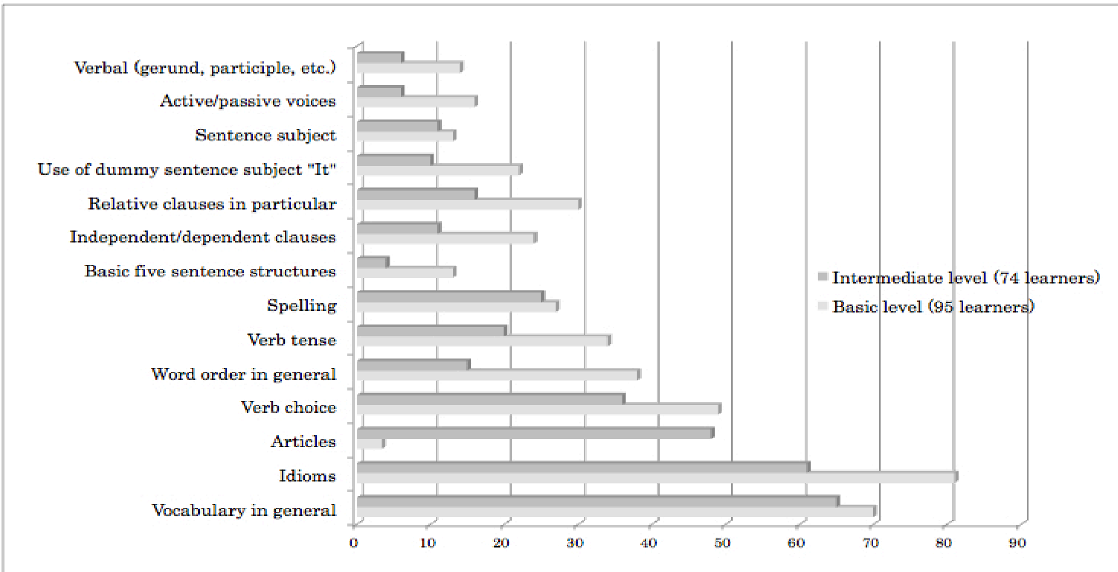


FIGURE 3. Grammar items that students claim to be challenging

free sentences or sentences with wrong subjects. In this study, errors with sentence subjects are categorized into several common types, and analyzed in relation with equivalent Japanese sentences to see if negative transfer is involved.

Analysis of Learner Errors with Sentence Subject in English

Error Type (A): Dummy Subject "It" Is Used Without Representing a Concrete Agent (Doer)

The English dummy subject "it" is mainly used "in the normal subject position in statements about time, distance, or weather" or "in the normal subject or object position when a more specific subject or object is given later in the sentence" (OED, 2003), but is frequently used by learners in place of appropriate sentence subjects as if they do not feel the necessity for concrete subjects.

(*ungrammatical)

(A-1) **There are things that are more important than knowing the opposite sex. **It** cannot understand the opposite sex unless knowing the opposite sex.*

(A-2) * *If **it** thinks only bad things, it becomes impossible to do anything.*

(A-3) * *I am not working in order to do the management. **It** is working in order to make highest computer.*

In these sentences (A-1–A-3), the incorrectly used subject "it" can be replaced by, for example, "they" or "I." However, these "it" sentences are natural without an explicit subject when translated to Japanese as shown in (A-2J) below.

(A-2J) *moshi warui koto dake o kanngae tara,*
If bad thing only OBJ think COND
nanimo dekinaku natte shimau.
nothing cannot do become RES

"It" is used as the dummy sentence subject for English sentences without a concrete subject.

(A-4J) *samui*. (It is cold)
cold

(A-5J) *ima go ji da*. (It is 5 o'clock now.)
now five o'clock COP

It can be assumed that Japanese learners often use the subject "it" incorrectly in English because they consider "it" to be good for statements without clear subjects like the above examples (A-4J) and (A-5J).

Error Type (B): English Sentence Subjects Are Missing

(B-1) **I think that* (missing subject) *should not quit using nuclear power for two reasons.*

(B-2) **However, this opinion is wrong, and* (missing subject) *don't agree with their idea.*

(B-3) **The second reason is that* (missing subject and verb) *not discharging CO2 at the time of power generation.*

These ungrammatical sentences do not have sentence subjects (or clause subjects). However, the subjects can be easily filled with "we," "I," or "they/it." Then, why do not the learners use a concrete subject? Again, in the equivalent Japanese sentences, subject words are not obligatory. For example, in (B-2J), a subject is not used in the second statement, but the sentence is natural in Japanese.

(B-2J) *shikashi, kono iken wa machigatte iru,*
however this opinion TOP wrong STAT
soshite karera no iken ni sansei shimasen.
and their POSS opinions DAT agree do NEG

Japanese speakers often do not emphasize pronouns equivalent to "I," or other words that suggest agents when the subject/agent is obvious, or even when not obvious. Nakajima (1987) wrote that emotions and intentions are always expressed from the speaker's viewpoint in Japanese so that the subject does not need to appear in such sentences, while English sentences are expressed from the viewpoint of its sentence subject. Also, it is said that understood topics/subjects can be omitted in Japanese social situations that are intensely grouped and closed (e.g., Makino and Tsutsui, 1989). Additionally, it has been argued that modern day pronouns are imported from western languages, and the Japanese language does not require them (e.g., Kanaya, 2002). Therefore, it can also be hypothesized that students may have difficulties using English pronouns properly.

Error Type (C): General Topic Is Incorrectly Used as the Sentence Subject for English Sentences

In these types of ungrammatical sentences, the topic of the speech situation is erroneously used as the sentence subject. In these sentences, even if the topic is shown, there is no subject, and the predicate does not provide clear meanings.

(C-1) *Christmas *is cake.*
(We eat cake at the time of Christmas?/Cake is the most important thing at the time of Christmas?/Christmas means that we eat cake?)

(C-2) *Sunday *is dating*.

(I am dating on Sundays?/Sundays are good for dating?/People should date on Sundays?)

The meanings of the above sentences can be interpreted in many ways. Similarly, the Japanese counterparts (C-1J) and (C-2J) do not provide clear meaning.

(C-1J) *kurisumasu wa keeki da.*
Christmas TOP cake COP
(C-2J) *nichiyoobi wa deeto da.*
Sunday TOP dating COP

However, these Japanese sentences are commonly used, and it seems that the precise meanings are not considered important. This sentence structure, called "predicate structure" has been used for at least one thousand years from the 10th century. For example, *Makurano-soshi*, a book of observation and musings, written by Seishonagon around 990 A.D. already used sentences composed simply of a topic and a short predicate.

haru wa akebono. (In spring, the time of dawn is good?)
spring TOP dawn
natsu wa yoru. (In summer, night time is good?)
summer TOP night
aki wa yugure. (In autumn, evening is good?)
fall TOP dusk
fuyu wa tsutomete. (In winter, early morning is good?)
winter TOP morning

It seems that subject-free, predicate-only sentences are a Japanese tradition. Again, the exact meanings of these sentences are not clear, and readers or hearers decide the meaning of such sentences.

Error Type (D): The Subject Is Detached from the English Sentence, and Is Expressed in Adverbial Phrases and Attached to the Sentence

In this kind of erroneous English sentence, subjects are treated as the topic in an adverbial phrase, and there is no appropriate subject in the main clause.

