

Perspectives on Secondary School EFL Education



A Publication in Commemoration
of the 30th Anniversary of
the Language Institute of Japan

Jim Kahny and Mark James, Editors
Language Institute of Japan

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Foreword

LIOJ and Secondary School EFL Education

The Language Institute of Japan (LIOJ) has always taken a keen interest in secondary school EFL education. Our involvement in this area has included the following:

- *LIOJ International Summer Workshop for Teachers of English.* In 1969, we conducted our first Workshop, making the LIOJ Workshop one of the oldest ongoing teacher-training conferences in Japan. Over the years, the Workshop has attracted junior and senior high school teachers of English from around the country.
- *Community English courses.* In 1971, LIOJ began offering courses for community residents, and these included classes and special activities for junior and senior high school students. Thousands of secondary school students from the Odawara area have attended LIOJ classes.
- *High school intensive program.* In 1992, LIOJ started offering three-day, activity-based intensive residential programs for high school students. Since then, students from high schools in Tokyo and Kanagawa prefectures have participated in these programs. Currently, we host students from Arima High School (Ebina city, Kanagawa), Fukagawa High School (Koto ward, Tokyo), Goryogadai High School (Hiratsuka city, Kanagawa), Hachioji Koryo High School (Hachioji city, Tokyo), Kodaira High School (Kodaira city, Tokyo), and Tokyo Jogakkan Girls' High School (Shibuya ward, Tokyo).
- *Team teaching program.* Since 1988, LIOJ teachers have participated in international understanding classes in local junior high schools. Currently, we provide team teaching visits to Matsuda Junior High School and Yadoriki Junior High School in nearby Matsuda town.
- *Thailand/Japan Team Teaching Exchange.* In 1993, we started this program in partner-

ship with the Department of Linguistics, Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok. This teacher exchange program gives Japanese secondary school teachers of English the opportunity to travel to Thailand and team up with a Thai counterpart. The exchange also gives the Thai teachers of English the opportunity to team teach in the Japanese teacher's junior or senior high school.

With the publication of this book, we hope to make a further contribution to the area of secondary school EFL education.

The 30th Anniversary of LIOJ

In 1998, LIOJ celebrates its 30th year. With the publication of this book, we acknowledge this milestone and the history of the institute. We believe the collection of articles that make up this book is a fitting tribute to the school's anniversary.

Contributors

In keeping with the commemorative theme, we invited submissions from various "friends of LIOJ." These included faculty members present and past, Workshop guest presenters, as well as contributors to *Cross Currents*, the journal published by LIOJ from 1972 to 1992.

The response from both within Japan and overseas was overwhelming. Contributors to this book represent a variety of perspectives from fourteen countries, including Australia, Cambodia, Canada, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Vietnam.

Scope of the Book

This publication contains articles concerned with both theoretical and practical aspects of EFL acquisition and instruction, intercultural training and learning, international language teaching with a special

emphasis on Japan, and English as an international language. The topics are relevant to junior and senior high school EFL teachers in Japan as well as to the larger group of language educators worldwide.

The book is divided into five sections. The first section, "Perspectives," consists of eleven articles on general issues ranging from the use of English internationally to professional development. The second section, "Teaching Methodology," includes eight articles on instruction-related topics such as listening and using texts. The third section, "Focus on Asia," includes ten articles and features the perspectives on English education of some of our colleagues in countries around the Asia-Pacific region. In the fourth section, "Classroom Activities," there are eight articles that include ideas for practical use in the classroom. Finally, in the fifth section, "Thirty Years of LIOJ," we devote a few pages to pay tribute to LIOJ on its 30th anniversary.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we would like to thank the authors. We are grateful for the enthusiasm with which they participated in this project. Special thanks go to the proof-readers: Natalie Williamson, Laurie Sansone, Lisa Brickell, and Daina Plitkins-Denning. We would also like to extend our thanks to the teachers who have attended the LIOJ Workshop, to our colleagues from the junior and senior high schools, and to our students—especially our junior and senior high school students—for broadening our perspectives on language education. We would like to express our gratitude to the MRA House, Inc., the foundation which oversees LIOJ, for its support of this project. Finally, thanks go to the residents of Odawara, and to all who have worked at LIOJ over the past 30 years: We have enjoyed a fruitful relationship which we hope will continue into the future.

the Editors

Section I

Perspectives

English – Weeding Out the Bad from the Good

Sen Nishiyama
Japan Society of Translators

Learning English by listening to native speakers of the language has pitfalls that must be avoided through proper instruction. Take for example a remark like this: “Last night I went like to a real bash, bigger than like anything compared to what we’ve had before, and it kind of like gave me a splittin’ headache. So between like you and I, man, I’m tellin’ you I’ll need like a real jolt in order for me to really get goin’ like today.”

Ordinary conversation among native speakers of English is often loaded with grammatical errors. It might be understandable to a non-native speaker, but not the kind of conversational English that should be acquired. The use of “like” after every few words, the incorrect use of prepositions (“compared to,” “in order for”), the misuse of pronouns (“between you and I”), and the unnecessary splitting of infinitives (“to really get goin’”) are often committed by native speakers.

A non-native speaker of English who tries to increase vocabulary and ability in colorful language might be seriously affected by attempting to mimic the informal conversation of native speakers. It is one matter to understand the meaning of a language style, but quite another to copy it.

Slang is a useful tool for spicy, possibly humorous, expression. But this is a form of English that requires a sense of timing and recognition of circumstances, including the occasion, environment, persons hearing the slang, and other related factors.

An acquaintance related to me the case of a Japanese instructor at an American university who had acquired some slang. One

evening, at a reception hosted by the university president at his home, the Japanese had several drinks and, in an especially festive mood, he stepped up to the president’s wife, greeting her with, “Hi ya, babe!”

The sense required for using slang is developed from childhood. Growing up with other native speakers, being corrected—even reprimanded—by parents when slang is misused, observing the use of slang by adults in a variety of circumstances, and gradually learning through years of growth, both physical and cognitive, form the basis for this sense. It is combined with an almost instinctive judgment of the choice of words appropriate to the occasion.

A non-native speaker has not benefitted from these years of experience from childhood. The learner of English can obtain a vocabulary of slang, but does not have this essential background. Depending only on knowledge of the meaning of a term in slang, a non-native speaker runs the risk of committing a serious error or breach of etiquette.

Language is rooted, nurtured, and developed in its culture and society. For this reason, English is a language that requires a broad range of understanding. The British, American, Australian, Canadian, and other native English speaking societies have different histories and experiences that result in differences of meaning in the same language.

Once, in London, I went to Harrods to buy something to hold up my trousers. I approached a middle-aged saleswoman in the men’s wear department and inadvertently

asked for "a pair of suspenders." "You want what?!!" she exclaimed with an expression of incredulity. I caught myself and corrected, "Oh no, I mean braces." "That's better, young man," she responded with a smile, and produced what I wanted. Already approaching age seventy at the time, I wondered whether she was complimenting me by saying "young man" or being sarcastic. Or was it customary to say this to any man? (However, we Japanese often do appear younger than our age.)

It helps to be exposed to the different styles and terms in English in various English-speaking countries. But this exposure should be accepted as lessons in the varieties of the same language, and not something absolute.

Native speaking teachers sometimes pay less attention to grammar than non-native speaking teachers, because they take grammar for granted. For them, English is spoken naturally, with hardly any thought given to the rules of the language. When conversing with other native speakers, the language can become informal and relaxed, very fluent, of course, and rapid.

Non-native speakers trying to develop their listening ability might listen in on such conversations, or go to a movie or watch videos. Movies need to be selected with an understanding of the style of language used, which might be ascertained from a synopsis of the plot.

Detective stories, which are entertaining and often exciting, frequently show the characters speaking lines proliferating in four-letter words: The lieutenant in the police department shouts at a detective, "Why in f—n' hell didn't you take your f—n' partner instead of goin' it f—n' alone?" "Y'know d—n f—n' well I f—n' don't want a f—n' trainee draggin' his f—n' feet behind me," retorts the detective.

Listening to such language to increase listening ability might be useful to learn vulgar vocabulary, but there is a critical difference between learning the meaning of words and using them. The use of vulgar terms should be avoided, as should the use of slang. Both

run the serious risk of casting a bad image of the speaker.

The wide variety of English spoken by native speakers frequently includes slang and vulgarities. A student trying to increase listening and speaking ability could become confused in an effort to weed out the bad from the good. Also, the student may wish to learn colloquialisms along with the usual correct forms of English. However, the task of differentiating the usually acceptable forms of colloquialism from certain slang or vulgarities may not be easy.

In Japanese television shows, a performer occasionally shouts in English, "Oh my God!" To some viewers, particularly native speakers of English, this exclamation may sound offensive. Probably this expression was heard often from the mouths of native speakers, and the Japanese have therefore assumed that it is a natural, acceptable exclamation.

Students need almost a sanctuary of safe English in order to avoid these pitfalls, and teachers are responsible to guide them to it. Fortunately, the basic rules of grammar are the same for English in all native speaking countries. This grammatical foundation provides a sound base of security. And grammar can be taught without resorting to slang, vulgarities, or colloquialisms.

Non-native speakers who teach English often know correct grammar in more detail than native speakers. Native speaking teachers, as mentioned before, may assume that the English they use and teach is grammatically correct, or at least colloquially acceptable. On the other hand, non-native speaking teachers have studied the rules of grammar, sometimes delving into more detailed analyses and interpretations of the rules. They may have looked into references, read books on grammar, and asked about some fine points of correct usage, to which many native speakers might not have given any thought.

The world today uses English as the major verbal means of international communication. In recent years, this has resulted

in linguists recognizing the legitimacy of various styles of English used by various nationalities. "World Englishes" embraces all forms of the language expressed by peoples of all countries. World Englishes therefore might include ungrammatical forms of the language commonly used in a country, which in turn might confuse a student who wants to learn correct English.

Such ungrammatical forms do not need to be copied by the student who wishes to speak with someone of that country. By adhering to correct grammar, the student can express any information in a way that can be readily understood by English users of any country. The various styles of English mainly include vocabulary unique to a country, certain phrases, and sentence formation different from the usual form.

The main task of a student who is exposed to unfamiliar vocabulary is to learn the meaning but not necessarily use it. Indians use *lakh* (100,000) and *crore* (10 million) when quoting units of rupees. The student, however, could say, "one hundred thousand rupees" and be understood by an Indian.

On the other hand, care must be taken with the use of certain terms commonly understood in a particular country. The British women use "suspenders" as garters to hold up their stockings, and the men use "braces" to hold up trousers. This is what got me into trouble at Harrods. Even in Japan certain words in English have taken on meanings different from usual usage. An "apartment" in Japan is usually a one-room, low-rent accommodation, and a "mansion" is a larger, more substantial apartment in a ferro-concrete building, often a condominium. Such terms should not be regarded as misnomers. In the realm of World Englishes, they are as valid as any.

Many English words have been used as derivatives of terms in Japanese, however. *Supah* for super-market and *depaato* for department store are not English words. They are Japanese words derived from English. It is important to differentiate between English words themselves and Japanese words derived

from English. The former might take on a uniquely Japanese meaning, while the latter usually may have the same meaning as the original English term.

World Englishes is probably the richest language on earth, resulting from the introduction of vocabulary from many cultures. In addition to English words or style used by various nationalities, words and phrases of a country are often introduced either with or without translation.

Japanese words, such as "sushi," "sukiyaki," "teriyaki," and many others have been adopted directly into English. Other terms have been derived from Japanese and are often translated into English. "Information society" is a literal translation of "*joho-shakai*," initially used by Professor Yujiro Hayashi of the Tokyo Institute of Technology in the 1960s to describe the growing role of information media in modern society. "Hollowing out" is a translation of *kudo-ka*, the emptying of core manufacturing industries due to transfer to lower-wage nations.

A new phenomenon (e.g., hollowing out) or product recognized in a particular country is often adopted by other countries either directly or in translation. Sony introduced the pocket-size stereo playback unit in Japan with its nickname "Walkman," a term initially avoided by Sony's British and American subsidiaries. However, non-native speakers of English regarded this word as appropriately descriptive of a unit that allowed people to enjoy music while walking. It was therefore adopted worldwide and today is almost a generic term. "Videocassette" is a word originally used in Japan and soon adopted as a common term in other countries.

Some phrases and statements in Japanese, such as proverbs, might be very readily adopted in English to describe situations. "A cornered rat will bite the cat" would be a literal translation of "*kyuso neko o kamu*," which is used to describe an underdog maneuvered into a desperate position. "*Shaka ni seppo*," like "coals to Newcastle," is a phrase that could be translated as "preaching to Buddha." A paraphrasing of this original could be

“explaining the Sermon on the Mount to Jesus,” which would be the equivalent description of the ludicrous attempt of an amateur to tell a professional how to perform.

I was told that a Japanese student in a Canadian university, when asked by a friend to do something simple, responded, “OK, before breakfast!” The Canadian assured the student that he didn’t have to do it that early, to which the Japanese explained that he had merely said in English a literal translation of “*asameshi mae*,” meaning the request was so simple that it could be done before breakfast. The result was that the entire campus began responding, “before breakfast” to mean “no sweat,” “no problem,” when faced with a simple task.

Such additions to English vocabulary from Japanese contribute to the enrichment of the language. They do not add to slang, vulgarities, or pitfalls in grammar. They join the parade of English unique to other cultures of the world in expanding World Englishes.

Many Japanese words and phrases have their origin in Chinese, a language enriched by millennia of experience and civilization. Without doubt, the Chinese language will enrich English possibly even more than Japanese. The increasing numbers of native English speakers who have acquired competence in Chinese or Japanese could accelerate this process of enriching English.

Students of English today are faced with a combination of good fortune and challenge. They are fortunate in having available a choice of vocabulary and style far broader than before. But the challenge is to expand their knowledge of English to a much wider range than that needed in the past.

In this process, the ungrammatical expressions and the meanings of slang and vulgarities need to be understood. But they should be avoided in the student’s own use of English. Instructors, especially native speakers of English, need to take meticulous care in the teaching of correct English

Sen Nishiyama is president of the Japan Society of Translators. He is a member of the Board of Directors, MRA House, Inc., which oversees LIOJ, and has been a frequent presenter at the LIOJ Workshop.

Strategies for Internationalizing Your English Language Classroom

Kip A. Cates

Tottori University

One of the most important tasks for educators today is to help students learn about the rich variety of peoples in our multicultural world and the problems that face our planet. Language teachers have a special role to play in this important work.

This mission is outlined in the 1974 "Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation, and Peace" of UNESCO (the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization). This stresses the following principles of education:

- an international dimension and a global perspective in education at all levels;
- understanding and respect for all peoples, their cultures, civilizations, values, and ways of life;
- awareness of the increasing global interdependence between peoples and nations;
- abilities to communicate with others;
- awareness of the rights and duties of individuals, social groups, and nations towards each other;
- understanding of the necessity for international solidarity and co-operation;
- readiness on the part of the individual to participate in solving the problems of his or her community, country, and the world at large.

The contributions that language teachers can make to this have been further set out by UNESCO's Linguapax project (UNESCO, 1987). Among other things, this asks foreign language teachers in countries around the world to (a) be aware of their responsibility to promote international understanding through their teaching, and (b) make efforts

to increase the effectiveness of their teaching so as to enhance mutual understanding, respect, and peaceful co-existence between nations.

The Language Institute of Japan (LIOJ) has consistently worked to promote international understanding and global awareness through its international teacher training programs. It has been my privilege to contribute to this goal in a small way through my participation in several LIOJ Summer Workshops. In this article, I would like to outline several strategies that can help English language teachers in Japan and elsewhere to bring an international dimension into their classrooms.

Rethink the Role of English

The first step in internationalizing the English classroom is to rethink our image of the English language itself. Traditionally, English has been seen as (a) a linguistic system of difficult vocabulary and grammar to be memorized for tests; (b) a language for daily conversation about topics such as family, sports, fashion, and hobbies; and (c) the mother tongue of English-speaking countries that is studied to understand the people and traditions of such nations as the U.S., Britain, Australia, and Canada.

A global view of the English language, however, involves much more than this. It sees the English classroom as a place for teaching the following:

- *English as an international language.* This means teaching English not only as the native language of Britain and the U.S., but also as a national language spoken in countries like

India, Hong Kong, Jamaica, Kenya, and the Philippines, and as a foreign language used for international communication by people in countries throughout the world. English, after all, is the international language of business, diplomacy, technology, and tourism, used between Chinese and French scientists, by German and Arab businessmen, by Russian and Spanish diplomats, and by Italian tourists in Japan.

- *English for learning about the world.* This means seeing English as a means for learning about our global village and for understanding the issues, cultures and problems of our small planet. In this role, English is a “window on the world” through which students can learn about the peoples of the world (e.g., Arabs, Chinese, Russians, Brazilians), about social issues (e.g., violence, sexism, minorities, AIDS) and about important global problems (e.g., war and peace, world poverty, human rights, environmental destruction).

Part of the job of international English teachers, then, is to broaden students’ views of English. This means showing English being spoken by people in both New York and Nairobi, by both rich and poor, by both black and white. It means showing how English can be a language of world citizenship for learning about our multicultural global village, and for working to solve the global problems facing “spaceship Earth.”

Explore Global Education and Related Fields

After rethinking our image of English, the next step in internationalizing our classrooms is to explore the field of global education. Exploring a new field to help us improve our teaching is nothing new. Good teachers have always gone to other disciplines to learn about new ideas, techniques, and resources. Teachers who want to improve their teaching of grammar turn to the field of linguistics. For teachers who plan to use computers, it is natural to turn to the field of computer science. In the same way, if we are serious about teaching English to promote global awareness, international understanding, and action toward

solving world problems, we need to turn to the fields which specialize in these areas. These include global education and its related fields of peace education, human rights education, environmental education, multicultural education, and education for international understanding.

Global Education. The aim here is to give students the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed by responsible world citizens to solve the global issues which face our planet. Global education can provide language teachers with ideas, techniques, and resources for designing lessons about world regions, international connections with other countries, and global issues such as AIDS, world hunger, and refugees. Key books from the field of global education include *Global Teacher*, *Global Learner* (Pike & Selby, 1988), *World Studies 8-13* (Fisher & Hicks, 1990), *Next Steps in Global Education* (Kniep, 1987), *Worldways* (Elder & Carr, 1987), and *Visual Factfinder: Countries of the World* (Williams, 1993).

Peace Education. This is a field which aims to teach students the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent violence and war, and to build a peaceful world for ourselves and others. Peace education can provide language teachers with ideas, techniques, and resources for designing lessons on topics such as cooperation, war, Nobel Peace Prize winners, and conflict resolution. Key books on the theory and practice of peace education include *Learning the Skills of Peacemaking* (Drew, 1987), *Elementary Perspectives I: Teaching Concepts of Peace and Conflict* (Kreidler, 1990), and *Creative Conflict Resolution* (Kreidler, 1984).

Human Rights Education. The aim here is to inspire students with the knowledge and commitment needed to protect the human rights of others and themselves. Human rights education can provide us with teaching ideas, techniques, and resources for designing language lessons on topics such as prejudice, sexism, children’s rights, ethnic minorities, Martin Luther King, and the human rights organization Amnesty International. Good resources for human rights education include

Teaching Human Rights (Shiman, 1993), and *Human Rights Activity File* (Pike & Selby, 1988).

Environmental Education. This is a field which aims to develop in students the knowledge, abilities, and commitment needed to protect our fragile global environment. Environmental education can help language teachers design lessons about the beauty of nature, recycling, and Greenpeace as well as ecological issues such as water pollution, acid rain, endangered species, and tropical rainforests. Good resources on environmental education include *50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth* (Earthworks Group, 1990), *The Blue Peter Green Book* (Bronze, Heathcote & Brown, 1991), *Dear World: How Children Around the World Feel about our Environment* (Temple, 1993), *Spaceship Earth: Our Global Environment* (Worldlink video, 1990), and *Green Teacher Magazine*.

Multicultural Education and Education for International Understanding. These fields aim to help students understand and respect the variety of peoples and cultures in our global village. They provide language teachers with ideas, techniques, and resources for designing lessons about topics such as world religions, world flags, families around the world, and and daily life in Africa, Latin America, or India. Key books from these fields include *Multicultural Teaching* (Tiedt & Tiedt, 1990), *Hands Around the World* (Milord, 1992), *Children Just Like Me* (Kindersley, 1995), *Countries and Cultures* (Wheeler, 1994), and *Games for Global Awareness* (Asch, 1994).

Exploring these fields can be done in a number of ways.

1. Reading books about these areas is an easy option for learning about the teaching approaches, ideas, and activities of each field. The books listed above are all in English; a list of books in Japanese is given at the end of this article.
2. Attending conferences in these fields is another possibility—much of my own growth as a global education teacher has come from trips in Japan or overseas to attend global

education conferences, peace education seminars, and environmental education workshops.

3. Contacting organizations working in these fields is another option. Writing to environmental groups like Friends of the Earth or visiting human rights organizations such as Amnesty International, for example, can provide you with a lot of useful information and materials.

4. Ordering classroom teaching resources from global education centres is another option. Resource centres such as ERIC in Tokyo and Social Studies School Service in the U.S. can provide a wide variety of books, photo packs, posters, videos, and computer software to help you internationalize your classroom.

5. For more serious teachers, taking academic courses in these fields is another option. Summer courses for teachers in fields such as peace education and global education are often offered in Japan and overseas, and are a great way to spend an educational summer vacation.

English language teachers who begin exploring these fields soon discover a new excitement in their classes and a new mission in their teaching. They are able to approach global issues and world topics more confidently, and can draw from a wider variety of teaching activities, techniques, and resources for their English language classes. The result is more student motivation, increased global awareness, and enhanced language learning.

Integrate Global Topics Into Your Teaching

Global education does not happen through good intentions alone. It must be planned for, prepared, and consciously taught. After all, students cannot learn what you do not teach. It does not do any good, for example, to teach English grammar and somehow hope that students learn about environmental issues by studying the present perfect. Rather, a good global language teacher must sit down, write up two sets of goals for each class—language learning goals

and global education goals—then design effective classroom activities that will achieve both sets of objectives. In our example of environmental awareness and the present perfect, a sample lesson plan might look like this:

Language learning goals:

- to practice the present perfect (using “Have you ...?”)

Global education goals:

Activities:

- Show the class pictures of various environmental problems and ask: “Have you ever seen (a) a polluted river, (b) a dead tree, (c) an oil spill on TV, or (d) litter on the ground?”
- Put the class into groups of three and have them do a group eco-survey about environmental action by asking each other the following questions: “Have you ever (a) picked up litter from the ground, (b) turned off the light to save energy, (c) used something that was recycled, or (d) given money to an environmental organization?”

Not every teacher has the freedom to design language lessons around global themes. For those who have to follow a set textbook, another way to add an international dimension is the “extension approach.” This consists of teaching your regular textbook lesson, then extending it by adding a global component. Suppose, for example, that your English textbook focuses on everyday topics such as clothes, shopping, holidays, and families. Now suppose that you also wish to teach your students about multicultural themes related to world countries and cultures. By using the extension approach, you would teach your textbook lesson but arrange to have extra time afterwards to add a global dimension as follows:

Topic:	Extension:
clothes	clothes around the world
shopping	shopping around the world
holidays	holidays around the world
families	families around the world

Let us look at an example extension for a typical EFL textbook lesson about clothes. Such a lesson generally introduces students to basic vocabulary (e.g., *shirt*, *coat*, *sweater*), then uses drills or pictures to practice English expressions such as “What’s Tom wearing? He’s wearing a coat.” This format is fine for introducing the basic language for talking about clothes, but it does little to raise students’ global awareness.

To add an international dimension to this textbook lesson, the topic “clothes” can be extended to the topic “clothes around the world.” To do this, students can be given pictures of national costumes from around the world, put in pairs, and then practice the same expressions, but this time in an international context. Instead of looking at the textbook and repeating “What’s Tom wearing? He’s wearing a blue shirt,” the students will be looking at pictures of Arabs, Russians, Kenyans, and Greeks and practicing “What’s Meena wearing? She’s wearing a sari from India,” or “What’s Le Li wearing? She’s wearing an aodai from Vietnam.”

To introduce more global learning and additional language practice, the lesson could be extended further by bringing to class actual costumes from foreign countries and having students try them on. This not only creates a great deal of classroom excitement, but ensures lots of communicative language use. Having students try on beautiful, exotic Korean costumes to practice “What’s Tomoko wearing? She’s wearing a chima chogori from Korea,” combines both real-life language practice and a new awareness of the beauty of Korean design—a lot more stimulating than textbook Tom and his blue shirt.

Of course, this kind of multicultural extension teaching does require more preparation. But, with a little time, creativity, and the right materials, this approach can add an exciting multicultural dimension to almost any topic in the classroom.