(D-1) *As an employee, there is fear that *a person is a little tooth on a giant cogwheel.*
(As an employee, I have a fear that?/An employee has a fear that?)

(D-2) *A reason for declining birth rate, it *is in a woman's order of desirable priority of marriage and children.*
(One reason for declining birth rate is related with women's decreased order of priority regarding marriage and having children?)

(D-3) *A solution to declining birth rate*, improvement of childcare system and social security system is needed*.
(One solution for the declining birth rate is to improve the childcare system and social security system.)

In (D-1) "there is/are" structure is used. Japanese learners tend to overuse "there is/are" structures. This probably comes from learners' preference for the popular Japanese verb "*aru*" (exist). Some scholars claim that Japanese is a language of "*aru*" (exist) and "*naru*" (become) while English is a "*suru*" (do) language (e.g., Ando, 1996; Kanaya, 2003). When the verb "*aru*" (exist) is used, the sentence may not need a subject (doer). In D-2 and D-3, the first part [A reason for declining birth rate], and [A solution to declining birth rate] are the literal subjects of the sentences, but the learners chose to treat them as topics, and made them separate from the main sentence. These examples may reflect the reality of spoken Japanese sentence structure; that is, although a topic (*shudai*) exists, a clear sentence subject is not usually used.

Does Japanese Really Have Sentence Subjects?

There seem to be roughly three varieties of analysis regarding Japanese sentence structure, especially sentence subject. The first approach, which may be the most prevalent, is that Japanese sentences have a sentence subject similar to English sentences. Current Japanese "school grammar" taught from elementary to high school, based on the so-called "Hashimoto grammar," assumes the existence of a sentence subject (*shugo*) (e.g., Kuno 1973, 1983; Kuroda, 2005; Shibatani, 1990). This analysis is largely influenced

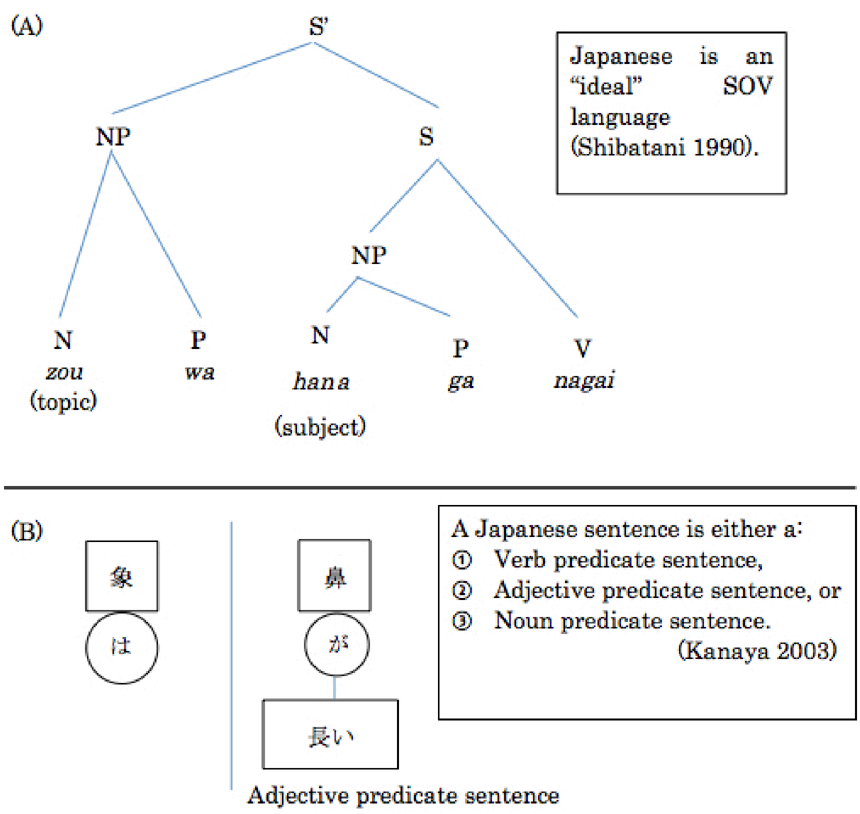


Figure 4. Different analysis of Japanese sentence structure

by western linguistic studies and was introduced to Japanese school grammar decades ago. In this view, Japanese sentence structure can be analyzed like English, with the exception that Japanese sentences follow SOV structure while English sentences have SVO structure [see (A) in Figure 4].

The second analysis of the issue claims that Japanese does not need a sentence subject, and historically has never had one: sentences are composed of predicates only and sometimes have a topic. (e.g., Hattori, 1966; Kanaya, 2002, 2003; Mikami, 1975; Nakajima, 1987; and Tsukimoto, 2008). [see (B) in Figure 4]

A neurological approach may support this view. Based on neurological experiments on brain behavior using several languages, Tsukimoto (2008) claimed that the brain of speakers of languages in which vowels are dominant, including Japanese, tend not to need sentence subjects. Vowels are processed in the language area of the left brain. On the other hand, consonants are acknowledged in the right brain and their information is transferred to the left brain. The right brain is also responsible for differentiation between "self" and "other." As a result, vowel-dominated languages are processed faster than consonant-dominant languages. Also vowel-dominant languages do not cause active cognition of "self" and "other." The speakers of consonant-dominant languages such as English, on the other hand, discriminate between "I" and "other" more clearly and use sentence subjects as well as personal pronouns. Tsukimoto and other related researchers also identified the correlation between vowel dependency and subject omission (e.g., Tsunoda, 1978).

Another approach to Japanese syntax takes a position between the previous two. There are differences among the supporters of this group. For example, Tsunoda (2009) stated that compared to English, Japanese sentence subjects have a weaker syntactic function, and thus are less important. Noda (2002) proposed that the *shudai* (topic) should be separated from the idea of *shugo* (subject) which is considered to have multiple functions including being the nominal case, the agent of the verb, and the agent to show the topic.

Approaches which do not vehemently support *shugo* in Japanese seem to be closer to the reality of actual language use: predicate-only structures are widely used. At the same time, *shugo* (or agents/doers) does appear in Japanese sentences, so *shugo* as a subjective (nominative) case may be optional as well as other grammatical cases that complete the full meaning of a sentence. As Nakajima (1987) wrote, Japanese may not be a language which can be analyzed fully by its syntax, and its meaning may depend more on semantic or pragmatic analysis.

Conclusion and Suggestions for English Teaching

To discuss whether or not Japanese has a sentence subject is not at all the primary purpose of this study. The intent is to determine the relevance of Japanese learners' English errors to their understanding of the structure of their native language. Based on the error analyses, it can be argued that Japanese learners' problem with English sentence subject is largely created by their idea of Japanese sentences; thus, negative transfer is the cause. Then, the next step is to consider solutions.

By the time students are in college, it is fairly difficult to make a drastic improvement in their syntactical understanding of English. Early stage instruction may be significantly useful. However, currently, young students are mostly engaged in communicative learning; thus, it may not be ideal to introduce structure focused instruction at an early stage. Based on this notion, some ideas can be proposed including the following.

Give learners some opportunities to think about the differences between their native language and English in relation with the use of sentence subjects. The following are some examples:

1. Present Japanese fairy tales in both Japanese and English. Most Japanese sentences do not have sentence subjects (agent/doer), and the subject positions of English sentences are not filled. Instruct them to add appropriate subject words to their English sentences from the Japanese context.
2. Compare the use of English and Japanese nouns that reference people such as "you" (*anata, omae*, name+*san*, *kimi*, etc.,) and "I" (*watashi, ore, watakushi, okaasan, boku*, etc.) to see how English subjects and Japanese subjects are very different, and thus cannot be treated in the same way.
3. Emphasize the nature and limited use of the dummy subject, "it."
4. Use natural sentences for Japanese translations of English. Where appropriate, Japanese sentences should not include a subject word.
5. Discuss English language culture in comparison with that of Japanese. For example, being familiar with the differences of "do" language culture and "existing" language culture may help learners intuitively understand how to begin sentences in each language.

References

Ando, S. (1996). *Eigo no ronri nihongo no ronri* [English logic and Japanese logic]. Tokyo, Japan: Taishukan.

Hattori, S. (1966). *Gengogaku no hoho* [Methods of linguistics studies]. Tokyo, Japan: Iwanami Shoten.

Kanaya, T. (2002). *Nihongo ni shugo wa iranai* [No need of sentence subject for Japanese]. Tokyo, Japan: Kodansha.

Kanaya, T. (2003). *Nihongo bunpoo no nazo o toku* [Solving the mystery of Japanese grammar]. Tokyo, Japan: Chikuma Shobo.

Kuno, A. (1973). *The structure of the Japanese language.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Kuno, A. (1983). *Shin nihon bunpo* [New Japanese grammar]. Tokyo, Japan: Taishukan.

Kuroda, S. (2005). *Nihongo kara mita seisei bunpo* [Generative grammar viewed from Japanese]. Tokyo, Japan: Iwanami Shoten.

Makino, S., & Tsutsui, M. (1988). *A dictionary of basic Japanese grammar.* Tokyo, Japan: Japan Times.

Mastumoto, K. (2006). *Sekai gengo e no shiza*

[Perspectives on world languages]. Tokyo, Japan: Sanseido.

Mikami, A. (1975). *Mikami Akira ronbunshu* [Collection of papers by Akira Mikami]. Tokyo, Japan: Kuroshio Shuppan.

Nakajima, F. (1987). *Nihongo no kozo* [Structure of Japanese]. Tokyo, Japan: Iwanami Shoten.

Noda, H. (2002). Shugo to shudai [Subject and topic]. *Gengo 31-6*, 38-49.

Shibatani, M. (1990). *The language of Japan.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Tsukimoto, H. (2008). *Nihonjin no noh ni shugo wa iranai* [No sentence subject is needed for the Japanese brain]. Tokyo, Japan: Kodansha.

Tsunoda, T. (1978). *Nihonjin no noh*. [The Japanese brain]. Tokyo, Japan: Taishukan Shoten.

Tsunoda, T. (2009). *Sekai no gengo to nihongo* [World languages and Japanese]. Tokyo, Japan: Kuroshio Shuppan.

Author's Biography:

Nobuko Trent holds degrees in English (BA), Japanese (MA), and foreign language education (Ph.D.). Her primary interests include discourse grammar and politeness studies.

Appendix

Questionnaire （無記名です）

(1) 英語の文章を作るとき(書く、話す)、まず日本語で考えてからそれを英語に変えますか？○をつけてください。

（A） 日本文で考えて英文へ変換することが多い。

（B） いつもはじめから英語で考える。

（C） どちらともいえない。両方の場合がある。

（A） = _________ パーセントくらい、 （B） = _________ パーセントくらい

（A, Bの合計が100%になるようにお願いします。）

(2) 英語の文章を作るとき(書く、話す)、難しいと感じることはなんですか？以下から選んでください。該当するものにすべてチェック(ⅴ)をつけてください。より深刻なものにはダブルチェック(ⅴⅴ)をお願いいたします。

（1） （　　） 適当な英単語が浮かばない。

（2） （　　） 単語の並べ方（語順）が良くわからない。

（3） （　　） 英文には必ず主語が必要だが主語を何にしたら最も適当なのかよくわからない。

（4） （　　） どのようなときにIt を主語にできるのかよくわからない。

（5） （　　） 英文の基本5文型のどれをつかったらいいのかわからない。

（6） （　　） 基本5文型を知らない。または5文型の考え方に賛成できない。

（7） （　　） 一文の中に複数の節（主節、従節）があるときどちらが主節なのわからない。

（8） （　　） 関係代名詞の働き、関係節の作り方が良くわからない。

（9） （　　） 英文の動詞は何にするか迷う。

（10） （　　） 動詞の時制（現在、過去、未来、進行形、完了形）がよくわからない。

（11） （　　） 受動態（受身形）と能動態がわからない。

（12） （　　） 準動詞(I want to travel, crying child, I enjoy drinkingなど)がわからない。

（13） （　　） a/the などの冠詞がわからない。

（14） （　　） 慣用表現　(イディオム)などの知識が足りない。

（15） （　　） 単語のつづり方がよくわからない。

（16） （　　） 辞書の使い方がわからない。

TOEIC, TOEFLを受けたことがありますか？差し支えなければスコアをお知らせください。（無記名です）

Fables and Fairytales: An Overlooked Classroom Resource?

James Venema
Nagoya Women's University
james.venema@gmail.com

This article explores fables and fairytales as an overlooked source of materials for the English language classroom. While many readers are familiar with fables and fairytales, there are less common stories that can surprise readers. Furthermore, the message of the two genres, explicit in fables and usually implicit in fairytales, is strikingly different and frequently at odds with modern liberal values. This paper looks at three example fables that are not so widely known to highlight a harsh world view that is common in Aesop's fables. This paper also summarizes three versions of two common fairytales to demonstrate the rather shocking origins of many fairytales and to show how the fairytales of Perrault and the Grimm brothers provided a consistent model of appropriate behavior for young women. The article concludes with some suggestions for incorporating fables and fairytales in the English language classroom.

本稿では、英語教育においてみすごされてきた寓話や童話を、教材として活用する方法について考察した。寓話や童話は一般によく読まれているが、中にはその驚くべき内容があまり知られていない作品もある。さらに、寓話においては明確に、また、童話においては暗示的に、これら二つのジャンルが伝える教訓の中には、現代の価値観とは著しく異なり、違和感を覚えるものもある。

本稿では、イソップ物語の三つの作品を取り上げ、顕著な特徴があるにもかかわらず、それらの厳しい世界観が知られていないことを例証する。さらに、別の二つの有名な童話を取り上げ、それぞれ三つの翻案を提示し、多くの童話には驚くべき原本があること、そして、ペローやグリム兄弟が、一貫して若い女性に相応しい行動の規範を描いていることを明らかにする。そして、最後に、英語の授業における寓話や童話の有効な活用法について提示する。

Key Words: Fables, fairytales, folk tales, classroom materials, EFL classroom

There probably isn't a single reader, teacher or student, who is not already familiar with fables and fairytales. Just giving a title, such as 'The Hare and the Tortoise' or 'Cinderella', is enough to send most people off on a summary of the plot. The popularity of these stories is reflected in their abundance in modern media, be it online written versions of the stories, published books, feature films, short videos, and even songs, meaning there are countless resources available for teachers to use in their classrooms.

Venema, J. (2013). Fables and Fairytales: An overlooked classroom resource? In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 196-201). Hiroshima: JALT.