Experiment With Global Education Activities

An important step in internationalizing your teaching is to experiment in your classroom with global education activities and resources. Reading about peace education or environmental education is fine, but it is only when you actually try out classroom activities from these fields that you can see how well they work in a live teaching situation. The more you experiment, the more you learn how to successfully blend language teaching and international education in your classroom activities. Here are a few examples:

- *Games*. These add motivation and excitement to the foreign language classroom. Language learning games designed around international themes promote global awareness while at the same time practicing language skills. Teachers interested in experimenting with international games can start with a book like *Games for Global Awareness* (Asch, 1994). This provides a variety of classroom activities which gets students learning about the world through map games, world flag games, and cultural awareness games.
- *Role plays*. These allow students to experience aspects of the world and its peoples in a personal way. It stimulates students' imaginations and creative thinking while promoting communicative use of the foreign language in a way that lecturing cannot. Teachers interested in experimenting with role play in their classrooms might start with a book like *World Studies 8-13* (Fisher & Hicks 1985). This provides a variety of classroom activities which get students role playing third world banana growers and tourists in the Caribbean as well as conflict situations which build creative conflict resolution skills.
- *Video*. This is a unique medium that allows language teachers to bring the world into the classroom in a very real way. Through the magic of video, we can take our students to Kenya or Kuwait, back in time to meet Gandhi, or off to New York to visit United Nations headquarters—all at the touch of a button. I teach an English lesson on tropical

rainforests and would love to fly my class of 60 students to Brazil, but my salary as a university lecturer does not allow that. Since I cannot take my class to the Amazon rainforest, the next best thing is to bring the Amazon rainforest to my classroom. This I can do with a global education video such as *Spaceship Earth: Our Global Environment* (Worldlink, 1990). This allows my students to travel to Brazil with British pop singer Sting and study the Amazon rainforest—all in English and without them ever leaving my Japanese classroom.

All good teaching grows out of experimentation. For language teachers wishing to develop activities with a global dimension, experimenting in class with materials and resources from fields such as global education, peace education, and environmental education is a vital step.

Make Use of Your International Experience in Class

I am always amazed at how much international knowledge and experience language teachers have. At the same time, I'm always surprised at how rarely language teachers make use of their world knowledge and experience to internationalize their classroom teaching.

Language teachers are an incredibly global group of people with a variety of international skills and experiences. Some can speak foreign languages such as French or Korean. Others know Spanish dancing or Chinese cooking. Some have travelled widely in Southeast Asia. Others have lived in countries like Brazil and Germany. Some teachers studied international relations in university. Others belong to environmental groups or do local charity and volunteer work.

All these skills and experiences can provide exciting topics for your English classroom. Despite such global backgrounds, however, many teachers leave their international knowledge and experience at home and spend their classroom time just being ordinary teachers. In my view, these teachers

lose out on a special chance to internationalize their language teaching, to promote good language learning, and to create a deeper connection with their students.

Good teaching means using our talents as teachers to promote effective learning. If you are good at art, for example, you should use this ability in your blackboard drawings to help motivate your class. If you are good at English pronunciation, you should pass this gift on to your students. If you have a talent for drama, you should exploit this and get your students performing English plays.

The same thing applies with international talents, knowledge, and experience. If you belong to an environmental group, you can use your knowledge to design English lessons about recycling and pollution. If you have been to India, you can use this experience to design a listening comprehension slide show to teach your class about this unique country through English. If you collect foreign stamps, you can use these to create a communicative English activity with the theme “stamps from around the world.”

I have been lucky to have had many international experiences that have enriched both my life and my English teaching. I lived for two years in Jordan, for example, a small country in the Middle East. That experience has enabled me to design global education EFL lessons which improve students’ English as they learn about Islam and Arab culture. In my travels around the world, I have collected coins and bills from countries such as Egypt, Russia, and Vietnam. This has allowed me to design a fun EFL lesson on the theme of “money from around the world,” which practices students’ English while deepening their understanding of other countries.

As teachers, then, we bring to the classroom a variety of talents, skills, and experiences. Using these effectively in class can enliven our teaching, stimulate student motivation, broaden students’ global awareness, and encourage better language learning. If you have a global talent, skill, or experience, don’t hide it: exploit it!

Discuss Global Education With Your Colleagues

Finally, if you are truly interested in internationalizing your classroom, one of the best things you can do is to share your ideas with your colleagues and supervisors at school. This kind of discussion can be either formal or informal, and can take place at a teachers’ seminar, over coffee in the teachers’ lounge, or at a local karaoke bar. Sharing your ideas on global teaching can help clarify your thoughts, elicit good ideas from other teachers, and lead to some exciting teamwork.

Many exciting initiatives have evolved from teamwork built through discussions with colleagues. One example is the development of the award-winning global education program at Taos High School in New Mexico, a story described in the book *Global Education: School-Based Strategies* (Tye, 1990). The idea for the program began in 1986 when a group of teachers got together for a beer one Friday afternoon and started to brainstorm about internationalizing their school. This led to more meetings, discussions, and proposal writing, and, after one year, with a little luck and lots of hard work, the school had a program with courses in environmental science, world food, global history, and foreign languages, with a global perspective integrated into every subject.

Another example is the Mexican EFL textbook *Imagine I: In Search of Nature* (Lopez, Santamaria & Aponte, 1994). This was written in 1992 when the Mexican Ministry of Education asked a team of their English teachers to write a new communicative textbook for all Mexican high schools. The Mexican teachers, eager to open their students’ eyes to the world and anxious about the pollution in their country, designed their textbook around the imaginary story of 15 teenagers from 15 countries who travel the world to tell people about the environment.

A similar example in Japan is Tokiwamatsu Gakuen, a private girls’ high school. The English department at this school—a team of Japanese and native speaker teachers—began thinking seriously about how

to internationalize their English program in 1992. They felt that their students needed to learn about the world and its problems, and they felt this could be done through English. After much discussion and classroom experimenting, they worked out a dynamic set of activities on world topics which was published in January 1998 as *Go Global: A Global Education Resource Book for Language Teachers* (Tokiwamatsu Gakuen, 1998). This contains a rich variety of English lessons on topics ranging from world geography and women in Asia to world religions and current events.

Conclusion

Internationalizing your English classroom involves a number of strategies. One is to rethink the role of English as a language for international communication and for learning about the world. Another is to explore fields such as global education, peace education, and environmental education, and to experiment in class with teaching ideas, activities, and resources from these fields. A further strategy is to integrate global topics into your classwork, perhaps by adding a global component to regular textbook lessons. Two final strategies are to make use of your international experiences in class and to share your ideas about global education with your colleagues.

Sharing your ideas with colleagues does not mean just talking with teachers in your own school. As an English teacher in Japan or elsewhere, you are part of a worldwide profession of foreign language educators who are striving to promote language learning and international understanding. A Vietnamese English teacher in Hue, Vietnam, a Thai English teacher in Bangkok, and a Korean high school English teacher in Seoul are just as much your colleagues as Mr. Smith or Ms. Tanaka down the hall.

Sharing ideas on global education and language teaching with colleagues around the world is part of the LIOJ ideal. It is also a dream which becomes reality every summer at LIOJ's annual workshop. For 30 years, LIOJ

has brought together English teachers from Asia, Europe, and the wider world for an exciting, emotional, inspiring week focussed on English education, intercultural communication, and world friendship. On this occasion of the 30th anniversary of the LIOJ Summer Workshop, I salute the teachers and staff of LIOJ for their commitment to global education, and I encourage English teachers throughout the world to work through their teaching to promote global awareness, world peace, a healthy environment, and international understanding.

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English in Elementary Schools: Five Ideas for Teaching Communication

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Finally, slowly and carefully, Japan is joining a growing majority of countries offering foreign language education at the elementary school level. According to a Tosho Kyozaï Center report (1997), 5,000 schools in Japan provide some form of English or international understanding related classes or events. This move carries with it exciting potential for educational change at all levels.

Because teaching English in elementary schools is new in Japan, it can be different from the conventional ways of learning and teaching we are familiar with. The Ministry of Education's directive to exclude reading and writing has pushed pilot schools to teach listening and speaking skills without using textbooks, pencils, desks, or chairs. And they are doing just that! Also, the people responsible for implementing this program are homeroom teachers, not professional English teachers: They have fresh ways of thinking, and often create activities new to the field and closer to the real world of children. We "old-timers" can learn a lot from them.

In my visits to schools around Japan, I have seen students experiencing English in a variety of ways, and have strengthened my belief that, in order to achieve international understanding, we should focus on English for communication at the elementary level of our education system. In addition, it is important to note that to develop communication skills at this level, teachers should emphasize fluency more than accuracy, and communicative competence over linguistic competence.

In this article, I would like to suggest five ideas which I believe can make a difference in elementary school English teaching and learning.

Idea 1: Ten Minutes a Day, Not Once a Week

How does this format help children develop communicative skills? First of all, learning without fear is essential in building communicative competence. Ten minutes a day means a lot of small steps, which will be easier for children to follow. Actually, small steps will be easier and less fearful for teachers too, since the alternative might be creating fifty-minute English lesson plans. Second, positive attitudes play a large part in successful communication. Even shy children will feel more positive about English through ten-minute daily practice sessions than through weekly study. Third, repetition makes children confident. Short, regular ten-minute segments means that newly-learned material is constantly reinforced. In contrast to longer weekly classes, teachers do not have to ask the students, "Do you remember so-and-so from last week's class?" or "Have you memorized such-and-such by now?" In those kinds of classes, teachers may feel they have taught a lot, but, realistically, after a week children have most likely forgotten most of it.

What are some ways to implement the ten-minutes-a-day idea?

1. Choose one song, chant, game, or activity for the day. (Songs must be easy to sing and games easy to play in homeroom classes.)

2. Have the students watch commercially or school board produced English educational programs on TV, video, or through a school broadcasting system.
3. Have "English time" the first thing in the morning, or the last thing before going home.
4. Use the same program, video, or audio cassette for a week, but not longer. The children will absorb it all in that time.

In Kasukabe Elementary School in Saitama, these ideas are already being practiced (ALC, 1998). They have "E-time" ("enjoy English everyday") for ten minutes everyday, and once a month E-time is conducted by an ALT for 50 minutes. The video material produced by the local board of education includes one song and one activity which can be easily copied in class. The same video is played repeatedly throughout the month. Reiko Matsukawa (1997) reported on how Namazu Elementary School in Gifu broadcasts its own internally-made program to all classes every day. Two children, chosen by lot (using grade, class, and roll call number) are spontaneously called to the studio to participate in the program. The realness of this program is the key to creating a climate which is good for communication.

Idea 2: Homeroom Teachers as Model Learners

How does this suggestion help children to develop communication skills? For one thing, it gives children a model to follow. Usually, teachers are in the classroom to teach. But as far as English communication is concerned, someone needs to model how communicative learning takes place. Instead of a whole class not knowing what to do, we can have a taller, somewhat older "student" model for everyone else. Children will become better learners if they see their homeroom teacher, someone they meet every day whose authority they respect, take this position.

Furthermore, the teacher as model learner demonstrates a student-to-student interactive style in the classroom. When the pattern is exclusively from teacher to student or be-

tween another adult and the children, what is taking place is instruction rather than communication.

When English was first introduced in public schools in Sweden (as early as 1969), a series of tapes and textbooks was produced by the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company so that tapes, not teachers, would teach. The name of the tape program was *Switch On* and it became popular in other European countries as well. As the title suggests, when using this resource, the only task teachers have is to "switch on." The cassette does the rest. Each tape lasts the duration of the class period, and all the talking, including direction-giving, praising, encouraging, singing, and reading, comes from voices on the tapes. The *Switch On* concept was well received because even European teachers, who speak languages much closer to English, find that teaching it in elementary school is no easy job.

How can we realize the model learner idea in the classroom?

1. Use TV programs, video tapes, and audio tapes in the manner of *Switch On* to put an emphasis on listening skills and to allow homeroom teachers to join their students as fellow learners. This will mean that instead of feeling afraid of teaching English, teachers will be excited about learning it.
2. Design lesson plans which include the homeroom teacher as a model learner whenever foreign guests, ALTs, or other Japanese teachers of English can come and teach the class. This will empower homeroom teachers to lead by example.

Idea 3: Picture Books for Natural Input

How do picture books develop English communication skills, especially when we are not teaching reading and writing? Picture books provide English input in an understandable manner and open the child's ears and mind. Children around the world grow up acquiring language in an easy and enjoyable way through picture books. When they first begin, they do not actually read the books. Instead, they look at the pictures and

listen to the stories again and again until they know everything by heart. They may at some point be able to recite a story from memory, but they cannot actually read, and I am not in any way suggesting we should teach them to! Japanese children who are exposed to English picture books develop good listening skills, which is a basic requirement for communication. They use their imaginations; they guess at meaning without translation; they learn to understand the message by feeling the beauty of the content. These skills get students ready to communicate in the English world.

Picture books make excellent communicative teaching materials because they come in a variety of levels. This permits teachers to solve the problem of finding suitable materials for fifth and sixth graders. These days, picture books cover an incredible array of topics. Teachers can pick and choose from themes such as environmental issues, human rights, friendship, self-esteem, war and peace, health, science, literature, history, and geography, to name a few.

An additional benefit is that children can listen to the picture book story being told and then reproduce it in communicative ways. This easy and fun activity might seem like a passive one which has nothing to do with communicative competence, but even children instinctively know that listening to books and reciting them is a good way to learn English. Teachers can encourage the use of gestures and pointing to the pictures to link sounds and meaning. Satoshi Nakamura (1997) said that the three-year English program at his Tokyo elementary school enhanced children's ability in Japanese. He felt it was because the children had learned to listen more carefully.

How can we make the most of picture books?

1. Create an English picture book library or tape library in each classroom. (One book for two students to share would be adequate.)
2. Make time for students to look at the pictures and listen to the tape over and over. Later they will be able to recite the book just as they can sing songs. Students and their

teachers should use gestures and act out the stories, or play pointing games with the sounds and pictures. The children could make a play or musical out of the story. No translation should be given since guessing at meaning is an important process in communicative language learning.

3. Provide the same content through videos. (But it is my personal feeling that picture books are more precious than videos because children can turn the pages themselves.)

For the sake of junior high teachers, I would like to add that using picture books in this manner would be a great way to prepare children to enter junior high English classes. If all Japanese children were to go through three picture books per year before going to junior high, the junior high English textbooks would appear to be much easier to them. Unconsciously, they would have acquired a certain grammatical competence, which they would not have noticed because they would have gotten it so naturally.

Idea 4: Games as Group Activities

How can group games develop communicative skills? One way is that children will use English for real communication to achieve their goals, that is, to win the games or to enjoy them. This is true even when teachers manage the games. But it is doubly true if children are put in charge of the games. I was so impressed when I visited Korea in 1997 and saw how teachers there had organized the game time. The children were sitting in groups of five (45 children in one class). The teachers put the names of the nine games for the day on the board, and then took out nine plastic boxes that contained everything five players would need for their game. The children knew all the games, and they played enthusiastically without any help from the teacher. Each group had its own leader. The leaders spoke the most English, but students took turns being the leaders. It did not matter whether all the children spoke a lot of English or not in this class. Perhaps in the next class they would be given a different game and a different child would be

the leader. I was impressed by the autonomous nature of this activity, which lasted about half of the class time. Planning an entire class of teacher-oriented activities is not only threatening to teachers, it is boring to students. In the Korean class, children learned how to act in a group situation where the group leader(s) needed certain English expressions to control the activity. Life-like opportunities like these are rare. Usually, teacher-centered teachers deprive children of chances to develop communicative skills within their own world.

When this kind of activity actually takes place, people wonder about the nature of the children's output. Will they speak correct English? Will they speak a lot of English? Will they speak English at all? The answer is that children will speak according to their level of fluency. Also, children will speak English if they feel it is necessary.

How can using games become a reality in Japanese classrooms?

1. Find, make, and organize a set of game materials in boxes or files in each classroom. I suggest games such as "Bingo," "Karuta" ("Slap"), "Go Fish," various math games, "Categories," "Rhythm 1-2," and "Fruit Basket." The themes of the games can be changed according to the children's level and progress. It is the teacher's responsibility to prepare games that will make children talk in order to play and win.
2. Prepare children by introducing each new game and playing it at least once with the entire class. Another job teachers have is to supply "student talk" or "classroom English for games." After the students understand the game and have practiced the game English they need, then they can be put in groups to play on their own.
3. Avoid interfering while the children are playing the games in groups unless it is necessary to control the use of Japanese. When possible, teachers can set up an "All-English Game Time" period during which children can try using their best English within the group.

Idea 5: Creating Short Skits

How do skits foster communicative skills? Skits provide children with the opportunity to create their own dialogs. Even young children soon realize that memorizing set dialogs does not help them carry on real conversations. Dialogs in real life never follow the script. So even from the very beginning it is essential for children to grasp the concept that they have to create dialogs by themselves. After learning a small number of basic expressions, children find the challenge of mixing and matching them to serve their own purposes exciting.

Short skits also give children control of their own conversations from the very beginning. At my MPI English school, children are taught to begin their dialogs with a "Hi!" and end them whenever they want to with a "Bye." I got this idea when I visited a fifth grade English class in Holland in 1993. The Dutch children did such a good job of creating and controlling their dialogs by using expressions such as "Hello," "By the way,..." "And you?" "Me, too," and "Good-bye." I realized this was a valuable strategy to teach EFL learners.

How can we help children create their own dialogs?

1. Teach sample dialog phrases consisting of two to eight lines. Show model conversations using the dialog phrases. These dialogs should be short, humorous, and include children as the main characters. Practice the model conversations together.
2. Pass the baton to the children and let them make their own short skits. Although it is necessary for children to memorize some model skits, that's not the place to end. They can go on to create their own dialogs by changing words, characters, situations, places, times, functions, real things to unreal, beginnings and endings, humor, and so on. Anything goes! That is the spirit, and there is beauty in it. I often see younger children make skits where the characters are animals. Or, they become monsters, ghosts, things, vehicles, the sun or moon. They go as far as

their imaginations take them.

My "Hi-Bye English" video and picture card series is based on this approach. Though the activity sounds advanced, in reality it is not so. If easy enough samples are supplied as starters, then any child can participate at some level in this activity, and all children feel the creative joy of communication.

Conclusion

English education in Japan at all levels has brought with it changes, such as calling each other by first names, inviting people from the community into the schools, sharing school lunches with non-Japanese—all departures from traditional English teaching in Japan. English for communication at the elementary level offers exciting potential because we have a new frontier to explore. We have the freedom to be different, to change. Already we can see that happening. We have 425,000 professional elementary school teachers in Japan who are skilled at

helping children participate, think, laugh, enjoy, and learn. These fresh voices ask, "What's this for? Why do you do it in this way? What's the purpose? Is this really interesting to children?" Students who experience the new communicative English will move through the system challenging junior and senior high school teachers to go farther and faster. Together we have a lot to learn—how exciting!

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University Entrance Examinations and Their Effect on English Language Teaching in Japan

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Over the course of the last ten years, I have become increasingly concerned about the state of the entrance examination system used by most of the universities in Japan. I have expressed that concern by doing research and publishing articles on the topic. My articles have caused both negative and positive responses from other authors. In the interest of brevity, I will simply list my articles on the subject and some of the key responses to them, so that interested readers can find and read them.

1. Brown and Christensen (1987) argued for the use of listening tests on university entrance examinations.
2. Brown (1987) tried to show ways to deal with testing for false beginners.
3. Brown (1990) explained how tests should fit into language programs primarily for making four kinds of decisions: proficiency, placement, diagnosis, and achievement.
4. Brown (1993) showed how test results are sometimes misinterpreted in Japan (though Japan is clearly not the only place where this occurs).
5. Brown (1995a) examined the nature of "examination hell," the social and psychological consequences of this exam system, the effects of entrance examinations on adolescent life, the egalitarian roots of the examinations, the relationship of the examinations to career opportunities, the nature of *juku* (cram schools) and *ronin* (high school graduates waiting for another chance to enter university), the responsibilities involved in making decisions with such examinations, and the "washback" effect of the English language entrance examinations on EFL teaching.
6. Brown (1995b) provided definitions for some of the primary Japanese terminology that students and others use to describe examination hell, the examination system, and the examination preparation industry.
7. Brown and Kay (1995) discussed the washback effect of the university entrance examinations on English language teaching in Japanese high schools.
8. Brown and Gorsuch (1995) raised a number of the above entrance-examination-related issues in the public eye.
9. Brown and Yamashita (1995a) described the 1993 entrance examinations at 21 universities, including 10 private, 10 public, and the nationwide center examination.
10. O'Sullivan (1995) criticized the Brown and Yamashita (1995a) study for having a weak design and not being very useful for teachers, test users, or researchers.
11. Brown and Yamashita (1995b) responded to the criticisms leveled by O'Sullivan (1995) and expanded the list of research questions which should be investigated on the English language entrance examinations in Japan.
12. Brown and Yamashita (1995c) investigated the 1994 examinations at the same universities as those in their 1995a study and how the 1994 exams differed from the ones in 1993.
13. Brown (1996a) discussed problems with the entrance examinations and ways to solve them, especially in the areas of (a) items

quality, (b) test revision, (c) test reliability, and (d) test validity. Two other issues were discussed in that paper: professional development and scrutiny, and the need for much more research.

14. Stapleton (1996) provided a thoughtful reaction to several of the Brown articles suggesting not so much that they were wrong, but that there is another "Japanese" perspective: the entrance examinations are designed to measure "effort and perseverance: two qualities that have infinitely more utility in Japanese society than learning to communicate in English which is the goal that Brown suggests the test should aim for" (p. 31).

15. Yoshida (1996, January) criticized the Brown (1996) JALT plenary on the basis of cultural differences between Japan and the United States and went as far as to say "what to an American might seem like a primitive and unscientific method of testing could very well be a reflection of the cultural values inherent in the educational tradition of a given country" (p. 15), which of course does not change the fact that it is still a primitive and unscientific method of testing.

16. Brown (1996, February) answered Yoshida's (1996, January) charges and Yoshida (1996, February) made another attempt to discredit Brown's ideas.

In my articles listed above, I leveled numerous criticisms and pointed out many problems, but I also offered some solutions. The purpose of the remainder of this paper will be to offer additional positive discussion of ways to improve the washback effect of the English language entrance examinations on English language teaching.

Defining Washback

Over the years, a number of definitions have been formulated for the concept of washback. Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman (1996) defined washback as "the connections between testing and learning" (p. 298). Gates (1995) defined washback simply as "the influence of testing on teaching and learning" (p. 101). Earlier, Shohamy (1992) provided a more comprehensive definition of

washback: "The utilization of external language tests to affect and drive foreign language learning...this phenomenon is the result of the strong authority of external testing and the major impact it has on the lives of test takers" (p. 513). To Messick (1996), washback, "a concept prominent in applied linguistics, refers to the extent to which the introduction and use of a test influences language teachers and learners to do things they would not otherwise do that promote or inhibit language learning" (p. 241). Clearly, then, washback has to do with the influences of external testing on the teaching and learning processes in the language classroom. In fact, the term "washback" might aptly be used in a sentence such as: "The university entrance examinations in Japan may have a negative washback effect on language teaching in the high schools."

In addition to defining washback in different ways, various authors have used other terms to refer to the same concept. I present them here in order to head off any confusion. Alderson and Wall (1993a) pointed out that "the phenomenon is referred to as 'backwash' in general education circles, but it has come to be known as 'washback' in British applied linguistics" (p. 115). I have also witnessed applied linguists referring to the concept of washback as "test impact," "measurement-driven instruction," "curriculum alignment," "test feedback," and even (jokingly) as "bogwash."

Does Washback Exist?

The question of whether the washback effect exists at all was quite reasonably raised by Alderson and Wall (1993a). They pointed to a great deal of literature that makes assertions about washback, but little actual empirical research into the existence and nature of washback. The same can be said for the literature in Japan: A great deal of writing exists in the literature about the effects of the university entrance examinations on the language teaching and learning processes, but is there empirical proof? For instance, Rohlen (1983) stated that "the criterion of efficiency

in preparation, of meeting competition by gearing education to the examinations, reaches deep into nearly every corner of high school education" (p. 108), and later in the same document said, "one third of all Japanese students who attend vocational schools must endure the same kind of instruction but without the sense of purpose or reward" (p. 247). He also quoted one teacher as saying, "I know I can't speak English, and your presence in school embarrasses me, but I study the fine points of English grammar, and this is more helpful to my students. They can use it on exams" (p. 244). In addition, Law (1995) said that *junken eigo* (examination English) "exhibits a strong preference for lists of language items over discursive texts, for peripheral over core forms, and for linguistic knowledge over linguistic performance" (p. 217). Other papers, including those by Reader (1986), Law (1994), and Zeng (1995, 1996), have included lengthy discussions of the effects of washback on high school EFL curricula and teaching. But, where is their proof? How do we know that washback really exists?