No doubt a number of teachers are already taking advantage of both these resources to incorporate fables or fairytales in the English language classroom. However, many of the stories we are so familiar with are based on modern adapted versions and on a cultural filtering that can leave out lesser known, and less digestible, details. Furthermore, while fables and fairytales are often confused, a closer look at these two genres reveals two very different and often surprising messages, explicit in the case of fables, and mostly implicit in fairytales. It is both the familiarity of fables and fairytales and their ability to surprise that present opportunities to facilitate learning in the EFL classroom.

Fables

While fables are common to many cultures and languages one cannot begin a discussion on fables without reference to Aesop. Ironically, there still remain questions and controversy regarding the attributed author of the ancient Greek fables. Most historians attribute the fables (or most of them) to Aesop, a slave in the ancient republics of Greece, born around the 6th century BC and later freed as a reward, perhaps for dazzling audiences and readers with his stories. Still the only writers that make any reference to Aesop, such as Aristotle and Herodotus, were not his contemporaries and were, occasionally, known to include myth in their histories. Whether he is real or fictional, the author or the collector of fables, the sole author or one of many does not, for our purposes, really matter. The power of these fables to entertain and instruct remains.

The fables are usually very short and almost always contain animal characters. There are typically in three parts: the situation in brief, a choice of action, and the result of the choice taken. The ending, whether positive or negative, serves as an evaluation of the choice taken. The fable may also conclude with an overt message, occurring outside of the story, to make explicit a general principle. The evaluation, whether implied by the outcome of the story or overtly written, is central as the stories are primarily vehicles for instruction.

Many fables such as 'The Hare and the Tortoise' and 'The Ant and the Grasshopper' are well-known. However, I suspect the fables that I will introduce are less familiar, and readers may find their messages surprising.
(For each of the three fables the source is 'The Project Gutenberg EBook of Aesop's Fables')

The Wolf and the Lamb

A Wolf came upon a Lamb straying from the flock, and felt some compunction about taking the life of so helpless a creature without some plausible excuse; so he cast about for a grievance and said at last, "Last year, sir, you grossly insulted me." "That is impossible, sir," bleated the Lamb, "for I wasn't born then." "Well," retorted the Wolf, "you feed in my pastures." "That cannot be," replied the Lamb, "for I have never yet tasted grass." "You drink from my spring, then," continued the Wolf. "Indeed, sir," said the poor Lamb, "I have never yet drunk anything but my mother's milk." "Well, anyhow," said the Wolf, "I'm not going without my dinner": and he sprang upon the Lamb and devoured it without more ado.

The Lion, the Fox, and the Ass

A Lion, a Fox, and an Ass went out hunting together. They had soon taken a large booty, which the Lion requested the Ass to divide between them. The Ass divided it all into three equal parts, and modestly begged the others to take their choice; at which the Lion, bursting with fury, sprang upon the Ass and tore him to pieces. Then, glaring at the Fox, he bade him make a fresh division. The Fox gathered almost the whole in one great heap for the Lion's share, leaving only the smallest possible morsel for himself. "My dear friend," said the Lion, "how did you get the knack of it so well?" The Fox replied, "Me? Oh, I took a lesson from the Ass."

Happy is he who learns from the misfortunes of others.

The Lion in Love

A Lion fell deeply in love with the daughter of a cottager and wanted to marry her; but her father was unwilling to give her to so fearsome a husband, and yet didn't want to offend the Lion; so he hit upon the following expedient. He went to the Lion and said, "I think you will make a very good husband for my daughter: but I cannot consent to your union unless *you let me draw your teeth and pare your nails, for my daughter is terribly afraid of them." The Lion was so much in love that he readily agreed that this should be done. When once, however, he was thus disarmed, the Cottager was afraid of him no longer, but drove him away with his club.*

The morals presented in these fables are more jarring to the modern liberal mind than that of the far better known 'The Tortoise and the Hare', although all our consistent with the Aesop world view. As Reinstein (1983) writes:

> (Fables) recognize that the world is a dangerous place, full of exploiters, bullies, and false friends. Love counts for little; it exposes you and foolishly allows you to relax your defenses. The fables teach self-protection and the value of hard work. Goodness is rarely rewarded, but evil is often revenged. The fables recognize that in the real world, might does make its own right – unfair, perhaps, but true, nonetheless. (p. 47)

The rationale for animal characters lies in the fact that the fables, however entertaining they might be, are primarily vehicles for communicating practical wisdom. Whereas with humans it might be difficult to refrain from assuming complexity in motives and character, the animals remain trapped within their own characterizations. A lion will always be strong and ruthless; the wolf rapacious and merciless; the fox cunning; and the ass, well, a bit of an ass. Where animal characters try to change who and what they are, the inevitable result is failure and, often, their downfall.

Fairytales

The origins of fairytales can typically be traced to folklore. The literary fairytale with which we are most familiar evolved from oral folktales to a written genre, becoming most famous in the works of Perrault in France, the Grimm brothers of Germany, and Andersen in Denmark. In the 20th century it has undergone another metamorphosis, or 'Disneyfication', if you will, in modern animated film. More recently, movies such as Shrek (2001) and children's books such as The Paper Bag Princess (2007) are offering further adaptations on the fairytale genre that tend to be more palatable to modern western values.

However popular fairytales may have become as children's stories, the original stories from which they derived were often not intended for younger, more sensitive, ears. In addition, the way the stories evolved from oral tradition of folk tales to a written genre shows a consistent message that is strikingly in contrast to that of Aesop, as well to that of our post-feminist world. While word constraints prevent me from including complete versions of the stories, this paper will offer plot outlines of three versions of two very popular fairytales: 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'Sleeping Beauty'. All of these stories are available in the wonderful anthology by Hallet and Karasek, 'Folk and Fairytales' (2011).

Little Red Riding Hood

Story 1: 'The Story of Grandmother' (oral folktale, author unknown)

This folktale depicts an unnamed peasant girl who meets a 'bzou' (werewolf) on her way to visit her grandmother. When the girl foolishly divulges her destination the werewolf quickly departs and arrives at the grandmother's house, where he devours the old lady and places some of her flesh in a bowl and some of her blood in a bottle. After the peasant girl arrives, the werewolf offers the girl the blood and flesh of her grandmother and, unwittingly, the girl does indeed engage in cannibalism. The wolf then invites the girl into bed, and has her take off, and burn, every article of clothing before doing so. Once in bed she asks several questions and realizes the wolf is about to eat her. Finally she engineers her escape by protesting the need to relieve herself.

Story 2: Little Red Riding Hood (Perrault):

While the girl in 'The Story of Grandmother' proves she can fend for herself, in Perrault's story she is now spoiled and naïve, and wears a red cap symbolic of her sinful nature. There is no cannibalism but the girl does strip and climb into bed with the wolf. Her reward for her impropriety is to be devoured by the wolf. The sad ending stands to serve as a warning to young girls to not *stop and talk to strangers, and to be aware of the always rapacious creature: man.*

Story 3: Little Red Cap (Grimm Brothers)

The plot outline pretty much follows that of Perrault, minus the stripping, and with a happy ending inserted as the girl is miraculously rescued by a passing hunter who cuts open the wolf's stomach and pulls out the girl and her grandmother. As is typical in Grimm's stories, the villain is served with a bloody end as the wolf is sewed back up again with a stomach full of stones.

Sleeping Beauty

Story 1: Sun, Moon, and Talia (Giambattista Basile)

A princess (Talia) falls into a coma from a splinter lodged in her fingernail and is left to lie in a closed room by her heartbroken father. She is subsequently the victim of rape from a king passing by and gives birth to two children nine months later, all the while remaining in a coma. The children are looked after by fairies until one sucks on Talia's finger, dislodging the splinter and awaking her from the coma. The king returns and continues a relationship with Talia. In revenge the queen attempts to have the children murdered and served to the king for dinner. Her plans are foiled by a cook, and the queen is rewarded with the fate she intended for Talia – being burned to death.

Story 2: The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood (Perrault)

An angry faerie curses the girl with death but the curse is lessened to 100 years of sleep and the whole palace falls into a deep sleep along with her. This time the chaste prince who comes upon her refrains from any physical contact and the spell on Sleeping Beauty coincidentally comes to an end as the prince falls, trembling, on his knees in front of her. The role of jealous rival is given to the mother of the prince who, once again, is foiled in an attempt to have the children of the princess served for dinner.

Story 3: Brier Rose (Brothers Grimm)

This is the shortest version, and probably the one we are most familiar with. While a mild form of sexual innuendo returns as the princess is awoken by a kiss from the passing prince, all aspects of cannibalism are removed. The story ends with the marriage of the prince and princess soon after her awakening.

Not surprisingly for a written genre that evolved into stories targeting families and children, the shocking cannibalism, sexual innuendo, and rape that occur in the original stories are edited out. Violence is more likely to survive the editing process than sexual innuendo, particularly in the most influential source of fairytales – "Children's and Household Tales" by the Grimm brothers (Grimm & Grimm). Thus the visit of the prince in 'Rapunzel' is revealed not by the tightening of Rapunzel's dress, but by a slip of the tongue. Yet he still suffers the same violent fate of being dropped from the tower and having his eyes gouged out by thorns. More subtly, there is a gradual shift in the stories that reveal some common themes and values that stand in stark contrast to the messages of fables. Whereas fables offer a rather cynical vision of world where only the cunning and ruthless survive, fairytales reward meekness and obedience in its female characters with magical rewards. Little Red Riding Hood, in Grimm, no longer engineers her own escape but is miraculously rescued by a passing hunter. The magical spell on Sleeping Beauty is broken by a kiss, and Cinderella's humility and stoicism in the face of bullying and taunting by her step-sisters and step-mother is rewarded by the intervention of a fairy godmother (or, in Grimm's version, a magical tree and birds). Charm is rewarded over cunning. Self-sacrifice is rewarded over cynicism. And magic prevails over all obstacles. There often appears to be a contradiction as Reinstein (1983) writes:

> If you are happily poor, and neither complain nor take active steps to secure your fortune, you may be rewarded with wealth; if you are passively self-effacing and let others mock you, mistreat you, and enslave you, you may end up with both power and fame. Self-sacrifice becomes the prudent course of action. (p. 49)

The EFL Classroom

"That is all very interesting, but what does it have to do with the EFL classroom?" is what some readers may be asking themselves. I would argue that where there is the opportunity to surprise learners (as I hope many readers of this article have been surprised) there is also the opportunity to engage them. Readers need not love the 'The Story of Grandmother' to be drawn in by shock and surprise to the precursor of the very famous fairytale cousin. An exploration of further fairytales, particularly those where the predominant source may be Disney (such as 'Cinderella' or 'Beauty and the Beast'), can uncover chances to engage learners in comparing stories. While fables may be less common in modern media than fairytales, they are shorter, simpler, and more thematic, thereby making it possible to have students predict stories from pictures before reading, and perhaps surprising them with stories such as have been included in this paper.

Both fables and fairytales present an opportunity for multimedia classrooms. Written versions, for which copyright is long since void, are plentiful online allowing teachers to copy, paste, and edit to suit their students' needs. Indeed, as the fables included in this paper would reveal to any experienced teacher, some rewriting, including more modern and relevant language, would go a long way to making them more accessible to students. Many fables and fairytales have been made into short videos and feature films. Those include the animated Disney shorts with the inevitable happy ending (A Walt Disney Silly Symphony - The Grasshopper and the Ants), to modern short versions of stories like the youtube version of *The lion, the fox and the donkey* (multichrom, 2009). There are then, of course, the fairytale Disney films including such classics as 'The Little Mermaid' (Clements, 1989), 'Beauty and the Beast' (Trousdale and Wise, 1991), and the previously mentioned 'Shrek'. For a thorough reference of fairytale and film the 'Enchanted Screen' by Jack Zipes (2011) is an excellent resource.

The clear structure of fables and fairytales, particularly the former, lend themselves to rewriting and creating tasks. Where students are uncomfortable with the morals of fables, they can be encouraged to revise them to alter the message. There are some examples online, my favorite (despite the inaccurate subtitles) being a YouTube video revision by Japanese students of 'The Ant and the Grasshopper': もひとつのアリとキリギリス (O2BO1968, 2008). In some cases teachers might find that students rewrite fables in a 'Disney fairytale' manner as in the faintly disturbing rewrite of the fable 'The Wolf and the Lamb' by a student in my class (edited by the teacher).

A wolf came upon a ewe straying from the flock. He was all set to devour her when he looked her in the eyes and fell in love with her at first sight. At first the sheep was terrified of the wolf and refused to trust him. But he was so gentle and kind with her, as well as being strong and protective, that she grew to love him as well. The ewe and the wolf were married, had children, and lived happily ever after. (Anonymous)

Conclusion

For teachers looking for authentic stories for the classroom fables and fairytales may warrant a second look. Despite their ubiquity, or even because of it, they still retain the ability to entertain, enlighten, and surprise readers. As genres with explicit or implicit messages, often undergoing revisions over time, they also offer the opportunity for interpretation, comparison, discussion, and rewriting. So go back and dust off some of those 'children's stories', you just might just be surprised by what you find.

References

Adamson, A. & Jensen, V. (Directors). (2001). *Shrek* [Motion Picture]. Los Angeles, CA: Dream Works.

Aesop. (1912). *Aesop's Fables* (V. V. Jones, Trans.) Retrieved from http://www.gutenberg.org/files/11339/11339-h/11339-h.htm

Clements, R. (Director). (1989). *The little mermaid* [Motion Picture]. Los Angeles, CA: Walt Disney Studios.

Grimm, J. & Grimm, W. (2006). *Household Stories by the Brothers Grimm* (L. Crane, Trans.) Retrieved from http://www.gutenberg.org/files/19068/19068-h/19068-h.htm

Hallett, M. & Karasek, B. (Eds.). (2011). *Folk and fairy tales, concise edition (4th ed.).* Naperville, IL: Broadview Press.

Jackson R. (Director). (1934). *A Walt Disney*

Silly Symphony: The Grasshopper and the Ants. [Short Film]. Los Angeles, CA: Walt Disney Productions.

multichrom. (2009, August 11). *Der Loewe der Fuchs der Esel (OT) / The lion, the fox and the donkey.* [Video file]. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ati3IJeA1iU

Munsch, R. & Marchenko, M. (2007). *The paper bag princess*. Toronto, Canada: Annick Press.

O2BO1968. (2008, Dec 17) もうひとつのアリとキリギリス another “the ant and the grasshopper”. [Video File]. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKFsnfK0Ao0

Reinstein, R. (1983). Aesop and Grimm: contrast in ethical codes and contemporary values. *Children's Literature in Education 14*(1), 44-53.