Alderson and Hamp-Lyons (1996), in a study in the USA, found that TOEFL classes were substantially different from non-TOEFL classes in that TOEFL classes had more test-taking, more teacher talking time, less turn taking, less time spent on pair work, more references to TOEFL, more metalanguage, more routinized language, and less laughter. They concluded that the picture was even more complex when the TOEFL and non-TOEFL classes were analyzed separately. Hughes (1988) described a study in Turkey and claimed a positive washback effect for an English proficiency test designed to screen students for entry into an English medium university in Istanbul. Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman (1996) examined the effects of two language tests in Israel: an Arabic as an L2 test for grades 7 to 9 and an EFL oral test for grade 12. They found a number of effects that could only be labeled as washback. Wall (1996) performed a study over the course of four years in an EFL project in Sri Lanka to evaluate a new national

examination (also discussed in Alderson & Wall, 1996). She too found numerous effects that would have to be labeled washback.

In Japan, Watanabe (1992) found some evidence for washback and observed that one of its effects is to broaden the range of strategies that students apply to learning. He also found that the washback effect persists at least one year later. In a later study, Watanabe (1996a) investigated two teachers at *yobiko* (special schools to prepare students for university entrance exams) and their use of exam-induced translation in class. He concluded that translation on examinations affects some teachers and not others depending on personal beliefs, educational background, and past learning experiences.

A number of other studies have addressed the issue of washback and demonstrated to greater or lesser degrees that washback exists, including Westdorp's study (as cited in Alderson and Wall, 1993a), and the studies done by (a) Ariyoshi and Senba, (b) Fujita, and (c) Saito, Ariata, and Nasu (all cited in Watanabe, 1996b).

At the beginning of this section of the paper, I pointed out that Alderson and Wall (1993a) had raised a legitimate question as to whether the washback effect exists at all. The answer from a variety of sources appears to be "yes." However, washback also appears to come in many forms and involves a much more complicated set of issues than many language professionals would have previously believed.

Factors That Affect the Impact of Washback

According to Gates (1995), the two ways in which washback can vary (from positive to negative, and from strong to weak) suggest that "teachers might reasonably want to determine the type of washback that flows from a given test" (p. 101). Gates (1995) also identified seven other variables that may affect the kind (positive or negative) and degree (strong to weak) of washback: (a) prestige, (b) accuracy, (c) transparency, (d) utility, (e) monopoly, (f) anxiety, and (g) practicality. Alderson and Hamp-Lyons (1996) argued that

the amount and type of washback depend on the extent to which (a) the test has status (and the level of the stakes involved), (b) the test is counter to current teaching practices, (c) teachers and textbook writers think about appropriate methods of test preparation, and (d) teachers and textbook writers are willing and able to innovate. Mehrens and Kaminsky (1989) discussed the importance of the high stakes versus low stakes distinction. Low stakes situations are ones where classroom testing is for learning purposes or research and "won't count." High stakes situations are ones where important decisions like admissions, promotion, placement, or graduation are directly dependent on test scores. The washback effect would naturally be much stronger in high stakes situations, like the university entrance examinations in Japan, than in low stakes situations.

Clearly, then, a number of variables come into play in the washback effect—variables that, alone or in various combinations, may be related to the approaches for promoting positive washback that I will discuss next.

Promoting Positive Washback

Hughes (1989) provided an entire chapter on ways of promoting beneficial washback, wherein he suggested that language professionals (a) test the abilities whose development they want to encourage, (b) sample widely and unpredictably, (c) use direct testing, (d) make testing criterion-referenced, (e) base achievement tests on objectives, (f) ensure that the test is known and understood by students and teachers, and (g) where necessary, provide assistance to teachers.

Heyneman and Ransom (1990) provided three suggestions for improving test content which would thereby increase positive washback effect: (a) ask more open-ended items (as opposed to selected-response items like multiple-choice), (b) test higher-level cognitive skills, and (c) provide feedback to teachers and others (i.e., teacher trainers, curriculum developers, inspectors, education officers, and head teachers) so meaningful

change can be implemented.

Kellaghan and Greaney (1992), in reviewing World Bank research in 14 African countries, suggested the following 11 positive steps that can be taken to lessen negative washback on classroom teaching (summarized in Wall, 1996):

1. Examinations should reflect the full curriculum, not merely a limited aspect of it.
2. Higher-order cognitive skills should be assessed to ensure they are taught.
3. Skills to be tested should not be limited to academic areas; they should also relate to out-of-school tasks.
4. A variety of examination formats should be used, including written, oral, aural, and practical.
5. In evaluating published examination results and national rankings, account should be taken of factors other than teaching effort.
6. Detailed, timely feedback should be provided to schools on levels of pupils' performance and areas of difficulty in public examinations.
7. Predictive validity studies of public examinations should be conducted. (This is to see whether selected examinations are fulfilling their purpose.)
8. The professional competence of examination authorities should be improved, especially in test design.
9. Each examination board should have a research capacity. (This is to investigate, among other things, the impact of examinations on teaching.)
10. Examination authorities should work closely with curriculum organizations and with educational administrators.
11. Regional professional networks should be developed to initiate exchange programmes and to share common interests and concerns.

Bailey (1996) suggested promoting beneficial washback by incorporating the following: language learning goals, authenticity, learner autonomy and self-assessment, and detailed score reporting. She also listed the following criteria, which she suggests are likely to promote beneficial washback: (a) test-takers, teachers, administrators, and

Table 1 - Approaches for Promoting Positive Backwash in Japan (adapted from Brown, 1997)

Test design approaches

1. Sample widely and unpredictably (Hughes, 1989).
2. Design tests to be criterion-referenced (Hughes, 1989; Wall, 1996).
3. Design the test to measure what the programs intend to teach (Bailey, 1996).
4. Base the test on sound theoretical principles (Bailey, 1996).
5. Base achievement tests on objectives (Hughes, 1989).
6. Use direct testing (Hughes, 1989; Wall, 1996).
7. Foster learner autonomy and self-assessment (Bailey, 1996).

Test content approaches

1. Test the abilities whose development you want to encourage (Hughes, 1989).
2. Use more open-ended items (as opposed to selected-response items like multiple choice) (Heyneman & Ransom, 1990).
3. Make examinations reflect the full curriculum, not merely a limited aspect of it (Kellaghan & Greaney, 1992).
4. Assess higher-order cognitive skills to ensure they are taught (Heyneman & Ransom, 1990; Kellaghan & Greaney, 1992).
5. Use a variety of examination formats, including written, oral, aural, and practical (Kellaghan & Greaney, 1992).
6. Do not limit skills to be tested to academic areas (they should also relate to out-of-school tasks) (Kellaghan & Greaney, 1992).
7. Use authentic tasks and texts (Bailey, 1996; Wall, 1996).

Logistical approaches

1. Insure that test-takers, teachers, administrators, and curriculum designers understand the purpose of the test (Bailey, 1996; Hughes, 1989).
2. Make sure language learning goals are clear (Bailey, 1996).
3. Where necessary, provide assistance to teachers to help them understand the tests (Hughes, 1989).
4. Provide feedback to teachers and others so meaningful change can be effected (Heyneman & Ransom, 1990; Shohamy, 1992).
5. Provide detailed and timely feedback to schools on levels of pupils' performance and areas of difficulty in public examinations (Kellaghan & Greaney, 1992).
6. Make sure teachers and administrators are involved in different phases of the testing process because they are the people who will have to make changes (Shohamy, 1992).
7. Provide detailed score reporting (Bailey, 1996).

Interpretation and analysis approaches

1. Make sure exam results are believable, credible, and fair to test takers and score users (Bailey, 1996).
 2. Consider factors other than teaching effort in evaluating published examination results and national rankings (Kellaghan & Greaney, 1992).
 3. Conduct predictive validity studies of public examinations (Kellaghan & Greaney, 1992).
 4. Improve the professional competence of examination authorities, especially in test design (Kellaghan & Greaney, 1992).
 5. Insure that each examination board has a research capacity (Kellaghan & Greaney, 1992).
 6. Have testing authorities work closely with curriculum organizations and with educational administrators (Kellaghan & Greaney, 1992).
 7. Develop regional professional networks to initiate exchange programs and to share common interests and concerns (Kellaghan & Greaney, 1992).
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curriculum designers should understand the purpose of the test, (b) results must be believable to test takers and score users, (c) test takers must find the results credible and fair, and (d) the test should measure what the programs intend to teach. She concluded that a test will promote beneficial washback to the extent that (a) it is based on sound theoretical principles, (b) it uses authentic tasks and texts, and (c) test takers buy into the assessment process.

Wall (1996) found that up-to-date test development practices in language testing should help create positive washback, especially in the areas of direct testing, criterion-referencing, authentic texts, and using tasks in testing. Taking the students point of view, Wall (1996) argued that (a) teachers and students should understand the tests for which they are preparing, (b) teachers should receive help so they understand the tests, (c) schools should receive feedback from testers, and (d) teachers and administrators should be involved in different phases of the testing process because they are the people who will have to make changes. Generally, Wall found the advice of Hughes (1989), Shohamy (1992), and Bailey (1996) to be helpful in improving curriculums. She also relied on suggestions made by authors in general education (Heyneman & Ransom, 1990; Kellaghan & Greaney, 1992).

Conclusion

The central purpose of this paper, as stated at the outset, was to "offer a positive discussion of ways to improve the washback effect of the English language entrance examinations on English language teaching." The previous section did just that. However, the approaches for improving washback discussed in that section may be hard to interpret because they are not particularly well-organized in the literature nor in any given article. Indeed, I find it startling that the various lists in the previous section have very little overlap.

Table 1 is my attempt to reorganize and summarize the approaches discussed in

the previous section. Notice that I have reorganized the information in the table into four categories of approaches that language educators in Japan can use to promote positive washback effects: test design approaches; test content approaches; logistical approaches; and interpretation and analysis approaches. Some of these approaches would be solely the responsibility of the language teaching professionals who design and write the entrance examinations at the universities. However, the majority can only be implemented through extensive cooperation between the test designers at the universities and the English teachers who teach the language to high school students. Because of this need for large-scale cooperation, my guess would be that none of these approaches can be implemented without strong leadership from the Ministry of Education in Japan.

As Watanabe (1996) pointed out, "A large amount of time, money, and energy is spent on entrance examinations every year at individual, school, and national levels. In order to make the best use of such an investment, we need to be empirical, rational, and well informed" (p. 332). We also need to be prepared to use the washback effect in a positive way to improve the manner that language education is delivered in the junior and senior high school classrooms of Japan.

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School Phobia in Japan

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Research into the problem called “school phobia” began in the United States in the 1940s. Since then, various studies have given different names to the problem, including “truancy,” “reluctance to go to school,” “school non-attendance,” “school refusal,” “school avoidance,” and “the phobia of separation of mother and child.” Whatever the name, it is a growing problem among Japanese children.

In an effort to categorize the nature of student absences from school, the Japanese Ministry of Education (1992) defined the school-phobic student as one who is absent from school for more than 30 days during the year for any reason other than illness or economic hardship. This definition, however, does not include students who have found a constructive alternative to school.

In Japan, the number of school-phobic students is increasing year by year. In fiscal 1996, there were 15,000 cases of school phobia in primary schools and 7,500 cases in junior high schools (Ministry of Education, 1997). These numbers translate to 0.24% of the total student population in primary school and 1.65% of the total student population in junior high school. The percentages represent a five-fold increase at the primary level and an eight-fold increase at the junior high level since fiscal 1975.

Causes of School Phobia

Why is the number of school-phobic children increasing? This is a question I have been trying to answer in my work with school-phobic students at Kaizen Juku Educational Counseling Center in Sayama city in Saitama prefecture. In Japan, there are more than 300 centers like this that provide support to school-phobic students. Many of these centers do

not encourage children to return to school; however, Kaizen Juku staff members regularly visit school-phobic children in their homes and conduct counseling sessions designed to encourage children to return to school. We also organize camping trips and other group support activities for school-phobic children on weekends and during school vacations. During its 18 year history, the center has helped more than 600 children return to school.

In the three years I have been working with school-phobic students, I have learned that there are some social factors that have clearly contributed to the rise in the number of school phobia cases. Here are the main ones that I have observed:

- *Stress caused by problems in the student's family.* I have talked with many children who have developed school phobia because of problems at home. It happens in situations in which a child's parents often quarrel. After an absence from school, the mother and father become concerned and discuss the situation together and with the child. The child may begin to feel that his parents get along better when he has a problem. As a result, he makes an effort to worry his parents by cutting classes and skipping school. Ultimately, it becomes easier for the child not to go to school, and a case of school phobia develops.
- *An obsession with cleanliness and personal appearance.* Among young people in Japan, this seems to be a growing phenomenon. For example, if a child is told by a classmate that her hair is not clean, she may worry about washing her hair to the point of obsession. Other children may worry to an abnormal degree about the cleanliness of restroom facilities at school. In such cases, many children find it easier just to stay at home.

- *A society which places greater value on an individual's academic career than on his real ability.* Japanese society places great emphasis on a child's academic performance. A child's future is determined by his ability to perform well on an entrance exam for a good high school or for a prestigious university. This places a tremendous amount of pressure on children. For the child whose talents lie outside the academic sphere, this situation can be particularly stressful. Some children feel unable to cope with this pressure and, as a result, choose to stay home.

- *A general decline in teachers' enthusiasm.* Many teachers are enthusiastic and hard working. The teaching profession in Japan is very demanding because of the many responsibilities that teachers have. However, due to the decrease in the number of school-age children in Japan, the demand for teachers has also decreased. In addition, the examination for teacher certification is difficult and favors individuals who are academically oriented. These teachers are often unable to empathize with the school-phobic child, and sometimes view teaching as an occupation rather than a vocation. An enthusiastic teacher, however, can make a difference to a borderline school-phobic student.

- *Bullying.* An increasing number of the students visiting our center have been the victims of bullying in schools. Reports of bullying and a number of high-profile cases of student violence have been recently seized upon by the mass media. The tone of these reports on television and in magazines and newspapers has been critical of the schools. Intellectuals and education critics who feel that the Japanese education system does not allow children's personalities to develop are also quick to blame the schools for the increasing atmosphere of violence.

In many cases, the parents of school-phobic children believe that it is these school-related problems that contribute to their child's desire to stay home. Reports critical of Japanese schools in the mass media serve to reinforce this belief, and are the reason some

parents support their child's boycott of school. The teachers, on the other hand, believe that problems in the home are at the heart of the child's school phobia. Consequently, parents and teachers find themselves distrustful of each other.

Many people have accepted as normal the fact that some students refuse to go to school. However, with the recent increase in the number of school-phobic students has come a new problem: *hikikomori*. This term refers to the student who refuses to even leave home.

The response of many counselors to all of this has been to sympathize with school-phobic students. In their view, a child who refuses to go to school should not be forced to do so. These students, they maintain, are tired and their spirits are broken, so they should be given time away from school to recover. Many parents follow this advice, and wait for years for their child to return to school. When this does not happen, they turn elsewhere for help, to centers such as Kaizen Juku.

A Case of School Phobia

Many students do recover fully from school phobia. When I first joined Kaizen Juku, I had the opportunity to meet a male *hikikomori* student who was being counseled by the staff. The boy, who had been an excellent student at a prestigious high school, had dropped out of school after a long absence. Although he stayed at home for several years without meeting anyone other than Kaizen Juku staff or family members, he kept up-to-date on current events by watching television and reading books.

When we met, he seemed to take an interest in me, and we were able to discuss many things. At a later point, we went out to a movie together. His family was surprised, as this event marked the first time in five years that he had left his house. Gradually, his interest in the outside world grew. He was subsequently able to qualify to take the university entrance examination, and he also received his drivers license. He is currently a student at a national university, enjoying

campus life and working part time on weekends. This young man is good example of the way school-phobic students can return to formal studies and make friends even after a long period of *hikikomori*.

But why was this particular student able to leave his house with me? I would like to believe it was because I am charming, but I do not think so. It may have been because he had reached the age at which people start to become interested in the opposite sex. Nevertheless, it draws attention to the fact that, in many instances, a non-professional can influence a school-phobic student more easily than a specialist. A non-professional can become friends naturally with a student, without preconceptions. Once such a friendship has been established, the school-phobic student will often make an effort to spend time with his or her new friend.

Dealing with School Phobic Students

In Japan, the school is the center of a child's existence. After dropping out, the school-phobic student typically experiences feelings of low self-esteem and does not want to meet other people. Only after a long time is he or she able to leave the shelter of home and family.

The reactions of adults to school phobia can vary greatly. Some adults take a combative approach in dealing with a school-phobic son or daughter. They simply scold their child and tell him or her to go to school. Other adults take a *laissez-faire* approach to the problem. Their reaction is that the student should do as he or she chooses, and that staying home from school is fine.

Taking into consideration the child's future, what message should parents and counselors be giving school-phobic students? Should students be led to believe that it is acceptable not to go to school? What is the best way to deal with this problem?

Based on my experience, I believe it is definitely not the *laissez-faire* approach. A child does not have adequate experience in life to make such an important decision on his or her own. If the student is able to find

an alternative environment to learn and live happily, leaving school may be a constructive option. But an education is far too important for a child to miss out on; it is the key to realizing dreams as an adult. Furthermore, this attitude does a disservice to the students. I believe that, in order to get their confidence back, school-phobic students must return to school. If they drop out, it becomes that much more difficult to return later when they get over their problems. School-phobic students should therefore be encouraged to return to school and face their problems. I believe most of these children really want to attend school like other students.

Kaizen Juku takes school-phobic students through a step-by-step process to help them return to school. For a student who wants to return after a long absence, there are many steps, which include (a) going to the school gate at night, (b) driving around the school during the day, (c) entering the school building, (d) going to the school nurse's room or counselor's room and meeting the teacher, and (e) returning daily to the school nurse's room and doing private study.

This process, of course, varies depending on the student. Some school-phobic students may be able to return quickly to school. For others, it is a long process until they can finally join the class; but, with each day comes a little more confidence. Often these students and their parents will delay taking the first step, citing the student's lack of confidence. But as long as the student has two legs, the process can begin. The gains in confidence will soon follow. Although it is not easy, a student who has dropped out should begin the process of returning to school as soon as possible. The only way to regain confidence is by facing the problem.

Some adults treat the school-phobic student in an extremely delicate manner in order to smooth their path back to school. The student's outlook on life brightens with each succeeding step taken toward a full return. Adults should encourage students in each step of their return to school life.

Conclusion

Beautiful school buildings alone cannot make our children happy. The key to a successful education system is our teachers. If teachers are able to successfully help school-phobic students with their problems, other students can feel confident that their teachers will support them if they have any difficulties themselves.

Teachers, however, are facing many problems in school. Many of these are a result of the requirement that all students of the same age be taught at the same level. Teachers are unable to give students the kind of individual attention they need. Although teachers often lack experience in dealing with school-phobic students, many are making efforts to help them. Being a teacher today requires an understanding of psychology and human behavior, as well as knowledge of a specific school subject and the field of education in general. In my opinion, teachers need more training on how to counsel these students with patience, sympathy, and encouragement.

My purpose is not to blame anyone—parents, teachers, students, the media—for causing school phobia. Rather, I hope to encourage adults to think about how to make our children happy. Unfortunately, my observations lead me to believe that the number of school-phobic students will increase in the future. In my visits to schools, I have noticed mood swings, tardiness,

disinterest in friends, and unpredictable actions on the part of many students. In my experience, these are all signs of a potentially school-phobic child.

Among Japanese, there are many people who choose to live abroad because they cannot find happiness in their own country. Likewise, a number of parents move their unhappy children from school to school in an effort to find peace of mind. Quite often, these students acquire an even greater fear of attending school. The problem of school phobia recurs as they are unable to form solid relationships with their classmates.

However, permitting an increasing number of school-phobic students to drop out of school does not help make schools better. We are, in fact, acknowledging that we are unable to provide an environment that our children can enjoy.

We must all work together to find a solution to the problem of school phobia. When children no longer suffer from school phobia, we can have confidence in our education system.

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Training Interests of Japanese Teachers of English

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The Education Profession

According to Webster's Dictionary (1988), a profession is "a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation" (p. 939). This word is usually associated with law or medicine, as in "the legal profession" or "the medical profession." The field of education is generally given the same recognition.

In addition to specialized training, a characteristic of professions is the presence of well-established systems for the sharing of relevant, up-to-date knowledge. This is done most commonly through conferences and journals, which are vehicles for the dissemination of current information, and which provide a forum for the discussion and debate that drives the development of a profession. Education is no different from other professions in that there are many conferences and journals to keep educators up-to-date with the latest information.

The ideas shared and the discussions generated through professional conferences and journals are a powerful force in moving a profession along a developmental path. Decisions regarding which topics to scrutinize in a professional forum are, therefore, important ones. But how are these decisions made? This study looks at one approach, which aims to find the areas of greatest concern among Japanese teachers of English (JTEs).

Language Education

There are a number of professional associations that hold regular conferences and publish journals for language educators (see

Kitao & Kitao, Paper 11). Some of the large international associations include TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) and IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language). There are also a number of smaller, national associations, such as Thai TESOL (in Thailand), KOTESOL (in Korea), and JALT (Japan Association for Language Teaching) (in Japan), that hold their own annual professional conferences and publish professional journals. There is also a variety of smaller workshops and seminars (e.g., the LIOJ International Summer Workshop for Teachers of English) geared toward particular niches in ELT.

A look at the contents of a conference, workshop, or journal reveals a lot about current concerns in language education. The 1997 JALT national conference, for example, included over 300 scheduled presentations that were divided into 38 different content areas, from "applied linguistics" and "materials design" to "writing and composition" (JALT, 1997). The content areas that included the most presentations were (a) course texts and books, (b) learner development, (c) activities and games, and (d) methodology. In 1997, the two main JALT publications (*The Language Teacher* and *JALT Journal*) included articles and features on topics such as communication strategies, standardized proficiency tests, cultural awareness, the relationship between reading and writing, study abroad programs, textbook evaluation, students' attitudes, learner awareness, second language acquisition research, and computer assisted language learning. These examples

show that language educators and researchers are actively addressing issues across the language education spectrum.

Choices about what to include in a conference or journal are usually made by a team of reviewers who look at submissions and make selections based on a list of criteria. Such a process generally provides conference participants or journal readers with a variety of high quality, informative presentations or papers. It may be possible, however, to address language educators' concerns in a more systematic way.

Background of the Study

The LIOJ International Summer Workshop for Teachers of English is one of the longest-running teacher training workshops in Japan. The first Workshop was held in 1969, and it has been a regular summer event in Odawara ever since. The week-long Workshop is designed especially for secondary school JTEs, and is conducted in an English-only environment.

Each year, Workshop participants are asked to complete a questionnaire in English when they register for the event. This survey includes questions about the participant's background (e.g., nature and length of teaching experience, level of English proficiency, and educational background). The information sheet also includes the open-ended question, "What difficulties do you have teaching English?" This question was the source of data for this study.

This is a broad question with a variety of possible interpretations. However, when posed to a large number of language educators, this question reveals some interesting patterns that help make clear the concerns of these members of the profession.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected from Workshop participant questionnaires processed over the last three years (1995, 1996, and 1997). The total number of questionnaires that were examined was 139. There is some overlap because of participants who attended the

Workshop more than once, so the actual number of participants who completed these questionnaires was 103. Participants were not given any directions on how to answer the question, so were free to list one or more difficulties. The total number of reported difficulties was 199.

Analysis involved the grouping of reported difficulties into categories. First, similar responses were grouped together. For example, the response "materials" was grouped with "reading materials," and "using materials"; likewise, "make classes more interesting" was grouped with "make classes more attractive." These groupings were then examined for patterns, and arranged in general categories.

Results

Analysis of the reported difficulties revealed patterns that resulted in classification into the following four groups: (a) affective factors, (b) methodology, (c) administrative factors, and (d) personal factors. (See Table 1.)

The results show that about 38% of reported difficulties were related to affective factors (i.e., things that influence students emotionally). The most common issue was student motivation (particularly with low level students), which was mentioned 31 times. Another common difficulty was making classes interesting or attractive (mentioned 15 times). The other difficulties in this category were (a) making lessons active, (b) getting students to speak loudly, (c) maintaining students' attention, (d) encouraging students to participate, (e) helping students to enjoy English, (f) helping students to become confident, (g) dealing with students' different learning styles, (h) dealing with students' conservative beliefs, (i) dealing with discipline problems, and (j) dealing with the fact that students generally don't like to study.