Trousdale, G. & Wise, K. (Directors). *Beauty and the Beast* [Motion Picture]. Los Angeles, CA: Walt Disney Studios.

Zipes, J. (2011). *The enchanted screen*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Author's Biography:

James is currently teaching at Nagoya Women's University where he has been incorporating folk tales, fables, and fairy-tales in classes for a number of years

Increasing Opportunities to Critique Content in the Media

Richard John Walker
& Neil Matthew Addison
Meiji Gakuin University
rjwalker@warpmail.net
naddison34@yahoo.co.uk

This paper reports on ongoing research within the field of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in a Media English course taught at two private universities in Japan. Following a discussion on the aims and objectives of CLIL, of our course, and issues regarding critical thinking in a second language, a description of the authors` pedagogic ambitions is outlined. Effectiveness of the course methodology is assessed with reference to statistics taken from student response questionnaire data. This data is examined in a paper which concludes with discussion on plans for further course improvement and research.

本稿は、日本の2つの私立大学で実施したメディア・イングリッシュ・コースにおけるCLIL（ある科目を外国語を媒体として教える授業形態）分野の研究について考察する。具体的にはCLILおよび当該コースの目標と目的に関する考察を始めとして、第二言語によるクリティカル・シキング（対象物を見聞きしたままに受け取るのではなく、客観的なおかつ分析的に理解する考え方）に関する問題点や本稿の著者達が抱く教育に対する熱意などを主に述べている。当該コースにおける授業方法の有効性については、生徒に実施したアンケート結果の統計を基に分析・評価してある。また、当該アンケート結果は、さらなるコースの改善と研究も考慮しながら、分析および調査されている。

Key Words: CLIL, Critical Thinking, EFL, Media Studies

1. Introduction

The use of computer technology to assist the learning of English as a second language is a subject at the very frontier of language teaching. Over the past decade, EFL teachers have rushed to use and advocate the use of online mediums, such as blogs and social networking systems, i.e. online tools that students now use willingly in their free time. Through the Internet, the predominant medium of today, teachers are exploring new ways to utilize media in language courses, but appear to do so without attempting to critique the social ramifications of such media, or their long term effectiveness as educational tools. While theorists outside the world of EFL (e.g. Carr, 2010; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Kahneman, 2011) have critiqued new media in their work and discussed their effects on humanity, EFL practitioners mainly

Walker, R. J. & Addison, N. M. (2013). Increasing opportunities to critique content in the media. In R. Chartrand, S. Crofts, & G. Brooks (Eds.), *The 2012 Pan-SIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 202-209). Hiroshima: JALT.

(and perhaps necessarily) focus on the practical nature of the media. We felt it worthwhile to establish a unique course that referred to such theorists and cast a critical eye upon the media, while employing a blog that hosted language and material prior to each class. Theoretically, we were also influenced by readings in Shaules, Itoh and Sanae's (2001) media focused EFL text, *Fish in Water*, but wished to develop multi-media materials on similar topics to seize student attention and activate a higher order of cognitive processing.

1.1 Considering Cognitive Processes and Thinking in English

To promote critical thinking in an EFL class necessitates a consideration of cognitive processes, specifically a movement from lower-order to higher-order processing skills (see Table 1). While most pre-tertiary and much tertiary education concentrates on teaching that aims at lower-order processing (remembering, applying and understanding), we sought to create a Media English course where higher order processes of analysis, evaluation and critique were pronounced and expected from students. There are plenty of usable English language media products that already resonate with students, through music, televisual media or websites, and although the consumption of Harry Potter, Pinky Blonde or Twilight is frequently in our student's mother tongues, such media is consumed increasingly in English. While watching such movies, students will utilize lower order thinking skills but it is our proposition that the popularity of such media can be utilized in the classroom to move students towards deeper, more considered thought.

The aforementioned movies also represent fantasy-based entertainment, i.e. worlds in which anything goes. When further considering the popularity of manga comics and anime with our students, there is the unmistakable truth that, for many, media products might be promoting an avoidance of real life issues. We believe that such 'pop culture' media can be used contrarily, as a springboard towards deeper channels of thought to confront authentic issues in the lives of our students. Not only does this allow us to use popular culture to illustrate academic topics, it also allays our Freirean concern of becoming top down promoters of western media without critique. Therefore we sought to increase opportunities for critical perceptions of media and we did so through the teaching of interlinked topics over two semesters.

2. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

We decided to employ CLIL as a framework to help shape the critical thinking aims of our curriculum. CLIL emerged in 1994, within a European pre-tertiary context, as a term for teaching content through a foreign or second language (Marsh, Maljers & Hartlia, 2001). Such courses had begun to permeate teaching in Japan by the late 1990s (e.g. Murphey, 1997), and gradually became more established due to instructors and

Table 1

Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Processing, as revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001, pp. 67-68)

Type of Cognitive	*Processing Description*
Lower Order Cognitive Processing	This type of cognitive processing covers three types of lower-order classroom based skills: 1) remembering information, 2) understanding information, and 3) applying information.
Higher Order Cognitive Processing	This type of cognitive processing covers three types of higher-order cognitive skills:1) analyzing information, 2) evaluating information, and 3) creating with the information.

institutions that wished to concentrate on content. For many who used CLIL as a methodology, the approach reconceptualised language learning. This change is best explained through Coyle, Hood and Marsh's (2010) *language triptych,* which comprises the language *of* learning, language *fo*r learning and language *through* learning. A simplified paraphrasing of these foci follows below; full details are available in Coyle, et al. (2010, chap.3).

2.1 Language *of* Learning

Language of learning is language needed to access basic concepts and skills relating to a theme or topic in a course. It may refer to contextually based phrases used as building blocks to begin activities suitable for the class. Effectiveness of such language increases when the phrases are recycled throughout the course. Ultimately, the extent and expertise to which language of learning is synthesized, within grammar, writing or communicative activities, determines the fate of the course.

2.2 Language *for* Learning

This focuses on language needed to operate in a foreign language environment. It may include speech acts or strategies related to the discussion of content, i.e. phrases to facilitate group based discussions, evaluations, or the drawing of conclusions.

2.3 Language *through* Learning

This is based on the principle that effective learning cannot take place without the active involvement of language and thinking. Learners need language to support and advance their thinking processes while acquiring new content-based knowledge. As Mohan and Naerssen (1997) noted, new meanings require new language, which is problematic as such language cannot always be predicted in advance. It gives teachers the task of grasping and explicating emerging language in an *ad hoc* manner, a situation rendered best through a carefully organized curriculum. In our curriculum, we planned thematic classes that followed on from each other and which, in turn, afforded us the chance to use and predict thematic vocabulary that would re-occur and be recycled in later classes. Our vocabulary selection was influenced primarily by the texts employed on the course, and we chose words we felt best helped scaffold these theoretical texts and ideas. This involved much author discussion, but resulted in the best selection of words for the type of students we expected.

3. Advantages and Disadvantages

CLIL has distinct advantages for both EFL teachers and students. Firstly, CLIL courses allow students to study subjects in a foreign language which they have already developed familiarity and interest in through their mother tongue. When classroom activities move from comfortable to challenging questions, teaching may be scaffolded towards the promotion of deeper thought in English. This can be illustrated by the manner in which we bridged the functional topic of shopping towards contentious issues such as the cannibalization of coffee shops by corporate coffee chains, the issue of celebrity 'chameleons' who sell widely differential products and the existence of sweat shops which produce the clothing many students may purchase or already own.