About 31% of reported difficulties were related to methodology. No single response stood out in this category, although "teaching English without using Japanese" was mentioned seven times. The other difficulties in this category were (a) developing, finding,

Table 1 - Categories of Japanese Teachers' Difficulties in Teaching English

	1995	1996	1997	Total
Affective Factors	19 (26.4)	28 (41.2)	28 (47.5)	75 (37.7)
Methodology	26 (36.1)	19 (27.9)	17 (28.8)	62 (31.1)
Administrative Factors	19 (26.4)	7 (10.3)	11 (18.6)	37 (18.6)
Personal Factors	8 (11.1)	14 (20.6)	3 (5.1)	25 (12.6)

Note. Raw number of responses (with percentages in parentheses).

and using materials, (b) presenting grammar appropriately, (c) teaching new vocabulary, (d) teaching pronunciation, (e) developing and using tasks, (f) teaching culture, (g) correcting errors, (h) helping students avoid translating, (i) making classes more communicative, (j) teaching conversation, (k) teaching oral communication skills, (l) helping students to think in English, (m) balancing skills, (n) using English and Japanese together effectively, (o) making English useful, and (p) evaluating students.

The third category, administrative factors, included about 19% of reported difficulties. The most common difficulties in this category were a range of student levels in one classroom (mentioned 12 times), and large classes (mentioned 8 times). The other difficulties in this category were (a) shortage of preparation time, (b) length of classes (i.e., too short), (c) inconsistent curriculum, (d) team teaching, (e) focus on entrance exams, (f) lack of consensus on syllabus, and (g) challenging new teaching guidelines.

The final category, personal factors, comprised about 13% of all reported difficulties. The most common problem here was the teachers' own perceived low level of proficiency (mentioned 17 times); some other difficulties were related to this, including (a) teaching in English, (b) presenting correct English, and (c) understanding hidden meanings in English. The other difficulties in this category had to do with keeping one's own voice healthy and maintaining personal motivation.

Implications and Suggestions

An examination of JTEs' self-reported difficulties in teaching EFL in junior and senior high schools reveals some general patterns in their responses. Categorization into four general areas (affective factors, methodology, administrative factors, and personal factors) helps us to see from a broad view what these teachers' concerns are and where they might need the most assistance. According to the results of this study, the area this group of teachers wants the most help with is related to affective factors, particularly in the area of student motivation. A variety of ideas and suggestions on how to stimulate students' motivation would therefore be particularly useful for this group of teachers. Almost as important are ideas and suggestions related to methodology. Less important, but still significant, are the teachers' needs for (a) guidance when dealing with specific administrative concerns such as large classes and various levels within a class, and (b) development of their own language skills. Are the journals, conferences, and workshops designed for these teachers currently soliciting and including presentations and papers that address these concerns? Most likely they are, but perhaps not in proportion to the demand.

The information collected in this study should be helpful to primarily three groups:

1. Researchers who spend time and effort searching for ways to improve the collective understanding of the profession can use this information as a guide. Knowing what would be the most useful information to the most teachers would help researchers to deal with

the endless range of research questions and prioritize their research interests on the basis of interest or demand within the profession.

2. Conference organizers and journal editors can use this information to focus on particular relevant issues when they call for presentations and articles.

3. Teachers can perhaps take comfort in knowing that they are not alone in their concerns. They can also become more demanding with regard to the contents of conferences and journals, as they will benefit if more of their own concerns are addressed in these professional forums.

Conclusion

Further enquiries into teachers' concerns are recommended. This study focused on JTEs in junior and senior high schools; however, language educators work in many

different contexts (e.g., universities, conversation schools, and as native speaker or non-native speaker), each of which spawns different needs for teachers. If similar studies are done with these groups, the information they provide will help that particular niche of the profession prioritize its collective teacher training needs.

Professional conferences and journals already provide a rich source of development opportunities for teachers of English and make important contributions to the field of ELT. With more attention to teachers' concerns, their value will be even greater.

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The Sound of Silence in Classrooms in Japan: A Search for Cultural Understanding

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When they are repeatedly faced with classes of silent students, teachers who come to Japan from a Western culture inevitably realize that their way of teaching has got to change. Culturally inappropriate ways of teaching English may cause students to become more silent and less willing to participate rather than less silent and more active. Successful teachers go through a period of transition as they learn to adjust their teaching to fit the Japanese context. Teachers who enjoy long-term satisfaction from teaching in Japan appear to understand the specific context in which they are working.

A Scene from a Junior High School: Decision-making

To take action or not to take action is one of the dilemmas students face. The following narration is an example of what I have observed.

I am meeting students in small groups of five to seven in turn in the library for a short, simple question-answer discussion about Japanese and American culture. The chairs for students are arranged in a semi-circle. As the students enter the room, they discuss among themselves where each student will sit. Once they have decided that and have been seated, I ask them which student will ask the first question. (They have prepared questions in advance.) After another discussion among themselves during which I am completely ignored, they decide to use *jan ken pon* ("rock, paper, scissors"). However, one student suddenly overrules this decision as it gets started and states that they will start

from the left and go to the right in order. They finally settle down and look at me. The planned activity can now begin. The actual duration of this scene was about three minutes, but it felt much longer as group after group followed a similar routine.

Before the activity could begin, students had to sort out their group's social rules. Foreign teachers often cannot help being amazed at times such as these. It is surprising to many that even the most basic decisions must often be worked out in the group before individual action is taken. This concern for getting some kind of group consensus is time consuming and can cause delays.

This is just one example of the way culture can become a hurdle for EFL teachers in Japan. However, it helps to listen to other teachers' stories, such as the one above, in order to build our background knowledge and cultural understanding. It removes us from direct emotional reaction and allows us to think more objectively about students' cultural behavior. This strategy also helps when we are faced with a very common cultural issue in Japanese EFL classes: student silence.

Learning from Stories about Students' Silence

I would like to address the way that Japanese secondary school students orally communicate in English. The easiest of tasks in the eyes and minds of teachers are not necessarily easy for students. There is not a more basic expression in English than "Good morning" (or other common greetings), yet

teachers continue to receive silence from students in response to such greetings. Students generally cannot make use of the most basic English they learned in the beginning lessons of first year junior high school. However, I think that even the students realize that their lack of responsiveness often has little to do with language skill.

Another indication of the gap between students' passive knowledge of English and their ability to use it is the time it takes a student to respond to a basic question. Many teachers know the feeling of waiting what seems an eternity for a student to answer a question as simple as "What's your name?" Again, if the problem is not a language one, what is hindering students? Japanese people criticize themselves for their poor ability to speak English and often stoically accept this as a cultural deficiency. This attitude is widespread to the point that not answering, or at least hesitating before answering, is the expected norm.

A public spectacle often occurs in offices and classrooms whenever someone can communicate quickly and smoothly with a foreign person. Onlookers act amazed. According to my Japanese informants, this reaction is a complicated mixture of admiration, envy, competition, and inferiority complex. The group's intense scrutiny can be tiring for the individual who dares to take action, and many give up trying. The feeling is described by one of the most well-known Japanese proverbs: "The nail that sticks up is hammered down." It is not uncommon to see business as usual come to a halt and see all eyes and ears focused on the person who is speaking in English. Viewed from this perspective, keeping silent looks like a reasonable decision. It does seem much less troublesome to keep quiet than to speak out and face all the attention. As another famous proverb goes, "Silence is golden. Eloquence is silver." Traditionally, being a silent (yet cooperative) member of the group has been highly valued.

Besides this peer pressure not to act

differently from others, various factors work against raising competent speakers of English in the classroom. An important one is the traditional and typical English education experienced by Japanese secondary school students. Until now, it has done little to prepare them for oral proficiency. Students naturally learn what they are given. Teachers are often too quick to criticize students' lack of self-initiative in their studies in general and ability to speak English in particular without taking into account how they are educated. Our oral communication classes represent only a fraction of the time students spend studying English. What is going on in the other classes?

Understanding the Education System in Japan

Many foreign teachers disagree strongly with the manner in which Japanese students study English. Probably the most controversial issue for foreign teachers is the heavy reliance on exam scores to rank students and ultimately determine their future options. Brown (1996) and others have pointed out how the entrance exams influence the way English is taught and learned in schools. This is called the "washback" effect (see Brown, Paper 4). There are even tests for entrance to prestigious kindergartens! As a result, some pre-schoolers are already being trained (sometimes at a *juku* [cram school]) to pass tests. National language examinations have a major impact on teaching, and teachers often "teach to the tests" (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1992). This is exactly what happens in Japan in many cases, though conditions may vary from school to school and area to area.

Unless foreign teachers—the newly-arrived ones in particular—understand and accept the fact that exam scores are extremely important in determining one's future in this society, they will always misunderstand why being able to speak English is not a top priority for Japanese teachers, students, and parents. It is crucial to admit, regardless of one's own upbringing and values, that (a) English is one of the main subjects on virtually all entrance exams to high schools, junior colleges, and

universities (and even to companies), and (b) given the importance of exams in Japanese society, students will learn English (and teachers will teach English) first and foremost to pass exams.

Students will study the kind of English which appears on the tests, no matter how dated it is. A related point is the prevalence of making test questions and marking answers under the assumption that there is a single correct answer for each question. In fact, some of the most important exams, such as the University Center Exams, are completely multiple choice. Students are taught to give the correct answer. They feel they are in trouble when they are not given the material, and especially when there is not a single "right" answer. Responding to open-ended questions and writing an essay to clearly express one's opinions in a persuasive manner are tasks which are rarely, if ever, given to students.

The short-term needs of Japanese students are being met. They are prepared to take exams based on the recall of a body knowledge. Being aware of the students' background in learning English, including the way it has been taught to them day after day, year after year, is an important step to take towards understanding the educational context. Teachers need to realize that the context shapes the attitudes of the students. As a famous proverb says, "We reap what we sow."

Recognizing the General Attitudes of Students

From junior high to university, there is a general feeling of apathy toward doing anything more than trying to meet the necessary minimum requirements. One Japanese high school English teacher once told me that the reason students are passive in class is simply because they are lazy. They do not want to do any extra hard work, therefore they choose not to do things such as speak out in English classes.

Another teacher found that students initially volunteered more in oral communi-

cation classes when he announced that he would give points for participation. However, after the subsequent report card, students stopped volunteering as much because, in their words, "it did not raise our grades noticeably."

Whether we agree or not with the comment of the first teacher or the policy of the second teacher, a critical issue has been raised: Do teachers (both Japanese and foreign) know how to provide today's students with classroom practices which minimize stress and maximize and maintain interest?

For better or worse, schools and teachers are under increasing pressure to offer students a variety of ways to study English which appeal to them. Freedom of choice and the rapid decline in the number of new students will only intensify the necessity of looking for more effective ways to satisfy this new generation of students. Do we know what students expect? Using formal and informal questionnaires in various forms is an effective and popular way to get valuable student feedback. I am always pleasantly surprised that students are quite articulate and honest in expressing themselves on paper.

Knowing Students' Expectations of Teachers

Continuing with the idea of trying to connect the world of students' expectations with what teachers do, this section gives us a sample description of what students are hoping for when the teacher walks into the classroom on the first day. During the year, some of the expectations of students will be met while others will not. Which ones can we meet? Which ones do we agree with? Whether teachers agree or not, change is coming, and it will be influenced heavily by what students want. In the very near future, if not already, teachers will be encouraged by the Ministry of Education and their schools to change their teaching style in order to appeal to students.

In response to the question, "What are the qualities of a good foreign teacher according to Japanese students?", my junior high, senior high, junior college, and university students

mentioned the following: “is friendly,” “understands students’ feelings,” “creates a happy atmosphere,” “is reliable,” “has a nice smile and voice,” “teaches with enthusiasm,” “speaks slowly,” “is kind,” “makes lessons enjoyable,” “does not show favoritism,” “works as a team with students,” “understands each student’s strengths and weaknesses,” “teaches culture, lifestyles, and people as well as the language,” “does not use only the textbook,” “is organized,” “listens to students’ opinions.”

As can be seen from the range of answers above, a foreign teacher is expected to meet the needs and interests of students on a personal level just as much as, if not more than, on a subject-knowledge and instructional level. The days when a teacher could simply lecture from his or her notes or book for the entire class period are over as far as English classes are concerned. Students are reacting to the teacher at least as much as they are to the subject. The very nature of oral communication requires that the teacher possess social skills (e.g., communication skills in a cross-cultural context) in addition to knowledge of the language and teaching skills.

Despite course titles such as “Oral Communication,” classes still generally follow a traditional pattern, with students passively receiving the knowledge teachers give them. The teacher still leads and students follow. Here lies one of the cultural differences which causes confusion and misunderstandings between students and teachers. Students are used to being told what to do and thus they continue to expect foreign teachers to tell them what to do. On the other hand, teachers—foreign ones in particular—expect students to show motivation and responsibility for their own learning. In this respect, students’ silence is a profound indication to the teacher that students are not motivated, nor are they taking responsibility for their learning.

We get a better understanding of the implications for teachers by grouping the above student comments into the following four categories:

1. *Desire for security.* The students hope that teachers will provide them with a comfortable atmosphere with a minimum amount of tension. In that way, they can relax and have a stress-free time.
2. *Desire for learning in a familiar way.* The students expect teachers to give lessons which are clear and easy to understand. Word by word translation has often become their only technique for comprehending English, so every word one by one in order must be understandable. If not, students get nervous and tend to give up. A single word can cause them to lose confidence and this causes silence.
3. *Desire to know the world through English.* The students are interested in learning more than what is needed to pass tests. There is a glimmer of hope that they realize English is more than just a test subject. English is alive, and its culture and people cannot be separated from the language.
4. *Desire to have a friendly, yet respectful relationship with teachers.* The students want to know about their teachers and also want teachers to get to know them as individuals with different abilities, interests, and personalities. But teachers should also be able to handle the class as a group, work as a team with them, and not show favoritism.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have described and explained Japanese students’ silence from four points of view: (a) teachers’ personal accounts of facing silence; (b) the contrast of educational background and values between Japanese students (and teachers) and foreign teachers; (c) the lack of connection between studying English and students’ lives and the resulting apathy; and (d) students’ expectations of foreign teachers.

There is evidence that these four views of silence are related to the four categories of students’ expectations listed above. First, stories about students’ silence show us what happens when students are uncomfortable and confused. They are asking us to make them feel secure (or face their silence). Second,

understanding how the Japanese education system shapes students' priorities and language skills (or the lack of them) explains why they do not respond easily in conversational situations. They are asking us to be understanding and to take it slowly, step by step. Third, the lack of a positive attitude toward speaking English is related to being required to learn a type of English which has little value outside of school. They are asking us to show them how English can enrich their lives now and in the future. Fourth, finding out what students expect helps us reflect on how we are teaching. They are asking us to get to know them as individuals, not just as student numbers.

This fourth category of students' expectations of teachers also highlights a central issue about students' silence in the classroom. Their high expectations of what teachers do and how they do it may be a double-edged sword. The more we satisfy their wishes, the happier they will be, but the possibility of them becoming even more teacher- and group-dependent and less independent is very real. Nevertheless, I believe they need to feel comfortable in class with the teacher before anything else can be started. Once they accept the teacher's personality and way of teaching and admit that he or she is a good teacher, progress can be made.

Before students will allow a teacher to guide them, the teacher must gain their trust. When this has happened, students' self-confidence will begin to grow. As it increases, student silence will begin to decrease. The transformation in certain cases can be astounding as students who once looked for ways to avoid taking risks begin to make modest, yet noticeable attempts to break out of the silence.

Finally, I believe that the silence of Japanese students is influenced by

how teachers react to it. In one sense, their silence is a sign of insecurity about what the teacher expects them to do. We cannot change the culture of the group or the way English is used to determine students' future, but we can use our cultural understanding along with our professional teaching skills to help students feel secure and trusting enough to take more individual action. A student with gradually growing self-confidence will perceive the risk of speaking in English as less and less of a problem. With each success and sense of achievement, interest, attitude, and motivation to speak in English will improve.

The sound of silence in the classroom is only the starting point. What teachers decide to do thereafter will determine whether the silence remains.

Data Collection Methods Used

The ideas presented were based on data collected from classroom video analysis, questionnaires, reflective journal writing, and discussions done in collaboration with Japanese teachers and students in secondary schools, colleges, and adult conversation classes.

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Preparing to Use Multimedia to Teach English

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Multimedia computers have come a long way in a short time. Ten years ago, there were no multimedia computers, only expensive computers attached to expensive videodisc players. With the introduction of the CD-ROM drive into computers in the early 1990s, the world of affordable multimedia truly began.

Throughout this remarkable history, however, there have been some consistent problems. Perhaps the most serious of these has been the multimedia industry's tendency toward hype (i.e., the overstating of the actual capabilities of multimedia at any given time). This has led to much frustration and wasted money, especially in education.

To compound this problem, the rapid progress and changes in multimedia technology have produced a shortage of competent technical support people. This has led to high costs in technical support and to improperly installed systems that have failed to work up to their design capabilities. In some cases, the cost of providing technical support has exceeded the cost of the computer system it is supposed to support.

Though multimedia technology has a great deal to offer, before it can reach its full potential, educators need to be better informed of the real costs, frustrations, and benefits of using it. In the hope that I can be of some assistance in this matter, I offer the following guide for teachers who are interested in the use of multimedia in the EFL classroom.

Problem 1: Multimedia Means *Multi*-media

In other words, the computer is only part of a system. Other essential components of multimedia, especially for language teaching,

include earphones, speakers, microphones, sound-boards, modems, and printers. Since many of these components are made by different manufacturers, you should not assume that they are designed to work with each other.

Suggestion. Before accepting a new system, make sure that each of the components works properly exactly as you plan to use it. To do this, insist that a full multimedia program of your choice works on the system. The program should be a multimedia product that can be used to test the following: speech recognition, video, audio output, printing, and connectivity to the network or Internet (if that is available).

The reason speech recognition should be tested is that it requires that the computer and microphone be suitably matched. In some cases, the microphones installed in a lab have not been matched properly with the computers, which means speech recognition programs do not work or are continuously out of adjustment because of an incorrect volume setting in the microphone.

In general, you should not assume that the technicians fully understand the systems they are installing, even if they are from a well-known company. Be sure to test things before the technicians leave, and schedule a time for them to return for a status check once you have had time to become more familiar with the system and software.

Problem 2: Out-of-date Systems

Recently, the random access memory (RAM) on computers has been doubling almost yearly. Just three years ago, a 4 or 8

megabyte system was sufficient to run most multimedia programs. Now the minimum requirements are 16 or 32 megabytes. Soon this will double again. This is because each year software and Internet browsers (e.g., Netscape or Explorer) require more and more memory. Software that works on your system today may not function six months from now because browsers or other software that you may have downloaded or installed use too much of the computer's memory. If this becomes a problem, it may be necessary to upgrade your system with more memory.

Suggestion. Do not purchase a system unless a clear memory upgrade path with clearly stated costs is presented. The ideal system should allow for easy, inexpensive memory expandability and the technical support to make it work. If not, then you should not expect a new system to be functional for more than three years.

Problem 3: Slow Computer Networks

If you think of networks as plumbing systems that move data rather than water, bandwidth refers to the diameter of the pipes connecting the system. If the pipe is small, the flow of water will be very slow. In more technical terms, bandwidth means the capacity to transmit a large amount of data, such as sound or video, through the smallest connection in the system. Multimedia programs require high-bandwidth, high-speed systems if they are to function well.

Suggestion. Do not throw away your CD-ROM. CD-ROMs have the capacity to store large amounts of data, such as audio and video. Used together with a network or Internet link, this can be a powerful way to run multimedia programs that have the capacity to be updated or administered through the network or Internet link. Record-keeping and other low-bandwidth tasks, such as testing, can utilize the network, while audio and video can come from the CD-ROM, with no need for a high-bandwidth connection. For some programs, this may be the most cost-effective choice until the bandwidth issue is solved.

Problem 4: Maintenance of Computer Networks

Computer networks are becoming increasingly complex, and require regular support from trained computer technicians.

Suggestion. The main difference between a computer network and a real plumbing system is that the plumbing system lasts for many years, while the computer network needs constant maintenance and reconfiguration as the software and hardware running on the system changes constantly.

When deciding to install a network in your lab, be sure to include support and security costs in your budget. Once installed, the network will need to be maintained and supervised by someone with good technical skills. In addition, any network that promises to run full multimedia programs that stream audio and video must be a high performance network. To appreciate this, keep in mind how painfully slow it is when you want to download a quality picture from the Internet.

Problem 5: Finding Effective Software for the English Classroom

Much of the language-learning software on the market is fun to play with, but has little value for long-term learning or test preparation. Some multimedia companies tend to over-emphasize the fun factor in learning. As a result, they have produced software that entertains but fails to improve language learning.

Suggestion. Just as mathematics, music, and other skills require focused attention and lots of practice, developing English language proficiency requires a concentrated effort over a long period of time. It is essential, therefore, that a language program be designed for long-term learning, with a suitable language sequence and constant review and recycling.

Effective multimedia programs should make clear the language learning assumptions behind their design. If there is not a clear scope and sequence, then it is doubtful that the program will result in increased language proficiency. On the other hand, if students are bored by a program, they may not use it at all.

The key then becomes to find the right balance.

Language learning is not a passive activity, so whatever multimedia program is used, it is important to stress that students need to concentrate and absorb the language they study. Because the act of learning a foreign language requires practice and focus, students need to be motivated. Students who do not make an effort will be no more successful than people who expect to learn to play a musical instrument by listening to a rock concert.

Student motivation must come from the larger environment of family, school, and friends. There needs to be a sense of value in learning English. If students see a real benefit, and if they believe that success is attainable, they are more likely to put forth the effort to learn. However, if they think that they will never be able to speak the language, then it is doubtful that they will put forth any effort. This is related to one of the biggest problems in teaching English in Japan: Many Japanese are convinced that they are poor language learners and that they can never really learn English, especially listening and speaking. This attitude makes language learning seem like a waste of time, and often results in low levels of motivation to study.

There is no doubt that well-designed multimedia programs can reduce language learning frustration and can provide an effective means for intensive language practice that is not possible in the classroom. Once students begin to use the language, and can see their own progress, their confidence and motivation will increase.

Problem 6: Integrating Multi-media and Traditional Methods of Teaching English

Suggestion. First, identify the role multimedia should play (e.g., team teacher or language practice center). In the role of team teacher, a multimedia program can help the teacher to present and model the language in

the classroom. Using a large monitor and speakers, the teacher uses the program to present a segment of a lesson and discuss it with the class. In this way, it is like having a native speaker in the class to assist the teacher.

The key to using a multimedia program in this way is to follow-up each presentation with group work (e.g., student-made videos), pair practice (e.g., role plays), oral presentations, and written assignments in which students take the language from the program and apply it to themselves, their friends, their families, their culture, and even to imaginary worlds they have invented. The language from the program comes alive as it is extended and personalized; it becomes as interesting and fun as the students themselves. Rather than being the object of study, the program becomes a starter, providing models to bring language alive.

In the role of language practice center, the multimedia program provides an opportunity for each student to immerse himself or herself in listening and speaking practice. This kind of intensive practice is essential if students want to learn how to speak English.

Conclusion

Multimedia language-learning programs have great potential to improve the effectiveness of English language instruction in Japan. The systematic use of well-designed programs will result in a greater number of students becoming fluent in English.

To accomplish this, it is important to understand not only the benefits, but also the costs and difficulties of using multimedia in a school environment. In order to avoid needless frustration and waste of both time and money, implementing multimedia should be a careful, step-by-step process. The potential benefits, can make the investment of time, effort, and resources worthwhile.

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The Development of Computer Technology in ELT

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This article is now obsolete.

Discussion of technology applied to education must be taken with far more than the traditional grain, but rather with a truckload of salt. The history of educational technology is a museum of bloated claims, wasted resources, failed experiments, and unreasonable expectations. Technologists arise smiling after each failure, happily offering “the next best thing,” which is invariably more complicated and usually more expensive than the recently deflated previous best thing. Institutions love to spend big on showcase items, and few things so contribute to the image of a department, administration, and school as having a room chock full of the latest shining marvels to display for prospective students and their parents.

If the foregoing paragraph strikes the reader as a tad cynical, my apologies. As a long-suffering English education (ELT) publishing professional who has for the last five years been deeply immersed in multimedia and computer assisted instruction, my scars are showing in that rhetorical flourish.

Multimedia has gone through a rapid permutation even as it permeates the everyday experience of millions. Originally multimedia referred to the combination of computers and compact disc technology which is called CD-ROM. Now it is branching into more powerful media containers with digital video disc (DVD) and more universal broadcast mechanisms of the Internet. The Internet, in turn, has speeded up technical development to a feverish pitch, and is leading to the convergence of broadcasting with computing.

The personal computer may shortly give way to the network computer which may give way to the computer-driven Internet TV. In the future, data may be delivered in containers like CD-ROM or DVD, or by Internet systems via telephone, cable, or telesat media.

How are ordinary folks—which includes most teachers and students—to find their place in this? This headline from *The Daily Yomiuri* newspaper (October 7, 1997) carries an article translated from the larger and respected Japanese daily: “Unfulfilled Internet expectations drive consumers out of home PC market.” This aptly summarizes the situation. There has been entirely too much hype, too much overblown talk of revolutionary changes, too much false information about what the technology can do, and too much selling of a dream with little reference to the reality.

Very few people join the English teaching profession as a result of a specific interest in technology. More likely the reverse is true: English teaching is attractive as a “people profession.” Teachers, while often among society’s most liberal members, are also, as keepers and carriers of tradition, at the same time conservative and slow to change. This is just as well, of course, since educational fads come and go. While the growth of technology has been rapid, teachers have been generally slow to adopt this technology, and even slower to make productive use of it. This varies, of course, from place to place, and generalities are often difficult to justify.

Technical Advances

There have been spectacular technical

advances which are worth reviewing. Many of our students have never known a world without personal computers (PCs), of course, but it is sobering to recall that the PC is really only 20 years old. Ask yourself when you first encountered a PC and what you thought of it. Have your ideas changed?

ELT has kept pace with the evolution of the PC revolution. The first floppy disc based ELT programs extended the grammar and vocabulary drill exercises to computers. These text-only, typing-based programs used little memory. In early PCs, little memory was available and most of that was used by the computer's operating systems (e.g., DOS). Naturally, the boring aspect of drills, the tiring aspect of reading computer screens, and the artificial beeps and bells did nothing to make computers interesting.

Floppy discs never had much room for graphics. PC processing power, speed, and memory were all limited. At most, the text could appear in one of sixteen colors. With the CD-ROM, graphics could be added in profusion. Graphics are processed through RAM (i.e., internal memory) to reach the screen, perhaps assisted by a chip on a board in the machine. However, large graphic files tended to slow down a computer. This principle of processing speed will always be an issue in computing. Whenever processing power and speed increase, developers of operating systems place greater demands on RAM. Developers of actual programs used with the PC must make best use of whatever RAM is not used by the computer's operating system. Thus graphics have evolved from low resolution with sixteen colors, to high resolution with 256 colors (i.e., VGA), to super high resolution with 32,000 colors (i.e., SVGA).

Multimedia per se got its start with the introduction of the CD-ROM. What the CD-ROM offered was crucial: a way to package a larger amount of memory-intensive contents. These contents are critical to language teaching and learning and begin with spoken language. The CD, unlike tape, can combine the highest possible sound quality

with instant access to any segment within that spoken language. Of course, CD sound technologies varied significantly. The best quality sound, called Redbook Audio, is identical to music CD sound technology. Digital sound (i.e., compressed sampled sound) did not initially offer very good quality. Many users were disappointed to hear a hiss, boom, or echo on the CD-ROMs they purchased. Happily, digital sound quality has improved significantly. Consumers should never tolerate poor quality sound in a language teaching tool.

It may be that listening is the critical skill best developed with multimedia. Speed, access, and quality of speech model are all optimized with multimedia. *Depending upon the quality of the ELT courseware itself*, multimedia as a tool offers tremendous potential benefit.

With the development of multimedia has come the introduction of other computer-related technologies that show potential for ELT:

- *Video.* Many learners appreciate video because they can see how words are formed as well as study body language. Such smooth presentation is critical. Video, like photographs, present a significant amount of visual data. When considering video software, however, teachers should be aware that there are numerous competing standards. MPEG 1 and 2 (Motion Pictures Expert Group) provide full motion, full screen video, but has not achieved wide acceptance in the market. MPEG's lack of a single standard has led to confusion among developers, vendors, and customers. The leading MPEG technology requires users to upgrade their PC. The many software versions of MPEG are not yet reliably compatible with each other. Apple's QuickTime is cross platform (i.e., works on both Windows and Macintosh systems), and is rapidly gaining acceptance as a standard. Given the dramatic improvement in computer speed and power, video can now appear in full motion in the QuickTime window. This full motion ability is important in language teaching because it can provide smooth,

seamless, and synchronized speech models with accurate mouth movements.

- *Speech Recognition (SR)*. Speech Recognition technology has improved dramatically. However, language learners are generally not a strong influence on the development of this technology. Language learners have various characteristics (e.g., accent and intonation variations, hesitations and false starts, etc.) that place unique demands on the technology. Nevertheless, a great advantage of SR technology in ELT is that learners can record and then compare their own voices to a native model. A variety of commercially available SR technologies include those from IBM, Lernout and Houspie, Dragon Systems, and Apple's Plain Talk.

Speech Recognition should be avoided if used as a gimmick in language courseware. The technology is at present demanding, and, if not thoroughly integrated into courseware curriculum, quickly bores the user.

The Internet and World Wide Web

The World Wide Web is so very new that we have only begun to grasp its potential. It may be that the Internet is the media that all other media will become, the so-called convergence of media. Like radio and television before it, the Internet will greatly expand our ability to look into other's lives, to learn from such looking, and to share the results of our looking with each other. This promise alone ensures that the Internet is a critical educational medium.

With the promise also comes a flood of irrelevance, however. The amount of material available to view is overwhelming. The amount of any particular interest is, to be polite, highly variable. From the point of view of an English teacher, most of the World Wide Web is junk. Thus, teachers have the new responsibility of becoming familiar with this particular ocean of data before launching students into it unaware. It is a good starting point to ask if schools should provide open and unrestricted Internet access during class time. Or should the teacher limit the sites available for students to access to those that

reflect the theme of the lessons, or even those that are not offensive to community, religious, or even political standards prevailing at a given time and place. This complex issue of censorship of the Web may lead many schools to abandon its use altogether. The Internet is not a particularly manageable medium. The phrase "Pandora's box" is far from inappropriate.

One of the biggest current problems with the Internet has to do with bandwidth (i.e., the carrying capacity of the Internet). Bandwidth is to the Internet as processing power or memory was to the first PCs. That is, bandwidth represents a limitation that affects user experience. For example, users might consider how often their machine has frozen or crashed upon encountering a particularly demanding Web page. This is often because the Web page designer has not achieved a good balance between content, appearance, and practicality. The Web page may look great on the designer's machine, but the designer's machine is usually a powerhouse with more RAM than the typical user's machine. It has not helped that the "browser war," a market share battle between MicroSoft and Netscape corporations, has resulted in both companies releasing Internet browsing products with bugs. This has made for a development mess and a support nightmare.

Bandwidth issues notwithstanding, Web pages now often come with active or interactive contents (sometimes in the form of lots of distracting little graphics that wag their ears or tails). Unfortunately, these efforts are often wildly overambitious. The result in these cases can often be a processing error that brings an online session to a sudden frozen stop. Options for avoiding this include (a) compressing data to be downloaded for local use, or (b) designing sensible, low impact sites. Interactivity on the Internet will eventually move from unreliability to jerky, blurred presence, to smooth video presentation; but, how long this process will take is open to question. My guess is over the next five years.

While technologists are working to

develop greater Internet bandwidth capacity, the WebCD may provide a temporary solution to the restrictions that the current capacity puts on sound, animation, video, speech recognition, and other data-intensive on-line uses. The WebCD is a technology that combines use of the CD with access to a World Wide Web site. The idea is to put the data-intensive files on the CD and other, more easily downloaded program elements on the Web. The benefits can include a pay-per-use system that introduces substantial economies to the learner. Once users have received the CD (either free of charge or for a minimal cost), they pay only for the degree to which they use the product. The WebCD is a way to bring high-bandwidth content to the local student machine while still providing appropriate benefits and services based on the Internet.

Development issues aside, the Internet and the World Wide Web are potentially very useful resources for both language teachers and learners. Through the Internet and the World Wide Web, students may gain access to a focused, online community of language learners and teachers, a service important for motivation, support, and positive feedback. An online set of services can evolve that meets the needs of specific target student populations. Services can range from evaluation and placement tests of various sorts to text-based chat rooms to live two-way camera sessions with a teacher or group.

Evaluation of Study with Multimedia Courseware

Regardless of how multimedia courseware is delivered and what it includes, how are teachers to know whether students are properly studying with multimedia courseware? Evaluating the learning environment and the quality of student experience with the courseware is also close to our development interests. Evaluation can be considered in relation to levels of student participation and performance.

Presence. The computer assisted instruction (CAI) material (i.e., the courseware) has to be able to record students' interactions.

What sort of record keeping? Presence is recorded by the study session time start and finish as copied from the PC's on-board clock. If specific interactions require completion in a set time frame (e.g., ten seconds to answer a true or false comprehension question), and the student does nothing, the program can simply ask the student, "Are you there?" in order to trigger the student's attention to the task. Failure to answer this question can lead to the lesson timing out and quitting. The quit time is then recorded. But presence itself is of little real use unless considered in relation to the quality of work. It is possible to record the number of student clicks and right or wrong answers, to weight the difficulty of various questions, problems, and so on, and to create an algorithm that results in some sort of scoring mechanism. A mere percentage of right or wrong answers may not be adequate if the courseware is itself truly interactive in adapting itself to challenge student's levels (i.e., if the difficulty or frequency of questions and syntactical challenges varies with individual student usage).

Quality of student work. The courseware and interactions themselves must be valid. Two requirements here are that (a) the courseware has to match the curriculum that has been objectively understood as pedagogically valid and set by the teacher, and (b) the interactions must exploit the material in ways that teach (as opposed to simple repetitive or mechanical game clicking).

Quality of student enjoyment. The notion of student enjoyment as a measure of the learning environment should be considered. Advocates of media in education often insist that motivation increases with enjoyment as if this alone justifies the use of such media. Students must be challenged and engaged. Their intelligence must be respected, not insulted. Oh yes, they must be taught as well. If these factors are well-developed, enjoyment, whatever that creature might be, usually follows.

There are a number of other considerations teachers should make when thinking

about multimedia courseware:

- *Mechanical aspects.* Student may be using multimedia courseware, but how do teachers know that the students are on task and are working successfully? Some form of evaluation, class management, and record keeping is indispensable if only to ensure teachers that students are not wasting their time. It is also useful in encouraging students to see the results of their work and to compare the current with past results.

If the courseware itself does not have an evaluation function, then the student and teacher will be frustrated in any effort to determine the value of studying with such courseware. Record keeping schemes can be at the individual machine level, posting records and scores to the hard disc drive. This requires the student to always use the same machine. The teacher would have to be able to either read the records or print them out. Another option is to have records kept on an individual student floppy disc. This permits the student to work on any available computer and print out the records for the teacher.

A local area network (LAN) is the ideal environment for management and record keeping. The record of student work resides permanently on the server or teacher machine. Students can use any computer attached to the network. Our experience so far, however, has been that school's networking systems are not generally powerful enough to do this, but this situation is changing rapidly.

One of the advantages of the introduction of a LAN into a school environment is an end to physical issues with CD-ROMs. A downside is support. Networked systems are notoriously complex and prone to failure resulting from student tinkering and other inescapable human factors (e.g., teachers pulling the plug at the wrong time!). Networks require an on-site skills level far beyond that available to the English departments at most schools. The alternative is an expensive service contract with the vendor.

- *Interaction with the "subject matter expert."* Evaluation can be ongoing and interactive.

The courseware can provide specific comments to the student. Instead of a passive "help" function, requiring the student to search out assistance, the help can be pro-active (i.e., an "expert" or "tutor"), jumping in to assist when the program perceives that the student is having specific problems. This tutor may appear on screen as a character who offers specific advice. How this expert is characterized (i.e., what it looks like, etc.) may influence student enjoyment. Some students may prefer to not have such a character, especially if it is personified as too cute or in some other way contrary to their personal tastes. Perhaps we can provide a menu of different potential tutors and let the student choose.

- *Consistency of environment.* For student records to mean anything, they must be in the context of a consistent courseware environment. Inconsistent evaluation lacks validity and invites skepticism. We assume that school includes an easily understood scheme within which students are progressing. The courseware should also provide this consistency.

Proving consistency will become more and more important. In the first stages of educational technology an infatuation with technical capability may blind us to the fact that our money has been wasted. Technological solutions are expensive. The honeymoon period never lasts long. Ensuring the validity of technological solutions is an essential element of quality control. The computers themselves are neither valid nor invalid, of course, but, since they are always changing, even this neutrality is a moving target! Ultimately it is the courses that are used with the computers that will be judged.

Conclusion

As we experiment with these various issues, there are certain values we keep in mind:

- *Pedagogical appropriacy.* Is this the best use of a given technology to assist the learner?
- *Value for money.* Is this the best use of a school or learner's resources?
- *Time versus benefit equation.* Is this an

efficient use of learner time relative to other study options?

- *Courseware value.* Is the material properly designed to challenge the students to learn as well as develop good study skills even when they are not using the multimedia based course?

This is the challenge for courseware

designers. For teachers the challenge is even greater. Developers have, after all, a belief in the legitimacy of the technology, and live by the principal of the next best thing. Teachers have to determine for themselves whether the hardware and any given courseware are appropriate for their classes. This process requires time and patience.

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Japanese Business Needs for Communicative English

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Globalization of Japanese Society

The increasing globalization of Japanese society and economy has had an unprecedented impact on its social and business behaviors. Last year was full of events outside Japan that affected the lives of Japanese both here and abroad: the 173-day hostage standoff at the Japanese embassy in Lima; the crisis in the Asian stock and currency markets; the killing of Japanese tourists in Luxor; the bankruptcies of the Hokkaido-Tokai Bank, Tokuyo City Bank, and Yamaichi Securities Company. These events were the result of causes beyond our borders and are evidence that Japan can not remain isolated in the world today.

The following statistics are evidence of the increasing presence of Japanese abroad:

- The number of Japanese overseas travelers reached 16 million in 1996.
- The number of Japanese businesses abroad reached 17,000 in 1997.
- For major industrial companies in Japan, the average overseas production ratio is more than 20%.
- The Matsushita Group in Malaysia operates fourteen companies and makes up 4% of Malaysia's entire GDP.
- Canon's sales from foreign operations is 80% of its overall turnover.
- Imported soba powder now accounts for 83% of all the Japanese soba noodle market.
- Forty-two percent of Japanese exports are within Asia, and half of all overseas profits of Japanese businesses stem from Asian activities (a fact highlighted by the recent Asian business crisis).

Despite facts such as these, criticism has

often been aimed at Japan for inadequate actions on the microeconomic and macroeconomic levels of the world business scene. I maintain that one of the major causes of this inaction is international communicative incompetence.

English has become the de facto global language. Eighty percent of world data bases are in English. One-seventh of the world's population uses English as an official or semi-official language, and another one-fifth uses it as the medium of communication in business exchanges. Hence, English is a "must" for internationally-oriented Japanese.

Although 700,000 Japanese take the TOEIC test and 3.4 million take STEP exams each year, the practical communicative ability of Japanese has not shown significant progress over the past fifteen years (Kobayashi, 1997; "Report on English," 1997).

Causes of Inappropriate English Usage

There are a number of reasons commonly given for the generally inadequate English proficiency level of Japanese, including

- few contact hours at the secondary level; (In public junior high schools, it is fewer than seventy-five hours per year.)
- the negative effect of test preparation in English teaching at the secondary level;
- little or no emphasis on oral communicative English at the secondary level; (There are a few exceptions, however.)
- the lack of a perceived life-or-death threat to Japanese for not being able to express themselves in English or any other foreign language;
- the geographical isolation of Japan;

- frustration, which leads to defeatism; (It is said that the average Japanese studies English for eight to ten years at secondary and higher educational institutions. This distorts the true picture. A closer estimate of actual English study is at most one thousand hours over ten years.)
- the Ministry of Education's control of Japanese education in general, and English study in particular. (Even with the introduction of native instructors through the JET Programme, many Japanese teachers of English remain reluctant to fully integrate native speakers into their classes.)

Practical Needs Analysis

In light of all these factors which work against Japanese communicative competence in English, practical-minded Japanese businesses have been forced to take their own initiative to upgrade the communicative skills of their employees. The most common ways have been (a) the widespread use, over the past 18 years, of the TOEIC to measure communicative English ability, and (b) the use of private institutes, such as LIOJ, JACI, and ELEC, which offer practical courses in business English.

Upon examination of the communicative English needs of the internationally-oriented Japanese business personnel, there are, I believe, three levels of required skills (Figure 1).

Level 1. At the top level of organizations, an increasing number of Japanese senior executives who can effectively run the business abroad are required. There are nearly 20,000 Japanese business establishments abroad which employ four million people. In

addition to knowledge of the industry and managerial skills, the executive must be able to negotiate and persuade effectively and represent the organization in English.

Level 2. At the middle level, managerial staff must also improve their English competence in order to express themselves efficiently in English on matters related to their area of expertise, be it accounting, research and development, marketing, or personnel. The manager must be comfortable in dealing with non-Japanese partners and counterparts. It is not enough for the accountant, for example, to be well-versed in Japanese book-keeping procedures. He or she must be able to exchange views with non-Japanese colleagues in order to effectively oversee accounting operations abroad.

Level 3. Employees who are below the level of middle manager must improve their English ability and cross cultural awareness beyond merely a "survival" level. Future managers and executives will come from among these employees.

Strategies for Improving the Communicative Ability of Japanese Business Professionals

What are the strategies for achieving these linguistic objectives in both the short- and long-term? The following are some ideas advocated by business leaders in Japan:

- an earlier start to learning English;
- closer cooperation between company human resource departments and English teaching organizations and professionals to coordinate efforts in streamlining the practical English training process and facilities;

Figure 1 - Communicative Needs of Japanese Business Personnel

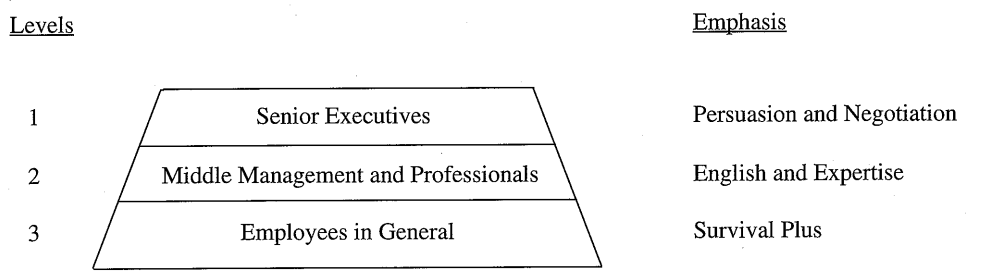


Figure 2 - Proposed Model for True Communication in English

Presentation Skills		Language Skills		Expertise	Cross-Cultural Awareness
oral	quick response and inter-active	English	Japanese	single specialty and expertise	own-cultural awareness
		primary			
written		intermediate		plural (multi) specialty and expertise	other-cultural awareness
		advanced			

- support for regional and local initiatives in promoting English learning (e.g., through networks such as Chambers of Commerce & Industries);
- assistance for the major English testing organizations in improving their process for testing and providing feedback;
- more accurate assessment of employees with low levels of English ability; (The detailed information that more accurate diagnostic methods allow would help entry level English learners find more efficient ways to reach higher levels of competence.)
- development of new theoretical model of English proficiency in business communication (e.g., Figure 2).

Conclusion

Though I have primarily focused on English skills in this article, Figure 2 suggests the importance of having a bigger picture and broader context in developing truly

communicative skills and awareness for globally-oriented personnel. I hope the above brief analysis contributes to the advancement of communicative English learning, which is of utmost importance if Japan is to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

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Resources for English Teachers

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After they graduate and start working, it is important for English teachers to continue to develop themselves professionally: to keep up with trends and developments in the field and to get ideas for their classes. This article will outline specific sources for information, including professional organizations, publications such as journals, books, and textbooks, and on-line resources (on computer networks).

Professional Organizations (International)

There are many professional organizations for language teachers in Japan and abroad. In addition to being a good source for information, they are a good way to meet other teachers.

TESOL. The largest organization for English language teachers is TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages)¹. It is based in the United States and has a major conference once a year in March or April and several publications.

TESOL has about twenty special interest groups² which are for people with interest in certain areas of ELT. If you join one of them, you will receive their newsletter, and you will obtain more specialized information in that field. Also, if you attend a TESOL conference, you can follow the presentations related to the special interest groups you are interested in.

TESOL has affiliated professional organizations in many countries³, and if you join any of those, you will receive information about TESOL. In Japan, JALT (Japan Association for Language Teaching) [see below] is the TESOL affiliate.

IATEFL. The second-largest language teachers' organization is IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language)⁴. It is based in Britain and also has publications and an annual conference in the spring. IATEFL has fourteen special interest groups including the following: Global Issues; Learner Independence; Pronunciation; Teacher Development; Testing, Evaluation and Assessment; Media; and Young Learners⁵. IATEFL also has affiliated organizations: JALT is its affiliate in Japan.

Professional Organizations (Japan)

JALT. In Japan, there are a number of organizations for language teachers. JALT (Japan Association for Language Teaching)⁶ is an organization for language teachers at all levels and of any language. It has a large national conference, publications, and active local chapters⁷. In addition, there are fifteen national special interest groups (N-SIGs) such as Junior and Senior High Teaching, Teaching Children, Video, Bilingualism, and Global Issues in Language Education⁸. JALT emphasizes teacher training and has meetings in more than thirty chapters all over Japan.

JACET. JACET (Japan Association of College English Teachers)⁹ is an association for English teachers at the college level. Some of the chapters have study groups for people who have special interests. These groups are smaller and more research-oriented than the special interest groups in TESOL and IATEFL.

Other Organizations. LLA¹⁰ (Language

Laboratory Association of Japan) is an organization that deals specifically with language laboratories and technology in language teaching. It has national conferences, publications, and active regional groups. LLA Kansai Chapter¹¹ has four special interest groups.

In addition to several organizations especially for high school English teachers, including Zeneiren¹² and Shin Eiken¹³, there are a number of other organizations for teachers in Japan¹⁴.

Conferences

As mentioned above, many of these professional organizations hold annual or biannual conferences, some of them attended by several hundred or even several thousand people. Teachers and researchers make presentations, offer demonstrations of teaching activities or methods, and give workshops on certain skills, approaches, and technologies at these conferences. Most organizations announce conferences through newsletters and on the Internet.

Attending conferences can be a valuable experience, but the presentations and demonstrations are not the only place you will learn. Meeting people is an important aspect of conferences. You can meet people who have interests or situations similar to yours. You may meet people whose books, papers, or articles you have read. You can sometimes keep in contact with the people you have met to exchange information or work together. Nowadays, it is very easy to contact other teachers by e-mail, fax, or phone, and having met them face to face can help you communicate better with them.

In addition to academic presentations, conferences often have publishers' exhibitions. You will find new academic books, textbooks, and other kinds of materials. It is a good place to look for publications. You can talk with salespeople and editors and sometimes even meet authors or developers. They can give you advice about the best textbooks for your situation (though keep in mind that their advice is not entirely unbiased).

Such publishers' exhibitions are generally your best chance to look at computer software and videos and ask questions of knowledgeable people.

Attending conferences can be very stimulating and even inspiring. You will learn a lot and find many teachers who are working on projects, doing research, and developing materials. That can help motivate you to work on your own professional development. You may find many better ways or new ways to teach.

Information about conferences can be found in the publications of the sponsoring organizations. In addition, many organizations' newsletters list related conferences¹⁵. Commercial journals have an announcement section, where such conference announcements are published.

There are a number of national and international conferences for teachers of English each year. One of the longest-running conferences for teachers of English in Japan is the annual LIOJ (Language Institute of Japan) International Summer Workshop for Teachers of English¹⁶.

Regional Meetings

Many professional organizations also have local or regional meetings¹⁷. These may be held once a month or less frequently, and are likely to have only one speaker or a panel of speakers on one subject. These meetings have the advantages that (a) presentations are generally more in depth, because they are longer than most conference presentations, (b) you can choose meetings that are specifically related to your interests, and (c) because they are often small, you have more of an opportunity to talk to the speaker before or after the meeting. Also, many of the same people from the city or region attend these meetings month after month, so you will probably meet some of the same people again and again and have a chance to get acquainted with them.

Publications from organizations will usually have information about regional and chapter meetings. Many of these meetings

are also announced in commercial journals.

Publications

Professional organizations usually publish one or more issues of their journal a year, and monthly or bimonthly newsletters¹⁸. Keeping up with these publications helps you keep up with new knowledge in the field, new theoretical developments, new publications and materials, and meeting and conference announcements.

Journals are formal publications and carry research papers, theoretical and practical papers, and book reviews. Among the useful journals in the field of English language teaching are *TESOL Quarterly*, *JALT Journal*, *JACET Bulletin*, *Language Laboratory*, *Language Learning*, and *ELT Journal*.

Newsletters carry more news, information, announcements, and short, practical articles. All of the above organizations have newsletters which give information about the activities of the organization and have articles intended to be of interest to their particular membership. *The Language Teacher*, published by JALT, is one of the more informative ones.

Some very large organizations such as TESOL may publish their own books which are distributed by the organization. You usually order them directly from the organization. You can also order back issues of journals and newsletters.