Secondly, CLIL courses are of especial use to students who expect to study or work in an English-speaking environment. Authentic or semi-authentic materials can be utilized towards the specific needs of such students. This might include a focus on study skills to help them work overseas, such as listening for gist, note taking or giving personal responses. This makes CLIL courses more flexible than conventional, pre-packaged ELT courses, or those that focus upon the teaching of discrete language forms.

These advantages naturally depend upon the material having resonance and relevance with students. Inevitably, there will be students whose intrinsic reason for studying English is for commercial tests such as TOEIC. Though a potential disadvantage, it can be made advantageous if the course broadens the students' world view while using vocabulary useful for such tests. For students who take the course for less specific reasons, a teacher must remember that they might not have interest in course topics. Courses thus should be designed with such students in mind and an understanding of the need for activities which entertain and surprise. Without a flexible approach to material creation or willingness to create material accessible to a wide range, difficulties can ensue.

4. Potential Difficulties When Teaching CLIL in Japan

There are potential difficulties to consider when teaching CLIL in Japan. They stem from the purpose to which English has been taught at pre-tertiary level. Two studies might be said to encapsulate this: firstly, Nishino's (2008) research which showed a majority of secondary school English teachers perceiving grammar, vocabulary and translation skills as more important than communication skills. Nishino noted that whilst teachers were sympathetic to the communicative approach, they did not necessarily know how best to implement it in the classroom. It is also unsurprising that teachers would make the pragmatic decision to focus on skills required to pass university entrance examinations; still, more surprising might have been the results of a 2010 government survey on public high schools in Japan: it stated that only 20% of English communication lessons were taught in English (McCurry, 2011). The under-emphasis upon authentic second language communication in pre-tertiary classrooms might have been a factor which problematized the transition to CLIL courses at tertiary level that targeted higher cognition. Yet The Japanese Ministry of Education and Culture's decision to mandate English lessons to be taught in English from 2013 suggests that the Japanese pre-tertiary educational environment will no longer be described as having a dominant educational paradigm that stifles communication (Murphey, Falout, Elwood, & Hood, 2009).

5. Background to the Course

After considering the barriers to teaching a CLIL course, we applied four factors Butler (2005) claimed influence the effectiveness of a content-based course. They concern the setting of a program and curriculum, the characteristic of teacher(s) who teach the course, the characteristics of the learners and the resources available.

5.1 The Setting of the Program and the Curriculum

The course was designed to provide analysis and criticism to selected aspects of the media. Classes were decided to be theme-based with an emphasis upon stimulating in-class conversation, discussion and finally analysis. The theme based structure contained weekly titles such as Social Networking, Beauty, The Global News, and Celebrity Gossip. By using authentic texts, the course blog and multimedia clips, we were able to introduce critical theories and literature that were used to gradually promote an expectation of making critical responses. The course was taught over 15 weeks of the Spring-Summer 2012 semester. A sample of course theorists and ideas is given in Table 2. Examples of how two theories were taught are shown in section 7.

5.2 The Characteristics of the Teachers and Learners

Table 2
Theorists and Ideas in the Curriculum

Theorists	*Ideas*
Marshall McLuhan	The Medium is the Message.
Aldous Huxley & Neil Postman	TV Entertainment and Social Distraction
Stuart Hall	Re-presentation, Encoding & Decoding.
Edward Said	National Stereotypes in the Media
From Wordsworth to the Global Village	The World is Too Much with Us
From Wollstonecraft to Naomi Wolf:	Women and Gender in The Media.
Sigmund Freud and Edward Bernays	The Unconscious and Advertising
The Milgram Experiment–	Public Deference to (TV) Role Models

Both teachers had previously been engaged in research in academic speaking courses as well as

Media English with third and fourth year seniors (Addison & Walker, 2011; Walker & Addison, 2012). In this study, our learners were also third and fourth year seniors from the English Language departments enrolled at two private universities. Learners took the course for different reasons, which many of them acknowledged in section 4. This necessitated our taking a flexible approach to curriculum design.

6. Teaching Approaches in the Curriculum

6.1 Vocabulary

We placed a primacy upon teaching textually specific vocabulary to students. Our vocabulary selection was concerned with teaching specific words we felt best helped scaffold the theoretical texts and ideas used in the course, and, as it was felt that using an academic word reference list would be too general for this purpose, no corpora were employed. Taking especial care to explicate complex ideas in more comprehensible ways, we were guided by Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey's (2001) critical and cross cultural comparative approach that advocates the employment of key terms and vocabulary to help learners talk about cultural diversity. We therefore decided upon specific vocabulary to promote understanding of key issues related to the class content, with an aim to improve the quality of in-class discussion. Vocabulary sheets, gap fills, word searches, multiple choice exercises and reading handouts were thus used in attempts to complement work on developing critical responses to course subjects.

6.2 The Employment of Video Clips and Reading Materials

In previous courses, the effectiveness of video clips and reading materials were affected by comprehension problems. We therefore reconsidered our use of video clips and redesigned the format of reading worksheets. We introduced a more considered, tempered approach to such materials by reducing time on video clips and creating pre-viewing questions that allowed for an earlier and easier entry into a topic. Additionally, our reading materials on theorists were made more succinct.

7. Theoretical Concepts Taught in the Class

The theoretical concepts associated with key thinkers in our course were explicated in class in various ways. Below we shall explain how we dealt with Marshall McLuhan's theory that a medium has a message (for an example see McLuhan & Fiore, 1967) and Stuart Hall's (1980) theory regarding media representation: encoding and decoding information.

7.1 The Medium is the Message

Teaching for this concept comprised two classes, with the theory of a medium being a message called upon in the teaching of concepts later in the course. It began with an initial brainstorming about the meaning of 'media' and was followed by an exploration about the message of specific media. This was made easier through the use of Marshall McLuhan's theoretical tool: the tetrad (Collections Canada, 2007). The tetrad is a theoretical device which when visually portrayed allowed students to consider the effects of a single medium on society. We chose the ubiquitous iPhone to explore the four 'effects' of the tetrad on a medium: what it enhances, makes obsolete, retrieves and reverses within developments and trends in humanity and society. Following this, we later used a communicative act to compound the message of a medium by asking students to role play the act of inviting someone to a restaurant. We used three media: a mobile phone, the Instant Messenger Service on Facebook and face to face communication. Upon completion of the activity, students considered the following questions:

a. What were you looking at?
b. What distractions were there?
c. How could you control the privacy of this act?
d. How did the language change with each medium?

This deceptively simple series of activities afforded students the opportunity to reflect upon the 'message' of each medium.

7.2 Stuart Hall - 'Re-presentation - Encoding and Decoding'

Students were introduced to the media theorist Stewart Hall and his media theories "re-presentation, encoding and decoding" (1980). Over two classes we gave examples of how the news media can subtly represent the news through dramatic visual techniques and rhetorical devices. In the first class students studied and discussed film styles and dramatic techniques such as lighting, sound effects, camera angle, CGI, facial gestures and voice intonation. In the second class the students were introduced to the ideas of Stewart Hall through a simplified reading sheet. They then watched a series of news reports and were encouraged to identify examples of rhetorical encoding by drawing stylistic parallels between these clips and the movie styles they had earlier viewed. The students then viewed a BBC video newscast and were requested to identify specific words that were rhetorically emphasized, or encoded, by the newscaster. After this the class discussed why specific facial gestures and intonation were employed with specific words, and, in a final discussion, the students reflected on whether re-presentation in the media potentially compromised objective news reporting, and to what extent this potentially shaped or influenced the viewer`s comprehension of world events.