Other Professional Organizations

The above information is about organizations and publications specifically related to English language teaching, but there are many other organizations in different fields which are related to ELT, such as linguistics, literature, and communication. If you have certain specific interests, it is a good idea to look for an organization related to your interests. You can find them through their journals in libraries and bookstores, and through on-line resources¹⁹.

Commercial Publications

In addition to journals and newsletters

published by professional organizations, there are some commercial journals which are published for general readers²⁰. Some professional organizations' publications are also available through bookstores, and you can purchase them even if you are not a member of the organization. Japanese journals are in many libraries. Foreign ones are in many university libraries. They are cheaper if you subscribe directly rather than ordering them through bookstores. Two major journals in Japanese are *Eigo Kyoiku* (*The English Teachers' Magazine*) by Taishukan and *Gendai Eigo Kyoiku* (*Modern English Teaching*) by Kenkyusha²¹.

You will find academic books and textbooks at bookstores. Maruzen and Kinokuniya both carry such books. It is a good idea to visit a large bookstore occasionally and see what books are displayed. However, many books are not in bookstores, so it is important to look at the catalogues of different publishers and advertisements of new books in journals and newsletters and to visit publishers' displays at conferences. It is also worth looking at new books in the libraries you use. Publishers send out catalogues to members of organizations, and you can request catalogues from publishers.

Textbooks are not only good resources as teaching materials, but they give some good ideas for teaching methods, techniques, activities, and skills. Teachers can learn a lot from various good textbooks.

On-line Resources

Recently, computers and computer networks have been developed vastly, and there are now many resources available on-line. Most of them are free. Some databases are on CD-ROM, and they are getting cheaper.

Internet Resources. There are many resources on the Internet²². That is, many individuals, libraries, organizations, and companies have resources, and you can get access to them using the Internet. There are World Wide Web sites, mailing lists, information gateways, and commercial and non-commercial search services.

The World Wide Web. The World Wide Web (WWW) is the largest database in the world, and is getting larger every day. It is very user-friendly and easy to use. All you have to do is click on indicated places on the screen. You will find an enormous amount of information. Related information is linked, and you can pursue that information just by clicking. There are many search engines, and you can search for information using them. The WWW displays characters, pictures, photos, sounds, and even videos. Some of them are interactive, and you can respond to them by writing your comments. The WWW will continue to grow in the future, and it is worth getting acquainted with it.

There are some journals on the WWW which you can read for free, including *The Internet TESL Journal*²³ in Japan (monthly) and *English Teachers' Electronic Newsletter*²⁴ in Israel (about bimonthly), which are easy reading and have a lot of useful information. They also have links to a huge number of resources.

Some other resources you will find are (a) useful commercial web sites; (b) games which students can use; (c) a vast number of reading materials and materials to help writing; (d) publishers' catalogues; (e) new reference books, academic books, and textbooks; and (f) many newspapers and magazines.

Mailing Lists. There are many computer mailing lists for English teachers and students²⁵. Mailing lists have a central computer, to which messages are sent. The messages are distributed to everyone subscribed to the mailing lists. On mailing lists, people discuss issues, exchange information, and ask questions related to a particular topic. Many lists have archives, and subscribers can get files of previous discussions or of articles and materials that have been placed in the archives. The largest list related to TEFL and TESL is TESL-L²⁶, which has more than 19,000 members in over 100 countries. It has a huge archive where it stores lots of papers, reports, and teaching materials.

In addition to TESL-L, there are nearly forty other lists aimed at teachers of English²⁷. There are some lists whose purpose is to distribute information about certain topics, such as announcements of new lists or new Web pages. You can receive news on some of the lists. You can also subscribe to electronic journals such as *English Teachers' Electronic Newsletter* in Israel and TESL-EJ on line. There are some mailing lists especially for students. Your students can subscribe to those lists and discuss matters with other students all over the world²⁸. There are lists for learning English, or discussing topics such as movies, music, and science. There is a list called IECC-Survey which students can use when doing class projects, for example.

Other resources. For children under 15, Kidlink²⁹ has a very useful computer network which children can use to exchange information. There are also some mailing lists for English learners. Using these, you can encourage your students to communicate with other students using English.

There are many useful resources and teaching materials for English teachers on the Internet, including information about different cultures in English-speaking countries, resources, lesson plans, teaching materials, student projects, reference materials for lessons, computer assisted language learning, and practical web pages made by English teachers³⁰. There are also many interesting and well-made materials which students can use to learn English with or without their teachers' assistance³¹.

Commercial Searches, Information Gateways, and CD-ROMs. There are some commercial search engines which can be used for publications, including ERIC, dissertation abstracts, newspapers, and business information. Many of them are very useful. If your library has access to commercial databases, it is worth investigating what you can do with them. One problem with this kind of service is the cost. Commercial services charge for use of their resources, and many of them are expensive. Among the commercial services is NISS³², a gateway to British university

libraries which allows you to search almost all university libraries as if you were there. (This part of NISS is a non-commercial service.)

CD-ROMs are becoming more popular and cheaper. ERIC and LLBA (Language and Language Behavior Abstracts) are very useful. ERIC CD-ROM can be used to search for close to one million documents. You can get information about where they are available and read abstracts of all of them³³.

You can order microfiche of more than half of the documents, and you can find the rest in various journals. In addition, many dictionaries and teaching materials are available on CD-ROM, and they are not very expensive. More and more materials will become available on CD-ROM, and it is worth looking out for new CD-ROMs.

Conclusion

There are many resources for reference and teaching; however, it is not always easy to find what you want. One way is through professional organizations. Another is through commercial publications. Another is using a computer or computer network, which is becoming increasingly important and will continue to do so in the future. It may take time to find the resource you really want. If you keep looking, however, you will find faster and more efficient ways to obtain the information you are looking for. It is necessary to invest time, energy, and money in looking for information, but this is an investment in your profession.

Notes

¹ For information on TESOL:

TESOL
1600 Cameron Street, Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22314-2751, USA
Tel: 703-836-0774 / Fax: 703-836-7864
E-mail: tesol@tesol.edu
<http://www.tesol.edu/index.html>

² For information on TESOL special interest groups:

<http://www.tesol.edu/isaffilisframes.html>

³ For information on TESOL affiliates:

<http://www.tesol.edu/isaffil/affil.html>

⁴ For information on IATEFL:

IATEFL
3 Kingsdown Chambers
Whitstable, Kent CT5 2FL, UK
<http://www.man.ac.uk/IATEFL/>

⁵ For information on IATEFL special interest groups:

<http://www.man.ac.uk/IATEFL/iatefl.html#SIG>

⁶ For information on JALT:

JALT Central Office
Urban Edge Building 5th Floor
1-37-9 Taito, Taito-ku, Tokyo 110, Japan
Tel: 03-3837-1630 / Fax: 03-3837-1631
<http://langue.hyper.chubu.ac.jp/jalt/>

⁷ For information on JALT chapters:

<http://langue.hyper.chubu.ac.jp/jalt/main/chaptersnsigs.html>

⁸ For information on JALT special interest groups:

<http://langue.hyper.chubu.ac.jp/jalt/main/about.html>

⁹ For information on JACET:

<http://langue.hyper.chubu.ac.jp/jacet/>

¹⁰ For information on LLA:

Language Laboratory Association of Japan
c/o Tatsuro Isikawa, General Manager
Registrar's Office, Seitoku University
531 Sagamidai
Matsudo-shi, Chiba 271, Japan
Tel: 0473-65-1111
<http://langue.hyper.chubu.ac.jp/lla/>

¹¹ For information on LLA Kansai Chapter:

<http://www.hll.kutc.kansai-u.ac.jp:8000/>

¹² For information on Zeneiren:

Zeneiren
Ryokoku Senior High School
1-7-14 Etobashi
Sumida-ku, Tokyo 130, Japan
Tel: 03-3631-2890

¹³ For information on Shin Eiken:

Shin Eiken
c/o Sanyusha Shuppan
1-19-23 Otowa
Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112, Japan
Tel: 03-3946-0285

¹⁴ For information on other organizations:

<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/Japanese/online/#gakkai>
<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/online/www/organi.htm>

¹⁵ For information on conferences:

<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/online/www/organi.htm#conf>

- ¹⁶ For information on LIOJ:
LIOJ, Asia Center Odawara
4-14-1 Shiroyama
Odawara, Kanagawa 250, Japan
Tel: 0465-23-1677 / Fax: 0465-23-1688
E-mail: lioj@pat-net.ne.jp
<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/4091>
- ¹⁷ For information on regional or local chapters of JALT:
<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/online/www/organi.htm#JALT>
For information on JALT chapter meetings:
<http://langue.hyper.chubu.ac.jp/jalt/main/chaptersnsigs.html>
- ¹⁸ For information on ELT publications:
<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/online/www/journal.htm>
- ¹⁹ For information on organizations related to ELT:
<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/Japanese/online/#gakkai>
- ²⁰ For information on commercial publishers:
<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/online/www/book.htm>
- ²¹ *Gendai Eigo Kyoiku* is available at:
<http://www2.aix.or.jp/kenkyusha/mag/gendai/index.html>
- ²² For information on WWW sites, lists, and ways to search the Internet:
<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/online/>
- ²³ For information on *The Internet TESL Journal*:
<http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj>
- ²⁴ For information on *English Teachers' Electronic Newsletter*:
<http://ietn.snunit.k12.il/newslett.OLD.htm>
- ²⁵ For information on mailing lists:
<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/online/list/lis-stud.htm>
- ²⁶ For information on TESL-L:
<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/online/list/lis-tesl.htm>
- ²⁷ For information on other ELT-related lists:
<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/online/list/lis-tefl.htm>
- ²⁸ For information on mailing lists for students:
<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/online/list/lis-stud.htm>
- ²⁹ For information on Kidlink:
<http://www.kidlink.org/>
- ³⁰ For information on resources and teaching materials:
<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/online/www/teacher.htm>
- ³¹ For information on materials for students:
<http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/online/www/student.htm>
- ³² For information on NISS:
<http://www.niss.ac.uk> or telnet niss.ac.uk
BIDS (<http://www.bids.ac.uk> or telnet bids.ac.uk) is another useful commercial search service for humanities and the social sciences.
- ³³ For information on the ERIC CD-ROM:
ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
1301 Piccard Drive, Suite 300
Rockville, MD 20850-4305, USA
Tel: 301-258-5500 / Fax: 301-948-3695
E-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/ERIC/
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Section II

Teaching Methodology

Small Talk: The First Step Toward Internationalization

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Small Talk and Human Interaction

As an English teacher, nothing is more bothersome than to learn that the students you have taught and have confidence in have a hard time initiating and carrying on a simple, friendly conversation with foreigners in English, that they have no interest in keeping a conversation rolling, or, worse yet, that they do not seem to realize the importance of this activity. As their teacher, you cannot help but question your whole approach; and in doing so, you are left with the nagging feeling that there is something missing from your EFL classroom. This, in turn, raises the question as to how you would stimulate your students' interest—and enhance their confidence—in using one of the most invaluable tools for international communication: “small talk” in English.

As a former exchange student in the U.S., I have long been of the opinion that small talk is the most important tool one can use to win new friends and to maintain relationships. This is a skill at which American people in particular excel, although I have since learned that people from other English-speaking countries find small talk just as essential (though there are different nuances of content and structure). I have noticed that a lot of EFL students—in fact, virtually all of them—lack the necessary skills for making small talk. By the term “students” I mean Thai students, although I have made use of my experiences teaching oral communication skills to a group of Cambodian students for two years and to a Japanese businessman for the past three years in Bangkok.

How about EFL students from a country

like Japan? During my participation in the International Summer Workshop for Teachers of English at LIOJ in 1997, I had the opportunity to share a wide range of ideas with my Japanese and Western colleagues. This confirmed my observation that Japanese students, and the Japanese in general, lack the requisite skills to engage in small talk in English, a fact which can be traced largely to culture.

Apparently, Thai, Cambodian, and Japanese people do not feel comfortable with the idea of small talk in English because there is no exact parallel in their own cultures. But since the world is undergoing a period of rapid change, with English emerging as the main language for international communication, small talk may be seen as a vital skill for these people. As the world enters the age of globalization, I firmly believe that people from every corner of the planet must learn to understand each other better if the “global village”—based on mutual trust, mutual understanding and harmony of interests—is to become a reality. And as all great journeys start with one small step, I truly believe that small talk marks the first step on the road toward the goal of true internationalization.

What Is Small Talk?

Initially, I would like to make use of the classification of conversation originally devised by Sabath (1992), who broke conversation down into three main categories: small talk, medium talk, and large talk. Defining the borderline between these three categories in this way will hopefully give the reader a clearer idea of the functions of

English conversation in general and of small talk in particular.

In the age of globalization, small talk may be regarded as an international tool of communication; essentially, it takes the form of a friendly conversation in which a person engages in order to get to know other people, both locally and internationally, and to maintain an existing friendship or relationship with them. It is characterized mainly by the fact that it avoids giving offense, since its topics are of a general, non-threatening, non-personal, non-serious, and non-controversial nature. One also finds that old acquaintances who have not met one another for a long time engage in this type of conversation.

Medium talk, on the other hand, is a more meaningful type of conversation that is usually possible after people have gotten to know one another through small talk. At this stage, both conversation partners feel a lot more comfortable with each other. By engaging in small talk, they have discovered that they have a great deal in common. For this reason, they feel that they are ready to take their relationship to a more meaningful level.

Large talk is a much more serious type of conversation in which partners have a set purpose in mind as to what they are going to talk about. Very few people can participate in this kind of conversation because they do not have the necessary information, knowledge, interest, or responsibility (in terms of decision-making) to do so. Regarding content, this type of conversation is characterized as an in-depth discussion or debate between both parties.

Importance and Advantages of Small Talk

In many ways, the term "small talk" can be misleading in that it can convey the impression that it is of minor importance or little significance. Quite the contrary, small talk plays a very big role in human interaction. Levine, Baxter, and McNulty (1987), and Schloff and Yudkin (1992) agree that the topic or content of small talk may be of little importance, but small talk itself, as a vehicle of human interaction, is extremely important. Also, Alan Maley (personal communication,

August 4, 1997) thinks that small talk is vital in that it can create a buffer zone between two or more strangers, since it fills up the gap which would otherwise be filled with silence. Because small talk plays such an important role in social interaction, being able to engage in small talk has a number of advantages:

1. Small talk gives people the impression that you are a friendly, approachable person, and can help you to make new friends instantly—wherever you are.
2. Small talk is a way to show that you are sincere and respectful towards other people.
3. Small talk can generate a sense of equality and sharing.
4. Small talk can help you to communicate with others with greater ease, and at the same time can help put other people around you at ease.
5. By engaging in small talk, you can often learn something new from other people, thereby broadening your horizons.
6. Small talk enables you to practice your English and your social skills.
7. Small talk can lead to a more meaningful relationship with others, and thus help you create a network of friends and acquaintances, both locally and internationally.
8. Small talk can help people to overcome cultural differences.
9. Given the advantages to be gained by being more outgoing and by engaging in small talk whenever the opportunity arises, you can develop into a more well-rounded human being.

The Etiquette of Small Talk

When engaging in conversation, it is vitally important that we observe the rules of etiquette underlying it. The following is the etiquette one needs to be aware of in order to fare better when making small talk:

1. Be warm, open and friendly.
2. Show respect for others and be sincerely interested.
3. Listen to what others have to say, and be agreeable and supportive.
4. Remember names.
5. Try making small talk, even in difficult

situations, and keep it going when you have to.

6. Avoid topics that might be considered controversial or too personal (e.g., questions about a person's age or about politics or religion).

7. Do not try too hard and don't overdo flattery.

8. Do not monopolize the conversation: With small talk there is both give and take.

9. Do not give unwelcome advice or be too dogmatic in your opinion.

10. Do not be a passive, unresponsive listener.

11. Relax and "think funny."

Structure of Small Talk

Levine, Baxter and McNulty (1987) state that each type of conversation essentially consists of three main parts: the greeting and opening, the discussion of a topic, and the closing and farewell. In general, therefore, when one makes small talk, there are basically three steps to bear in mind: First, we initiate small talk; then, we keep it going by broaching various topics and by developing these topics; and finally, we bring the exchange to a close.

We can say that small talk is complete in itself, consisting of three main parts as mentioned above, or as a part of medium or large talk. This paper, however, focuses on small talk that is complete in itself.

Nuances of Small Talk

The term "small talk" belies the fact that it is an extremely complex issue characterized by a wide variety of nuances. First, there are various levels within small talk, depending on one's relationship with the conversation partner, one's proficiency, one's experience, one's knowledge of the world, and the like. Also, there are cultural variations within small talk itself. American small talk, for example, is slightly different from its British counterpart. Finally, there are different contexts, such as small talk at a party, at a reception, at the workplace, and so on. It should be noted, for example, that in terms of topic and level, small talk among company employees is not the same as that among people who have just met at the airport.

Similarly, small talk at a funeral would certainly be different from that at a wedding.

Although there are several nuances within small talk, there is one constant thread running through all of them: All forms of small talk radiate the expression of human warmth. In other words, small talk is a kind of sounding board whereby friendships are established and/or strengthened. However, EFL students should not initially worry about all the nuances and levels of small talk, but should first become familiar with the earlier or simpler levels (e.g., covering such topics as hometown, education, or interests) that enable them to get to know others quickly and to make new friends, especially in the international community. This will help them in the future to overcome many cultural obstacles that exist between nations.

Body Language and Small Talk

Equal in importance to what we say is the way in which we express ourselves through physical gestures. Body language plays a big part in communication when we engage in small talk or other types of conversation; therefore, it deserves close attention. Sabath (1993) states that "when participating in a conversation, be sure to project a positive and friendly attitude. Smile. Touch with a handshake. Maintain eye contact. Nod....Even if you are not all that interested....Keep an open mind regarding future relationships" (p. 56).

The smile and the eye contact are even more important when people first meet because both gestures indicate openness and a willingness to engage in small talk. And as the conversation proceeds, both gestures and the occasional nod of the head are essential.

Fundamental Conversational Skills for Small Talk

Different levels of conversation call for different conversational skills and strategies. For small talk, we need to know how to initiate such a conversation, how to keep it going, and how to bring it to a close in a warm and friendly manner:

The Skill of Initiating Small Talk

We are usually thankful when someone introduces us to others at social gatherings, or when someone initiates an exchange and thereby ends the silence. But when we have to initiate a conversation ourselves, uneasiness may set in. Thus, the following are some examples of openers—besides the usual greetings (i.e., good morning, etc.)—with which we need to be familiar.

- asking questions (e.g., “Excuse me, is this seat free?”);
- comments on something present (e.g., “That’s nice music.”);
- comments on the weather (e.g., “Nice day, isn’t it?”);
- general complaints (e.g., “The traffic in this city is unbelievable.”);
- social comments (e.g., “Pretty good food, isn’t it?”);
- a compliment (e.g., “You have a beautiful home.”).

The Skill of Keeping Small Talk Going

To keep the ball rolling in a warm and friendly way, we need to (a) be a good listener, (b) ask questions, and (c) give additional information.

Being a good listener. To be perceived as a good listener we are expected to show interest, and to do so we need to utter certain words or sounds, or as Karant (1988) called them, “listening words.” Some of the categories of words that show interest are as follows:

- showing agreement (e.g., “Mm-hmm,” “Uh-huh,” “Yes,” “Yeah,” “OK,” “Right,” “I see,” “Absolutely,” “Of course,” “Definitely,” “Exactly.”);
- showing surprise (e.g., “Really?” “Wow!” “My goodness!” “No kidding?” “Gee,” “Is that so?”);
- showing delight (e.g., “[That’s] great!” “[That’s/How] interesting!” “[That’s] fantastic!” “[That’s] terrific!” “[That’s] wonderful!” “[That’s] marvelous!”);
- echoing (e.g., A: “I’ve been to Phuket.”
B: “Phuket? That’s great.”).

Asking questions. To be good at small talk, we need to have several questions in

store. It’s interesting to note that there is a logic to small talk in that there is always a logical question one can ask in response to comments from one’s partner. Most authorities suggest we ask *who/what/when/where/why*-type questions, so as to draw answers with more information, instead of just yes or no answers. (e.g., A: “Where do you go for your vacation?”

B: “My vacation? Well, I sometimes go to Europe.”

A: “Where in Europe?”).

Often a question is implied, although it has the form of a statement (e.g., “Tell me a little about your hometown.”)

Giving additional information. To help maintain the conversation, we are also expected to share information we have. Asking questions all the time can make our conversation sound like an interview or, worse, an interrogation. In this regard, giving additional information or adding comments can convey a sense of sharing and giving.

(e.g., A: “Where are you from, Hiromi?”

B: “I’m from Kyoto.”

A: “Kyoto! I’ve heard so much about it! I’d really like to go there sometime.”).

Though these skills are mentioned separately, in practice they are interwoven to keep the conversation rolling. In fact, there are a number of ways in which we can keep a conversation moving. For instance, the following is a dialogue and the various alternatives we can take in the course of a conversation:

(e.g., A: “Where are you from, Hiromi?”

B: “I’m from Kyoto?”).

From here there are at least four paths for A to take:

1. Show interest and ask a *wh*-type question:
(e.g., A: “Kyoto! How interesting! What’s it like in Kyoto?”
2. Show interest and indicate that you would like to know more about Kyoto:
(e.g., A: “That’s interesting! Tell me a little about Kyoto.”).
3. Show interest and share additional information:
(e.g., A: “Really! My friend went there last year. He loved it!”).

4. Show interest and add comments before asking another question:

(e.g., A: "Kyoto! I've heard so much about Kyoto. I'd like to go there sometime. What's the weather like in Kyoto now?").

The above paths are by no means exhaustive; they only show that in keeping a conversation rolling, there are several directions we can take. We need to keep this in mind when teaching small talk.

The Skill of Bringing Small Talk to a Close

Bringing small talk to a close is equally as important as the first two parts. Both verbal and non-verbal signs play a big part here also. For example, breaking eye-contact can signal that a conversation will come to an end. This can be followed by a pre-closing remark such as, "Well, it's been nice talking to you, Ken." Then comes the actual closing stage: for example, "Hope we can get together again sometime. See you later."

English Small Talk: Its Importance to EFL Teaching and Learning

Like it or not, we need to realize that English remains the lingua franca of the world of international commerce and diplomacy, as well as of the world of cultural and academic exchange. Given the recent explosion in information technology, English has become even more indispensable. With the Internet, for example, without a knowledge of English one would be almost helpless; though one could in fact use some other language, its use would be rather limited—and limiting.

Thanks to the current trend towards globalization, the true value of teaching and learning English has begun to emerge. Learning English is no longer a purely academic exercise. In Thailand, for example, there is a new urgency to produce workers who are able to communicate effectively with their English-speaking bosses, as well as counterparts or colleagues from other parts of the world. Consequently, we need to avail ourselves of this international tool (i.e., small talk in English) to ensure smooth and effective

communication.

The realization of the importance of English has given rise to a boom in English language teaching throughout Asia, including Thailand. Not surprisingly, English language schools in both Thailand and Japan have experienced a sharp increase in enrollment. In the past, as Nakayama (1997) pointed out, this increase had been tied to specific conditions or events on the geopolitical scene (e.g., the presence of U.S. troops in Japan in the years immediately following World War II, or the presence of American GIs in Thailand during the Vietnam War). In contrast, what differentiates the present boom is that it reflects the current trend towards globalization and is therefore likely to be more permanent.

With Japan, the reasons for this situation are more obvious, as the Japanese economy is inextricably linked to the global marketplace. The Japanese production base has long since moved off-shore, relocated to virtually every part of the world. Thus, the need to communicate effectively in English is more urgent in Japan than it is in a lot of other countries. Quite apart from the Japanese, however, developing the skill to engage in small talk in English will help anyone to mix better in the international arena, no matter where he or she happens to hail from.

Embracing Internationalization: Fostering the Culture of Small Talk

To prepare our students for a more internationalized world, English teachers need to take a leading role in fostering the culture of small talk. But before beginning, let us briefly review some of the obstacles Thai and Japanese teachers are facing.

Besides the "washback" effect (see Brown, Paper 4) of the entrance exam system, which leaves little or no room for oral communication skills, there are other obstacles that exist as a result of cultural differences. To begin with, our students may not have sufficient knowledge of the forms that small talk takes and the etiquette governing it. According to Sakamoto and Naotsuka (1982), English conversation is similar to a game of

tennis (in which participants take turns hitting the ball back and forth), while Japanese conversation is more like bowling (in which participants take turns independently). Both are totally different games with completely different sets of rules. Consequently, Japanese students may run into difficulties when engaging in small talk in English. In addition, composure comes into play. Sakamoto and Naotsuka also stated that while Americans find it easy to “hang loose,” Japanese are brought up to admire people who are disciplined and formal—what Westerners would describe as being “uptight.” However, small talk is usually made in a rather informal manner. Therefore, if we cannot hang loose, or relax, it may be difficult to enjoy making small talk. Also, small talk involves eye contact, which neither the Japanese nor Thais are really familiar with.

Finally, the kind of society we live in can pose a major obstacle for EFL students learning the skill of making small talk in English. For one thing, Thais and Japanese live in vertical societies. That is to say, our relationship to the people around us is different from Westerners, especially Americans, who are brought up in a horizontal society, where “all men are created equal” (Mortlock, 1986).

While American people—and other Westerners—strongly feel that they are equal to others, we are firmly convinced that there is always someone either above or below us (although, of course, there are those who are on the same level). With small talk, however, there is a sense of equality and sharing. Moreover, Thais and Japanese are both group-oriented, according to both Mortlock (1986) and Gen (1996). That is to say, they generally enjoy the company of their own group, probably with little or no interest in associating with those outside of their circle. We have to understand that small talk in English is often made between two or more strangers so that they can get to know one another and establish common interests.

There may be other potential obstacles, but the above problems can hinder both Thais and Japanese from really feeling at ease when

engaging in small talk. No matter how big the problems are, we cannot simply give up: We need to find a way of helping our students.

Introducing Small Talk into the Classroom

When introducing small talk in the classroom, the process of globalization needs to be emphasized, as well as the essential role that small talk plays in the process, so that students have a clear idea of how the two are related. As for methodology, teachers should pay attention to both direct and indirect approaches, which, according to Richards (1990), are currently the two major approaches to teaching conversational skills. The direct approach, in which there are situational role plays and problem-solving tasks, was typical of the communicative approach in the 1980s. The indirect approach, on the other hand, aims at fostering the students’ awareness of conversational rules, of what strategies to use, and what pitfalls to avoid, for instance.

Thus, it is the teachers’ duty to sensitize students to the culture of small talk, to guide them through the three main parts of a conversation. Teachers also need to help students overcome their shyness or reluctance, to encourage them to actually act out small talk in class—complete with gestures and listening responses—and finally to use it in real life. Meanwhile, it is vital that teachers emphasize the importance of being not only out-going, but also of being outward-looking and showing interest in others.

In-class activities will not be enough. Simulations outside of the class are also worth trying, (e.g., a picnic or a party), keeping in mind that small talk thrives in an informal atmosphere. Those teachers who have participated in the International Workshops at LIOJ will understand perfectly well how an informal setting can enhance small talk.

Also, according to Kehe and Kehe (1994), conversation with native speakers is seen as an important out-of-class activity. In reality, however, to expect all students to talk to native speakers is a bit too ambitious. What I’ve found useful in the past couple of years is to assign students to interview (and tape-record)

foreigners in Bangkok. I encourage them to do the interview in a small-talk manner, avoiding the format of a formal interview in which they would merely ask questions. Though my research into this particular activity is incomplete, the feedback I have received from the students so far has been extremely encouraging.

Conclusion

Although teaching small talk in countries like Japan and Thailand can be an uphill battle, I do not believe the task is an impossible one. We should remember, however, that English teachers need to appreciate the true value of small talk in order to be able to demonstrate how small talk in English unfolds. In this regard, what Nakayama (1997) had to say is highly significant:

I believe that language teachers have an increasingly important role to play in the new world that is emerging. Language teachers are expected not only to be good language teachers, but also, through language teaching, to be good cultural communicators and to stand as a living example of good global citizenship.

Naturally, we are bound to run into a lot of difficulties teaching small talk in English because it is by no means easy to change the manner in which people think or the way they do things. Unable to change the world, I often rely on this saying: "You cannot change the winds but you can adjust the sails and learn to become a more skillful mariner." Only "skillful mariners" can help the crew to roam the ocean, steering a steady course for their ultimate goal—true internationalization.

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Teaching Listening: Research and Practice

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Listening is the “Cinderella” skill in second language learning. All too often, it has been overlooked by its elder sister, speaking. For most people, being able to claim knowledge of a second language means being able to speak and write in that language. Listening and reading are therefore secondary skills—means to other ends rather than ends in themselves.

Every so often, however, listening comes into fashion. In the 1960s, the emphasis on oral language skills gave it a boost. It became fashionable again in the 1980s, when Krashen’s (1982) ideas about comprehensible input gained prominence. A short time later, it was reinforced by Asher’s (1988) total physical response, a methodology drawing sustenance from Krashen’s work, and based on the belief that a second language is learned most effectively in the early stages if the pressure for production is taken off the learners. During the 1980s, proponents of listening in a second language were also encouraged by work in the first language field. Here, people such as Brown (1987; Brown, Anderson, Shillcock & Yule, 1987) were able to demonstrate the importance of developing oracy (the ability to listen and speak) as well as literacy in school. Prior to this, it was taken for granted that first language speakers needed instruction in how to read and write, but not how to listen and speak because these skills were automatically bequeathed to them as native speakers.

As Rost (1994) points out, listening is vital in the language classroom because it provides input for the learner. Without understanding input at the right level, learning

simply cannot begin. He provides three other important reasons for emphasising listening, and these demonstrate the importance of listening to the development of spoken language proficiency:

1. Spoken language provides a means of interaction for the learner. Because learners must interact to achieve understanding, access to speakers of the language is essential. Moreover, learners’ failure to understand the language they hear is an impetus, not an obstacle, to interaction and learning.
2. Authentic spoken language presents a challenge for the learner to attempt to understand language as native speakers actually use it.
3. Listening exercises provide teachers with the means for drawing learners’ attention to new forms (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, interaction patterns) in the language.

The Nature of the Listening Process

Two views of listening have dominated language pedagogy over the last twenty years: the “bottom-up” processing view, and the “top-down” interpretation view. The bottom-up processing model assumes that listening is a process of decoding the sounds that one hears in a linear fashion, from the smallest meaningful units (or phonemes) to complete texts. According to this view, phonemic units are decoded and linked together to form words, words are linked together to form phrases, phrases are linked together to form utterances, and utterances are linked together to form complete meaningful texts. In other words, the process is a linear one, in which meaning itself is derived as the last step in the

process. In their introduction to listening, Anderson and Lynch (1988) call this the "listener as tape-recorder" view of listening because it assumes that the listener takes in and stores messages in much the same way as a tape-recorder: sequentially, one sound, word, phrase, and utterance at a time.

The inadequacy of a strictly bottom-up approach has been demonstrated by research which shows that we do not store listening texts word-for-word (as suggested by the bottom-up approach). When asked to listen to a text and then write down as much as they can recall, listeners remember some bits, forget some bits, and often add in bits that were not there in the original listening. Additionally, it is highly unlikely that the pieces which are successfully recalled will be recorded in exactly the same words as the original message.

The alternative top-down view suggests that the listener actively constructs (or, more accurately, reconstructs) the original meaning of the speaker using incoming sounds as clues. In this reconstruction process, the listener uses prior knowledge of the context and situation within which the listening takes place to make sense of what he or she hears. Context and situation include knowledge of such things as the topic at hand, the speaker or speakers and their relationship to the situation and to each other, and prior events.

An important theoretical underpinning to the top-down approach is schema theory. Schema theory is based on the notion that past experiences lead to the creation of mental frameworks that help us make sense of new experiences. The term itself was first used by the psychologist Bartlett (1932), and has had an important influence on researchers in the areas of speech processing and language comprehension ever since. Bartlett argued that the knowledge we carry around in our heads is organised into interrelated patterns. They are like stereotypical mental scripts or scenarios of situations and events, built up from numerous experiences of similar events. During the course of our lives we build up literally hundreds of the mental schemas, and they help us make sense of the many situations

we find ourselves in during the day, from catching the train to work, to taking part in a business meeting, to having a meal.

Occasionally, particularly in cross-cultural situations, when we apply the wrong or inappropriate schema to a situation it can get us into trouble. I am indebted to Erik Gundersen for the following vignette which eventually found its way into the *ATLAS* series (Nunan, 1995).

When I was in Taiwan, I went out to this restaurant for a business dinner with maybe five or six people, and I was the least important person. There was the manager of our Asian office, a local sales representative, and a few other important people. Our host offered me a seat, and I took it, and everyone looked sort of uncomfortable, but no one said anything. But I could tell somehow I had done something wrong. And by Western standards I really didn't feel I had. I simply sat down in the seat I was given. I knew I had embarrassed everyone, and it had something to do with where I was sitting, but I didn't know what it was....Towards the end of the evening, our Asian manager in Taiwan said, "Just so that you know, you took the seat of honor, and you probably shouldn't have." And I thought to myself, "Well, what did I do wrong?" And I asked her, and she said, "Well, you took the seat that was facing the door, and in Taiwan, that's the seat that's reserved for the most important person in the party, so that if the seat is offered to you, you should decline it. You should decline it several times, and perhaps on the fourth or fifth time that someone insists that you sit there as the foreign guest, you should, but you shouldn't sit there right away, as you did. (p. 52)

In this situation, Erik applied his Western schema which says that when you are offered a seat by a host, you take it. However, in many Eastern contexts, this is the wrong thing to do, as Erik discovered to his discomfort. However, the experience would have led him to modify his "restaurant" schemata. Seen in this way, even relatively uncomfortable learning experiences can be enriching. These mental frameworks are critically important in helping us to predict and thereby cope with

the exigencies of everyday life. In fact, as Oller (1979) has pointed out, without these schema, nothing in life would be predictable, and if nothing were predictable, it would be impossible to function. The world would appear chaotic.

What does all this have to do with listening comprehension? It suggests that in developing courses, materials, and lessons, it is important not only to teach bottom-up processing skills such as the ability to discriminate between minimal pairs, but also to help learners use what they already know to understand what they hear. If teachers suspect that there are gaps in their learners' knowledge, the listening itself can be preceded by schema building activities to prepare learners for the listening task to come.

In addition to the different views of processing, there are a variety of types of listening that should be considered. These can be classified according to a number of variables, including the type of text being listened to, the listening purpose, and the role of the listener. These variables can be mixed and matched to give many different configurations, each of which will require a particular strategy on the part of the listener.

First, there are a number of ways in which texts can be classified. One common division is between monologues (e.g., lectures, speeches, and news broadcasts), and dialogues. Monologues can be further subdivided into those that are planned and those that are unplanned. Planned monologues include media broadcasts and speeches. Many of these are texts which are written to be read, although this is not always the case. Unplanned monologues would include anecdotes, narratives, and extemporizations. Dialogues can be classified according to purpose: whether they are basically interpersonal or transactional in nature. Interpersonal dialogues can be further classified according to the degree of familiarity between the individuals involved.

Listening purpose is another important variable. Listening to a news broadcast to get a general idea of the news of the day involves

different processes and strategies from listening to the same broadcast for specific information, such as the results of an important sporting event. Listening to a sequence of instructions for operating a new piece of computer software requires different listening skills and strategies from listening to a poem or short story. In designing listening tasks, it is important to teach learners to adopt a flexible range of listening strategies. This can be done by holding the listening text constant (working, say, with a radio news broadcast reporting a series of international events), and getting learners to listen to the text several times, following different instructions each time. They might, in the first instance, be required to listen for gist, simply identifying the countries where the events have taken place. The second time they listen they might be required to match the places with a list of events. Finally, they might be required to listen for detail, discriminating between specific aspects of the event, or perhaps comparing the radio broadcast with newspaper accounts of the same events and noting discrepancies or differences of emphasis.

The third way of characterizing listening is in terms of whether the listener is also required to take part in the interaction. This is known as reciprocal listening. When listening to a monologue, either live or through the media, the listening is by definition non-reciprocal. The listener (often to his or her frustration) has no opportunity of answering back, clarifying understanding, or checking that he or she has comprehended correctly. In the real-world, it is rare for the listener to be cast in the role of non-reciprocal "eavesdropper" on a conversation. However, in the listening classroom, this is the normal role. Below, I will describe a technique that can be used in the classroom for giving learners a chance to respond as they might in a conversational exchange.

Research into Listening

Dunkel (1993), in her excellent overview of listening research and pedagogy, suggests that the current interest in listening

comprehension research has been driven by relatively recent developments in second language acquisition theory. Krashen (1982) and others suggest that comprehensible input is an important factor in second language acquisition, and that a comprehension-before-production approach can facilitate language acquisition, particularly in the early stages.

This research stimulated the development of a number of comprehension based methods, the best known of which during the 1980s was probably Asher's intriguingly titled total physical response (TPR). Asher's methodology was also heavily influenced by the implications he derived from research into first language acquisition. Asher (1988) derived three principles from his beliefs about the nature of first language acquisition:

1. We should stress comprehension rather than production at the beginning levels of second language instruction, with no demand on the learners to produce the target language.
2. We should obey the "here and now" principle which argues that language should be associated with things that are physically present in the environment.
3. Learners should demonstrate comprehension by listening to and carrying out instructions couched in the imperative.

Another strand of research has focused on the types of classroom tasks that facilitate listening comprehension. Spada (1990) reports on an investigation demonstrating the effectiveness of structuring the listening for the learners by providing a set of predictive exercises to complete while carrying out the listening. The predictive work plus the opportunity for students to stop the tape during the course of the listening exercise to ask questions led to greater gains in listening than in classes where the teacher launched directly into the listening without any schema building activities and students were not provided with the opportunity of seeking clarification during the course of the listening. In the listening study reported in Nunan (1998), the use of a concept mapping technique also proved effective. Students were asked to listen to an interview with a television journalist and

complete a concept map which showed not only the key words and phrases, but also the relationships between these. This task resulted in sufficiently greater recall than one in which subjects were simply asked to listen.

Related to this research, and an important consideration for pedagogy (particularly for course designers and materials writers using a task-oriented approach) is listening task difficulty. If grammatical complexity is not to be the sole determining factor in deciding the ordering of tasks within courses as a whole, and also within units of work, then what factors can be drawn on? In the first language arena, Watson and Smeltzer (1984) suggest that factors internal to the learner such as attentiveness, motivation, and interest in and knowledge of the topic can have a marked bearing on listening success. Textual factors include the organization of information (texts in which the information is presented in the same sequence as it occurred in real life are easier to comprehend than texts in which the items are presented out of sequence), the explicitness and sufficiency of information provided, the type of referring expressions used (e.g., use of pronouns rather than complete noun phrases makes texts more difficult), and whether the text is describing a static relationship (e.g., a geometric figure) or a dynamic one (e.g., an accident). Brown and Yule (1983) suggest that there are four principal sets of factors affecting the difficulty of listening:

- *Speaker factors.* How many speakers are there? How quickly do they speak? What types of accents do they have?
- *Listener factors.* What is the listener's role—eavesdropper or participant? What level of response is required? How interested is the listener in the subject?
- *The content.* How complex is the grammar, vocabulary and information structure? What background knowledge is assumed?
- *Support.* How much support is provided in terms of pictures, diagrams, or other visual aids.

In their research, Anderson and Lynch (1988) identified five factors determining the

difficulty of listening tasks:

- the organization of information;
- the familiarity of the topic;
- the explicitness and sufficiency of the information;
- the type of referring expressions used;
- whether the text describes a “static” or “dynamic” relationship.

The tasks used by Anderson and Lynch (1988) in their research illustrate the way some of these characteristics function to facilitate or inhibit comprehension. One of these was a “trace the route” task, in which students listened to a description of a trip around a city or part of a city and then traced the route on a map. The researchers manipulated some of the features identified above, and these variations changed the difficulty of the task. Maps laid out in a rectangular grid, with all streets and features marked, were easier than those with irregular streets. Not surprisingly, completeness of information was an important factor. Texts became increasingly difficult according to the number of features mentioned in the listening that were omitted from the map. As the number of buildings and natural landmarks increased, so did the difficulty. The most difficult version of the task was one in which the listening text and the map contained contradictory information.

Difficulty is also affected by the extent to which listeners are required to extract information directly from the text, or whether they are required to make inferences. In the study described in Nunan (1998), I found that learners had greater difficulty when determining the truth value of statements requiring inferences than when dealing with those in which the truth value could be determined directly from the listening text. This study also investigated the types of tasks that facilitate comprehension. It was found that having learners perform tasks such as making notes, checking off key words and phrases, and completing concept maps while they were listening facilitated comprehension.

Listening in Practice

As we have seen, listening and reading

are often characterized as passive or receptive skills. The image conjured up by these terms is of the learner-as-sponge, passively absorbing the language models provided by textbooks and tapes. However, as we saw in the preceding section, there is evidence to suggest that listening, that is, making sense of what we hear, is a constructive process in which the learner is an active participant. In order to comprehend, listeners need to reconstruct the original intention of the speaker by making use of both bottom-up and top-down processing strategies, and by drawing on what they already know to make use of new knowledge.

Because listeners are active participants in the listening process, a challenge for the teacher in the listening classroom is to give learners some degree of control over the content of the lesson, and to personalize content so learners are able to bring something of themselves to the task. There are numerous ways in which listening can be personalized. One way to increase learner involvement is by providing extension tasks which take the listening material as a point of departure, but which then lead learners into providing part of the content themselves. For example, the students might listen to someone describing the work they do, and then create a set of questions for interviewing the person.

This kind of learner-centered dimension can be lent to the listening class in one of two ways. First, tasks can be devised in which the classroom action is centered on the learner, not the teacher. In tasks exploiting this idea, students are actively involved in structuring and restructuring their understanding of the language and in building their skills in using the language. Second, teaching materials can be given a learner-centered dimension by getting learners involved in the processes underlying their learning and in making active contributions to the learning. This can be achieved in the following ways:

- making instructional goals explicit to the learner;
- giving learners a degree of choice;
- giving learners opportunities to bring their

Figure 1 - Example of a Listening Activity

[instructions to students] Imagine that you are taking part in an airport survey. Listen and circle responses for each question.

- a. Sure. / OK. As long as it doesn't take too long.
- b. Yes, I did. / No, it was rather short.
- c. Yes, it's fine. / Well, it could be a little cleaner, actually.
- d. Yes, they're fine. / I don't think so. I think they need to do better.
- e. Yes, it did. / No. I had to wait quite a long time, actually.
- f. You're welcome. / Don't mention it.

[tapescript]

Um, excuse me, we're doing a survey of what passengers think of facilities at the airport. Is it OK if I ask you a few questions? Did you have a long flight? Uh-huh. So what do you think of the airport? Is it clean? What about the airport personnel? Are they efficient? Right. Now, how about the baggage? Did it arrive quickly and in good condition? Well, that's all. Thank you very much.

[speaking extension task] Student A, interview your partner. Ask these questions:

- Can I ask you some questions?
- Did you have a short flight?
- Is the airport clean?
- Are the airport workers efficient?
- Did the baggage arrive quickly?
- Thank you for taking part in the survey. (p. 1)

own background knowledge and experience into the classroom

- encouraging learners to develop a reflective attitude to learning and to develop skills in self-monitoring and self-assessment.

In my classes, I try to simulate the interactive nature of listening, and also try to involve learners personally in the content of the language lesson through activities such as the one in Figure 1. In this task (from Nunan, 1997), the learners listen to one side of a conversation, and react to written responses. Obviously, this is not the same thing as taking part in an actual conversation, but I find that it does generate a level of involvement on the part of learners that goes beyond the usual sort of non-participatory listening task. Because learners are providing personalized responses, there is variation between learners, and this creates the potential for follow-up speaking tasks, in which learners compare and share their responses with other learners.

Teachers should also consider the development of learners' awareness of the processes

underlying their own learning. This is a recurring theme in recent books and papers on language teaching methodology, and the goal is that, eventually, learners will be able to take greater responsibility for their own learning. This is important, because if learners are aware of what they are doing, if they are conscious of the processes underlying the learning they are involved in, then learning will be more effective. Key strategies that can be taught in the listening classroom include selective listening, listening for different purposes, predicting, progressive structuring, inferring, and personalising. Such strategies should not be separated from the content teaching, but woven into the ongoing fabric of the lesson so that learners can see the applications of the strategies to the development of effective learning.

Finally, in addition to teaching direct strategies such as selective listening and listening for gist, the teacher can also emphasize learning processes by stating goals at the beginning of each lesson. Such statements

are important because learners are made aware of what the teacher is trying to achieve. The goal statement can be reinforced by self-check exercises at regular intervals during the course. These will serve to remind learners of what they have learned, and give them an opportunity to monitor and evaluate their progress.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have set out some of the theoretical, empirical, and practical aspects of listening comprehension, and suggested that listening classrooms of today need to develop both bottom-up and top-down listening skills in learners. I have also stressed the importance of a strategies-based approach to the teaching of listening. Such an approach is particularly important in classrooms where students are exposed to substantial amounts of authentic data because they will not (and should not expect to) understand every word.

In summary, we can say that an effective listening course will be characterized by the following features (see also the design features set out in Mendelsohn, 1994):

1. The materials should be based on a wide range of authentic texts, including both monologues and dialogues.
2. Schema-building tasks should precede the listening.
3. Strategies for effective listening should be incorporated into the materials.
4. Learners should be given opportunities to progressively structure their listening by listening to a text several times, and by working through increasingly challenging listening tasks.
5. Learners should know what they are listening for and why.
6. The task should include opportunities for learners to play an active role in their own learning.
7. Content should be personalized.

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Developing Cultural Awareness in the Language Classroom

Jaimie Scanlon

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Language teachers must be aware that inherent in all languages are the cultures of the people who speak them. The cultural aspect gives language depth, bringing it to life and making it something tangible, real, and relevant for students. Teaching cultural awareness in the EFL classroom may seem a difficult task, especially for teachers who are not native speakers. It is, however, entirely possible, and can be done quite easily even with large, mixed level groups. All it takes is a bit of preparation, a sense of adventure, and a lot of imagination.

Definitions of culture tend to vary, and asking a Japanese junior high or high school student for examples of his or her own culture might produce answers like “kabuki,” “tea ceremony,” or “*ikebana*” (flower arrangement). Similarly, if asked about the culture of English speaking countries, Japanese students may be most inclined to mention the U.S. and bring up “Disneyland,” “McDonald’s,” or “Hollywood.” It is true that these responses are representative of our respective cultures, but they represent only the surface of the profound, complex cultural whole. In most public schools in Japan, culture in the English classroom, if addressed at all, amounts to exactly that: a smattering of the surface elements, such as geography, history or references to popular sports or pastimes. Although such elements do have a place in the English classroom, if they are the only ones addressed, opportunities are missed to teach students not only language, but how to use it effectively and appropriately in context, how to become competent communicators in English, and how to interact with native

speakers of English. Most importantly, what students can gain from learning about other cultures is a deepened understanding of their own culture and, ideally, a deepened understanding of themselves.

What I will share in this article is a framework for teaching and learning culture and foreign language which I have found extremely effective as a guiding principle for developing lesson plans incorporating culture: the Patrick Moran framework. I have used this framework extensively and have developed a sequence of three units based on it especially for use in the Japanese junior or senior high school language classroom setting.

An Overview of the Framework

The framework was developed in 1996 by Patrick Moran. In it, the process of learning culture is divided into four “culture learning interactions”:

- culture as *knowing about*;
- culture as *knowing how*;
- culture as *knowing why*;
- culture as *knowing oneself*.

The first interaction, culture as knowing about, deals with those aspects of culture mentioned above: information which can be attained about a culture. This may consist of facts about, for example, geography, history, customs, and holidays. An example is a lesson in which the teacher presents or students read about or discuss an aspect of culture such as American style greetings (e.g., handshakes) or get information about Buckingham Palace and the royal family. Activities and materials may include, for example, readings, films and videos, personal anecdotes, and objects from

the culture. The rationale behind this step is that students need information about the culture itself.

Secondly, culture as knowing how leads teachers and students toward more experimental, interactive participation, and can be the most lively and enjoyable aspect of a unit. This is the step during which students put the learned information to use and give the language a life of its own which, to an extent, they themselves can control. This step includes activities such as role plays, dialogues and situational simulations, and out-of-class experiences. Here the language is brought out and away from the textbook so that students may experience it in a realistic context. In a language lesson dealing with greetings and introductions, for example, the teacher might first encourage students to talk about the ways Japanese people meet and greet each other (e.g., the custom of bowing, including to whom, in what situation, and for how long). The teacher could then guide students toward talking about how it differs from the ways people do this in other countries. After presenting and practicing new phrases and language for greetings, groups of students stand and act out situational dialogues (e.g., an English speaking student introduces one friend to another, incorporating a cultural aspect such as shaking hands). The rationale for this step is that in order for learners to adapt, communicate, and interact effectively in an English speaking culture, they need to know how to say and do things in the same manner as people in that culture. They may need to adapt their behavior to suit the culture and in order to become proficient and confident, they must go through the experience.