9. The Role of the Blog

To increase opportunities for students to comprehend the ideas of Hall and McLuhan, we used a blog to give students online access to ideas and vocabulary. Students could access it before and after each class. Included on each page was a list of vocabulary considered essential for the class. Using seventy key words for the first semester, we broke them down to five new words per week. They were placed on PDF files, uploaded onto an external website, and embedded in the blog. By continuously recycling the words in class, key content was reinforced which allowed us to improve the likelihood of vocabulary acquisition and familiarization of course content. We requested students to check each blog entry before class and post an answer to a question. In doing this, they were better prepared for a vocabulary test which we mandated to students. The test was given in June 2012 to thirty-four students from two classes, covering a selection of forty words that had been uploaded onto the blog site, in which students chose a correct definition from a choice of four. It allowed us to record and check student acquisition of vocabulary. Pleasingly, our students scored a mean score of 75%, which suggested that our students had acquired content specific vocabulary and phrases from our course. It also suggested that vocabulary inputted onto the blogs was a factor in promoting vocabulary acquisition. This did not necessarily mean that they understood the course theories and ideas; thus we requested students to answer a question on their understanding of course content.

10. Question on Course Content and Theory

In June 2012 students answered a question on their perception of their understanding of course content and theoretical ideas. The question used a Likert scale with two positive and two negative choices both question and the four responses are given below:

> *How well did you understand the course theories and ideas, such as media re-presentation (dramatic techniques)?*
>
> *a) very easy to understand*
> *b) quite easy to understand*
> *c) a little difficult to understand*
> *d) difficult to understand*

`Very easy to understand' was assigned 4 points and 'quite easy to understand' a score of 3. These were the two 'positive' responses. 'A little difficult to understand` was given a score of 2, and 'difficult to understand' a score of 1. These were the two 'negative' responses. The result of the question is shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Mean Score for Course Theory Question

Question	*Mean Score*
How well did you understand the course theories and ideas, such as media re-presentation (dramatic techniques)?	2.80

11. Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

The results from this research reflected student perceptions halfway through the Spring 2012 course and suggested, due to the relatively average response score of 2.8, that there are improvements to be made in increasing student understanding of course content. This relatively low response score may be attributed to a self-assessment phenomenon noted by Dörnyei (2010), who notes that people do not always provide accurate responses regarding themselves, observing that "the results represent what the respondents report to feel or believe, rather than what they actually feel or believe" (p. 8). Secondly, the low response may have been the result of student anxiety towards their perceived, rather than actual, lack of ability in handling the critical thinking demands of the course. Young, cited in Ohata (2005), observes that student anxiety and negativity can arise through "a lack of self confidence in language proficiency and their perceived lack of knowledge about the class subjects they were studying" (p. 14). Wishing to avoid evaluating our course purely in terms of student self-assessment or by testing passive vocabulary awareness, future research will aim to quantify students` productive ability through an assessment of written essays, which will be subjected to a word frequency test. In pursuing a triangulated assessment of our course it is hoped that student perception of content will be evaluated in a more holistic, practical way. Subjecting the essays and exams to this test would enable us to see how students use the language more critically. We aim to conduct this future research and publish these results in 2013.

References

Addison, N.M., & Walker, R.J. (2011). A qualitative study of mixed level students' attitudes towards studying english discursive communication with the use of an instructional blogsite. *Reitaku Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, *19*(1), 59-73.

Anderson, L.W, & Krathwohl, D.R. (eds) (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: a revision of bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*, New York, NY: Longman.

Butler, Y.G. (2005). Content-based instruction in EFL contexts: Considerations for effective implementation, *JALT Journal*, *27*(2), 227-245.

Byram,M., Gribkova, B & Starkey, H. (2001). *Developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching: a practical introduction for teachers.* Strasbourg, The Council of Europe. Retrieved August 30, 2011, from http://languagecenter.cornell.edu/director/intercultural.pdf

Carr, N (2011). *The shallows*. London, England: W.W. Norton and Company.

Collections Canada (2007). Old messengers, new media: The legacy of Innis and Mcluhan. *Library and Archives Canada Website*. Retrieved August 30, 2011 from http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/innis-mcluhan/030003-2030-e.html

Coyle, D., Hood, P. & Marsh, D. (2010). *CLIL: Content and language learning.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Dornyei, Z. (2010). *Questionnaires in Second Language research*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hall, S. (1980). Encoding / Decoding. In S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe, & P. Willis (Eds.), *Culture, media, language* (pp. 128-139). London, England: Hutchinson.

Herman, E., & Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. New York , NY: Pantheon Books.

Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. London, England: Penguin Books.

McCurry, J. (2011, March 8). Japan launches primary push to teach English. *Guardian Weekly*. Retrieved October 1, 2012, from, http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2011/mar/08/japan-launches-primary-english-push

McLuhan, M., & Fiore, Q. (1967). *The medium is the massage – an inventory of effects*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Marsh, D., Maljers, A. & Hartiala, A.K. (2001). *Profiling European CLIL classrooms. Languages open doors*. University of Jyväskylä: Jyväskylä.

Mohan, B. & van Naersson, M. (1997). *Understanding cause-effect: Learning through language*, Forum [Online] 35 (4). Retrieved December 20, 2011, from http://eca.state.gov/forum/vols/vol35/no4/p22.htm

Murphey, T. (1997). Content-based instruction in an EFL setting: Issues and strategies. In M.A. Snow & D.M. Brinton (Eds.). *The content-based classroom. perspectives on integrating language and content*. White Plains NY: Longman.

Murphey, T., Falout, J., Elwood, J., & Hood, M. (2009). Inviting student voice. *Asian EFL Journal.* Retrieved December 20, 2011, from http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/PTA-May-2009.pdf

Nishino, T. (2008). Japanese secondary school teachers' beliefs and practices regarding communicative language teaching: An exploratory survey. *JALT Journal*, *30* (1), 27-51.

Ohata, K. (2005). Potential Sources of Anxiety for Japanese Learners of English: Preliminary Case Interviews with Five Japanese College Students in the U.S. *TESL-EJ*, *9*(3), (2005): Retrieved August 4, 2011 from: http://www.cc.kyoto-su.ac.jp/information/tesl-ej/ej35/a3.pdf

Shaules, J., Itoh, I., & Saito, S. (2001). *Fish in water*. MacMillan Language House.

Walker, R.J., & Addison, N.M. (2012). Further investigations in teaching content based instruction. *The research reports of Shibaura Institute of Technology: Social Sciences and Humanities, 46 (1),* 83-91.

Author's Biography:

Richard Walker teaches at Meiji Gakuin, Reitaku and Shibaura universities. Recent research has focused on blended learning, critical thinking in ELT and laughter in second language interaction.

Neil Addison teaches at Meiji Gakuin, Bunkyo and Reitaku universities. Recent research includes blended learning, culture and ideology in ELT and teaching English literature to EFL students.