Culture as knowing why is the stage in which learners begin to develop an understanding of the underlying values and attitudes of the culture. The rationale is that learners need to understand the thought behind the action and give reason to the behavior. A simple set of behavioral rules may be enough to survive successfully in another culture, but a deeper analysis of the reasons why—an explanation or inquiry into the attitudes of a

culture which in turn explain certain behaviors—is necessary as a stepping stone to the next phase, knowing oneself. During the present phase, teachers act as co-researchers or guides. The objective here is to interpret behavior and explore possibilities for explanations rather than to look for clear answers, as there may be no simple explanation for a given behavior. Here, teachers may guide students to be curious and question a behavior, and then compare that behavior with their own culture (e.g., “Why do you think Americans shake hands instead of bowing? What does shaking hands mean in different situations?”). Here is where students begin to make connections with their own culture and teachers encourage them to observe and try to understand rather than to observe and make judgments. Short reflective writing assignments and small group discussions in which students share their observations or hypotheses about cultural behavior are effective teaching tools in this step.

Students who reach the final stage, culture as knowing oneself, enter a world of self-discovery based on learning about another culture and comparing it to their own. Passing through each stage brings language students to a place where they are able to analyze their own feelings, attitudes and cultural values and develop a sense of self-awareness. The rationale for this final step is that if learners have a strong sense of themselves as members of a culture and understand their own values, they may be better able to adapt to or accept another culture to the extent to which they choose.

Below are three culture units which may be used in Japanese high school English classrooms. They should be easily adaptable to large groups and can be modified to complement a given language lesson. This style of interactive learning environment may take some getting used to on the part of the students and the teacher. It might be helpful to tell the students they are going to try something different. A brainstorming session around questions such as “What is culture?” or “What things represent Japanese or American culture?” would be a good lead-in

activity. This could be done either as a class activity with the teacher facilitating or in small groups which present their ideas afterwards.

Unit I: The Vacation

- Culture interactions: Knowing about, knowing how.
- Objectives: Students will (a) gain general knowledge about the geography of English speaking countries, (b) learn useful phrases and language skills for travelers to these countries, and (c) gain skills in etiquette and social interaction with people in those countries.
- Materials: Maps, atlases, travel guides and brochures. (It is a good idea to choose only one or two countries of focus [e.g., Canada and the U.S.].) (As preparation for the unit, students may use the Internet, if available, or the may provide them with addresses for travel bureaus to request maps, travel guides and regional or recreation information.)
- Language focus: (a) Asking for clarification (e.g., "Could you repeat that?" "Could you speak more slowly?"); (b) making hotel reservations; (c) ordering food at a restaurant; (d) changing money at the bank; (e) asking directions.

Knowing About

1. As an introduction, the teacher may show a travel film, students may be given readings, or if there are students in the class who have visited the country to be discussed, they may serve as a resource to answer questions for the other members of the class. (This is an excellent opportunity to include the expertise of students who have lived overseas.)
2. The teacher divides the class into small groups of up to six or eight and tells each group that they are going on a vacation to the chosen country and will be in charge of planning the trip. The teacher may provide guidelines such as length of vacation, number of cities they will visit or how much money they have for their vacation.
3. Groups use maps and travel guides to

plan their vacation. They should be given certain tasks to carry out (e.g., planning which places to go to and which famous sights to visit). The teacher should ensure that students cooperate to complete the task and that the less outspoken students do not get left out.

4. Groups present their finished vacation plan to the rest of the class, or to another group, using the maps as a visual guide.

Knowing How

1. Groups create situations and English dialogues relevant to their vacation plan. For example, for a unit on ordering in a restaurant, groups create situations in which they are eating in a restaurant in a vacation context.
2. Students are assigned roles and role play the dialogues in front of the class (or to another group, depending on class size). To expand this activity, teachers could (a) ask students to create different dialogues for each language focus, or (b) involve students in a deeper examination or discussion of behavior, such as table manners or restaurant etiquette, after the role plays.

Unit II: The Homestay

- Culture interactions: Knowing about, knowing how, knowing why, knowing oneself.
- Objectives: Students will (a) gain knowledge about home and family and school life in an English speaking culture, (b) gain linguistic skills for introducing themselves and talking about themselves and their home country, and (c) learn to request information, ask questions about others, and interact comfortably in the host culture.
- Materials: Texts about the target culture, customs, and habits, including excerpts on family life.
- Language focus: (a) Asking for clarification; (b) introducing self and others; (c) talking about oneself (e.g., interests, hobbies, likes or dislikes); (d) making requests or asking questions.
- Other skills: Written communication (e.g., letters).

Knowing About

1. As an introduction, the class brainstorms for differences between a Japanese home and, for example, an American one. The teacher asks the students to imagine that they are going on a homestay, and, in pairs, to come up with questions they would ask their homestay families before leaving Japan. The pairs then share their questions with the class as the teacher writes them on the board.
2. For homework, the teacher asks the students to write a letter to their homestay families in which they describe themselves and their interests and ask questions about what life will be like in the family.
3. After reviewing and correcting the letters, the students exchange letters with each other. One method for doing this that seems to work well is to ask each student to randomly draw a letter from a box.
4. Students research the answers to their partner's questions and respond as a representative of the host family. Texts about cultural customs or habits or the Internet may be used, as well as the expertise of students who have lived abroad.

Knowing How

Role plays may be created around different language points. For example, groups of students may create skits such as "first dinner with the homestay family" (in which they must ask family members about their hobbies or use language for asking if they may do certain things during their homestay), or "first day at school" (in which the host brother or sister introduces the student to his or her friends and teachers). If a video camera is available, it is fun to videotape the role plays to play back in the knowing oneself stage.

Knowing Why

Teachers invite students to speculate on certain behaviors which surprise them about the host culture. For example, the teacher may ask, "What do the phrases 'make yourself at home' and 'help yourself' mean?" or "Why do Americans say these things to a guest?" Students should be invited to question and

examine the behaviors as often as possible. It is important to remember that at this stage teachers act as co-researchers. They are not expected to produce answers to all questions, but should instead encourage curiosity and inquisitiveness.

Knowing Oneself

1. Teachers ask students to write about how they think it might feel to live with a foreign family. For example, do they think they would enjoy it? What do they think would be most difficult about it? What would be the most exciting, or the most interesting things about living with a foreign family?
2. Students reflect on how they felt doing the previous role plays.
3. If a video was made, students watch themselves on tape and talk or write about how it felt to see themselves acting differently than normal.

Unit III: The Visitor

- Culture interactions: Knowing about, knowing how, knowing why, knowing oneself.
 - Objectives: Students will (a) gain an awareness of their own culture and be able to compare it to an English speaking culture, (b) gain linguistic skills in describing places, giving directions, and answering questions, and (c) learn effective skills for communicating with people from other cultures in Japan.
- Materials: None.
- Language focus: (a) Giving directions; (b) explaining how to do something; (c) talking about Japan; (d) describing places.
 - Other skills: (a) Written communication (e.g., letter); (b) telephone English.

Knowing About

1. As an introduction, students are asked to imagine that they are going to host a foreign visitor who has never been to Japan. As a whole or in small groups, the class brainstorms for things that might surprise a foreigner about Japanese culture because they are different. Students are asked if any of them have met a foreigner in Japan or if they have any foreign

friends, and, if they have, to describe the experience.

2. For homework, the students write letters to their guest-to-be in which they describe their city, home, the room in which the guest will stay, other family members, and so on. They may also include a few warnings to the visitor about Japanese customs which they think may surprise them when they arrive.
3. Students share their letters in class either with a partner or in small groups.

Knowing How

Pairs of students develop role plays or dialogues to target certain language skills. For example, they can arrange a telephone call role play in which one student plays the visitor and the other the host. The visitor may ask about Japanese culture while the host responds. Alternatively, they may act out a telephone call in which the visitor asks directions to the host's house from the nearest train station. Some other ideas for role plays include (a) eating with the visitor in a Japanese restaurant (e.g., teaching the visitor to use chopsticks, or telling him or her to take off his or her shoes), (b) explaining to the visitor how to do origami, and (c) explaining a Japanese custom or holiday to the visitor.

Knowing Why

1. The teacher asks students to examine aspects of their own cultural behavior and make comparisons with other cultures.
2. Students discuss or write about why they think a foreigner would be surprised at some Japanese behavior.

Knowing Oneself

1. Teachers ask students to react to the above role plays in writing or in small group or class discussion. They may ask, "How did it feel to act as a foreign person in Japan?" "What might be difficult for foreigners living in Japan?" "What aspects of Japanese culture are important for a foreigner to learn before they come?" and "Why?"
2. Students may discuss what aspects of Japanese culture they are especially proud of or what things they would like foreigners to see, experience, or do when they visit Japan.

Conclusion

At this time, it may seem impossible, given the limits of time and curriculum, to imagine adding a deeper cultural dimension to Japanese junior and senior high school English classes. As the world continues to grow into a more open place with more and more opportunities for cultural exchange and intercultural experience, the English language classroom must also change. Language goes far beyond words and phrases on paper and opportunities for students to learn about other cultures are present each time they walk into the English classroom. When students become aware of other cultures, the "how" and the "why," they become increasingly aware of their own culture and themselves. They become true representatives of their own culture and competent, confident intercultural communicators.

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Giving Grammar a Human Face: A Fictional Alternative to the Language of Grammar

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The Language of Grammar

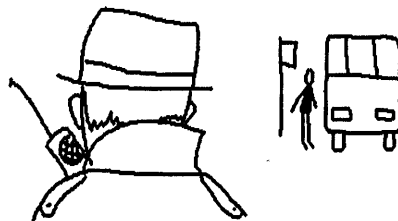
The language of grammar is difficult. As teachers we get used to terms such as “unreal past conditionals,” “the moment of speaking,” “permanent situations,” “present states,” but many of our students find them extremely difficult to understand. Perhaps it is because of the difficult, technical, abstract nature of language that many students develop negative attitudes towards grammar and find it boring. We can, of course, translate grammar terminology into the students’ first language, but the problem of comprehension remains. After all, most native English speakers would find it puzzling to know that when they say, “It’s going to rain” in response to seeing some dark clouds in the sky, they are in fact “predicting something in the future as a result of some-thing in the present.” Furthermore, it is impossible to make the language of grammar more colloquial without distorting and falsifying what it describes. We need expressions such as “as a result of something in the present” to accurately describe how language works. And finally, there is also the larger question about whether technical description of language helps our students become more accurate and fluent. Most teachers would probably agree that their students need to develop a feeling for how language is used, not just understand it intellectually.

Using Grammar Characters in the Classroom

If the reason students feel negative about

grammar is because of the language which is used to describe it, the way to make their feelings more positive is to find an easier, alternative description. I have tried to do this in my own classes by developing a cast of “grammar characters”—fictional beings who each represent and epitomise a different grammar item. Here are six examples:

1. Detective Dave is very good at following people and predicting what they are going to do from present evidence. (He is used for the predictive use of *going to*.)



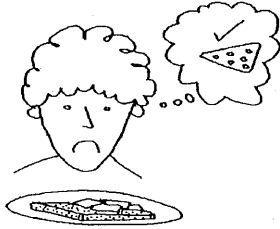
“He’s going to get on the bus.”

2. Messy Molly is very untidy and lives in a terrible mess. She can never find things and is always asking where things are. (She is used for prepositions of place.)



“Where’s my comb?” “In your hair.”
“And where’s my hairclip?” “Under the bed.”

3. Fussy Fanny is extremely fussy and only eats food that is uncountable. (She is used for countable and uncountable nouns.)



"I love cheese, but I can't stand cheese sandwiches. I hate french fries, but I adore mashed potato."

4. Clumsy Colin is always breaking and dropping things. (He is used for the present continuous, with adverbs such as *always*.)



"I'm always breaking my glasses and I'm constantly cutting my fingers."

5. Ron Regret is always imagining what life would be like if things had been different in the past. (He is used for unreal past conditionals [i.e., the third conditional].)



"I'd be rich and famous if I hadn't left the band in 1982."

6. Nelly News travels around the world reporting the latest stories for TV news. (She is used for the "announcing news" aspect of the present perfect.)



"Good evening. This is Nelly News speaking from Pisa in Italy. The Leaning Tower of Pisa has fallen down."

Creating Grammar Characters

Grammar characters work best when they are invented by teachers for the specific classes they are teaching. For example, Messy Molly might be ideal for adolescent students or even adults but you would need a different character for a class of young learners. It is also very important that the students themselves play a part in the creation of the characters for they will remember the characters (and therefore the grammar) far better if they feel the characters belong to them. This can be achieved by, for example, asking them to invent the name of the character, or drawing what they imagine the character looks like.

Here are some tips to help you create your own characters.

1. You can get clues for your characters by looking at the grammar examples in the textbook or grammar book you are using. For example, when you look at unreal past conditional examples, the sentences often express regret (hence: Ron Regret), and examples of countable and uncountable nouns very often are items of food (hence: Fussy Fanny).
2. The characters should be cartoon-like and larger-than-life rather than realistic. The more exaggerated they are, the more the students will be able to remember them and the grammar they represent: Ron Regret is not just miserable, he is exceptionally miserable, expressing regret in every word he utters; Clumsy Colin doesn't just break things occasionally, he breaks things all the time.
3. Give your characters memorable names

or nicknames, for example by using alliteration: Messy Molly, or Nelly News.

4. Drawing a simple portrait on the board will also help the students remember the character. You could do these on flashcards if you do not like drawing on the board.

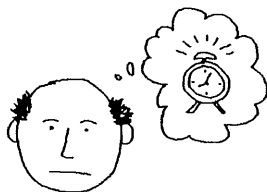
Using Grammar Characters in the Classroom

I usually use grammar characters in the summary or consolidation phase of a lesson. The following example describes the process I use.

1. In the last few lessons we have been working on talking about routine and habits using the present simple.

2. The examples in the textbook we are using give me a clue to the grammar character I am looking for: "I get up at 7.30 every morning. I go to school on the bus. I have lunch at school." All these sentences describe daily routines. This is perhaps not one of the most fascinating of topics, but certainly one we can liven up by introducing a grammar character.

3. I start off by drawing a portrait of my character on the board:



4. I write "B _ B _" on the board under the drawing. I then ask the students to guess the character's name. I accept one of their suggestions as being the "real name," for example, "Bob," and I write this on the board: "B _ Bob." Next, I elicit "boring" by asking the students whether they find the face interesting. I then complete the nickname on the board: "Boring Bob."

5. I follow this with an oral introduction of Boring Bob, getting the students to contribute to the story by suggesting some details. For example:

Boring Bob hasn't just got a boring face. He

is boring. For example, most people set their alarm clocks at 7 o' clock, or a quarter past seven, or five or ten past seven, but Bob sets his alarm clock at three minutes past seven and gets up at exactly the same time every morning. Then he has breakfast. Can you think of a really boring breakfast? That's right, he has cornflakes. And what is a really boring drink to have at breakfast time. That's right, he has a cup of tea. He always reads a newspaper at breakfast time. What is the name of a really boring newspaper?

And so on, talking about the boring car Bob drives to work, the boring things he does at work, the boring TV programmes he watches in the evening, and so on.

6. The grammar character Boring Bob consolidates and reinforces what the students have previously learnt: that we use the present simple to talk about actions that happen regularly. Boring Bob's mega-boring, larger-than-life nature provides the students with a number of memorable examples of this use of the present simple which will remain in their minds far longer than the examples found in the textbook. Later in the school year, when I want to remind the class of this use of the present simple, I just have to mention the words "Boring Bob" and I have found that the students are able to retell the story we created together. Also, when I come to the point in the course where the present continuous is introduced, all I need do is create a new character, Boring Bob's cousin, Hypoactive Harry, who can't stop doing things and who is probably doing five different things simultaneously at this very moment! Placed together the two characters *are* the two tenses and the difference in their characters *is* the difference in grammar.

Questions and Answers about Grammar Characters

• *Can grammar characters be used for other stages in the lesson apart from consolidation and review?*

Certainly. Grammar characters could be used effectively in the presentation and practice stages of a lesson.

- *Is one character enough for complex areas of grammar such as the present perfect?*

No, characters are only effective if they represent a single aspect of a tense. You will need at least three characters to cover the present perfect. I have already introduced Nelly News for the “when the result of a past action is connected to the present” use, but you will also need a character for the “things that happened during a period of time that continues up to the present” use (my character is Ernest Everest, an annoying guy who has been everywhere, met everyone, experienced everything even, of course, Mount Everest: “Oh, yes, I’ve climbed it.”), and also a character for the “something which started in the past and continues up to the present” use (my character is Old Timer, a very old man who has worked in the same factory for twenty years).

- *Are grammar characters useful for making comparisons between different tenses?*

Very much so. Take the present perfect characters described above. They could be used very effectively to point out the difference between the past and present perfect tenses. For example, you could continue the Nelly News and Ernest Everest stories (“The Leaning Tower of Pisa has fallen down. This happened at 2:00 a.m. last night. Luckily, no one was under the tower at the time. The noise woke everyone in the city.” “Mount Everest? Oh, yes, I’ve climbed it. I was the first man to do it. It only took me two days.”) and illustrate that we use the present perfect to announce news and give information about an indefinite period of time, whereas we use the past simple to give details of a definite time in the past.

- *The passive is something my students find very difficult. Can grammar characters help?*

Yes, though the best characters might be inanimate objects rather than people, as we need to downplay the human element when we describe the use of the passive. For example, perhaps one of the characters could be a Haunted House where doors are mysteriously closed and chairs are moved around the rooms.

- *Can grammar characters help my students with phrasal verbs?*

No, I don’t believe so. Phrasal verbs are a vocabulary problem, not a grammar one. You would need a different character for each individual phrasal verb to make it work.

- *Can you suggest some more characters suitable for classes of young learners?*

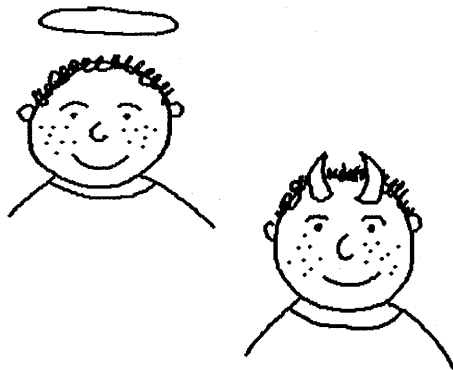
Certainly. How about Busy Boy Octopus, who is busy doing things with his eight hands all day for the present continuous, Heidi Hedgehog who is always hiding in different places for prepositions of place, and a mythical beast, part fish, part bird, part monkey, part horse called Cando for *can* ability?

- *Can you use fictional characters from films and books as your characters?*

Yes. Sherlock Holmes would be an ideal candidate for the predictive use of going to; Superman would be great for *can* ability; and Robinson Crusoe would be ideal for daily routine and the present simple.

- *What is your favourite grammar character?*

My favourite character is a little boy called Willing Willy who epitomizes the modal use of will for decisions made at the moment of speaking. I tell my students that Willy is a remarkably good little student of mine who is always extremely helpful. For example, when I discover there is no chalk in the classroom, Willy puts up his little hand and says, “I’ll fetch you some.” When I’ve got a frog in my throat, Willy says, “I’ll get you a glass of water.” When it gets too warm, he says, “I’ll open the window.” You can even use this character to point out the “non-future” modal aspect of will. After all, Willing Willy would never ever say, “I’ll fetch you some chalk next week.” That would be far too naughty!



- *Can you find characters to represent every grammatical point?*

I'm not sure. With the help of the teachers and students I've worked with on this topic, I've now got a cast of some 100 characters, but I've still got a long way to go before I've

covered the whole of English grammar.

Good luck with using grammar characters in your classes. If you have any successes using this idea, please tell me about it. You can e-mail (cgranger@dircon.co.uk) or send a fax (44-1273-563515).

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A Reading Compromise for Junior High English

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Reading! All Japanese junior high school students must learn to do it, and so junior high school English teachers are faced with teaching it. But how? Many books and articles are written arguing the best approach. At times, the most daunting aspect of teaching reading is wading through the approaches, trying to apply things designed for native speaking elementary school students to a foreign language environment. Even when there is not a smooth fit between the two, there is always value in examining new approaches and taking what will help to improve our teaching.

Two reading instruction approaches that have been receiving attention recently are phonics and whole language. In this paper, we will look at both of these approaches, what they say about teaching reading, and what benefits and problems they hold for us when used in a foreign language classroom. Then we will pull the good points from each of these approaches to form a suggested curriculum for teaching English reading in Japanese junior high schools.

Phonics Versus Whole Language

Phonics is the most familiar approach in Japan. Using phonics, students are presented with a sequence of skills and sound patterns to help them learn to decode words. There is an assumption that if students are given the codes for sounding out words, they will be able to extract meaning from those same words when encountered in books. In the spectrum of language acquisition versus language learning (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), phonics is at the learning end of the scale.

There are some problems inherent in a phonics approach. One is that phonics is not very helpful for students beyond the beginning stages of language learning. It is an inefficient way to read because it requires a right to left progression rather than the normal (for English) left to right. Students have to look at the end of words first in order to figure out how to pronounce the beginning (e.g., *city* vs. *cite*). Another weakness is that students do not always get enough practice in putting the bits and pieces together in sentences and longer passages. As a result, students can often perform the mechanics of reading fairly fluently without having much idea about the meaning of what they are reading. It is hard to understand isolated bits of language without context. We do not know how to pronounce the letters *c* or *g* in a word without seeing the letter that follows, we cannot always understand a word outside the context of a sentence, and we do not always understand the meaning of a story without a title.

The phonics approach also has some advantages. For beginning students, it is a valuable tool for breaking the language into manageable chunks. It provides guidelines that can help students sound out words in controlled readings. Because it depends on teaching small parts that build on each other, it is easy to teach, and therefore easy to test. Foreign language students do not come to the classroom with the wealth of passive vocabulary and sound-symbol knowledge native speakers bring. A phonics approach can help us teach this knowledge artificially.

Whole language has also been at the center of debate in recent years. If phonics

can be described as teaching students to decode words and hoping they will be able to understand those words in books, then whole language can be described as giving students books and hoping they will be able to understand the individual words in context. In the spectrum of language acquisition versus language learning (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), whole language falls at the acquisition end of the scale. Whole language lessons begin with what students already know and are mostly learner centered. Oral and written language are acquired simultaneously. Whole language suggests that reading instruction proceed from whole to part because that is how children naturally acquire language. Analyzing individual parts does not necessarily help in understanding the whole, and can even make understanding more difficult. In analogy, seeing flour, eggs, sugar, and milk does not give one much idea of how wonderful a finished cake will taste.

There are some problems in applying whole language methods in a foreign language classroom. First, because whole language depends on presenting students with lots of context to help them understand meaning, it demands a lot from teachers, in terms of both English ability and preparation. It can also be hard to test, since students may be acquiring language before it is observable (and thus gradeable). Also, for the most part, whole language assumes that students are surrounded by English in their daily environment. This can be a weakness in an EFL setting, where students have little or no English exposure outside the classroom.

However, there are also some strengths in a whole language approach. Context does support meaning, and we should teach our students from the start how to use context to help them understand what they read. Foreign language students do not have daily exposure to written language in context, and a whole language approach allows us to provide this. Also, lessons that are based on student interests are usually more motivating and fun than lessons based on a set sequence of discrete items.

In addition to phonics and whole language, there is one more approach getting attention these days. Advocates of phonemic awareness recommend teaching the decoding skills of phonics in context, an approach which falls somewhere between traditional phonics and whole language. Phonemic awareness is a conscious, analytic knowledge that English is made up of sounds that can be manipulated to form words. This awareness is an essential step in becoming a successful reader.

Traditional phonics instruction teaches students to assign sounds to letters and then blend the sounds to decode words. A phonemic awareness approach teaches sounds in the context of onset and rime. An onset is the part of a syllable that comes before the vowel. In the word *black* the onset is *bl*. A rime is the part of the syllable that contains the vowel and the consonants that follow. In the case of *black*, the rime is *ack*.

Teaching phonemic awareness through onset and rime is more useful to students than teaching a multitude of phonics rules. Vowels can have many different sounds depending on the letters that surround them in words, so spelling and pronunciation rules do not work consistently. For example, one of the phonics rules learned in elementary school is, "when two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking and says its name." That rule works for words like *goat* and *peace* but what about *friend* or *readily*? Clymer (1963) found that this particular rule works only about half of the time. In contrast, vowels contained in rimes are pronounced the same way 95% of the time because the consonants following a vowel often determine its sound. For example, the vowel *i* has numerous pronunciations. But *ird*, as in *bird*, *third*, and *gird*, is pronounced the same way quite consistently. Since students have more trouble pronouncing the vowels in English than the consonants, this approach makes sense.

Onset and rime become even more useful tools when taught in tandem with analogy decoding strategies. Analogy strategies teach students to use the same reading strategies that fluent readers use. Fluent readers do not tend

to focus on individual letter sounds when decoding unfamiliar words. Analogy strategies teach students to use rimes they have learned in one word to help them guess at the pronunciation of unfamiliar words. For example, once students have learned the rime *ime* in *time*, they should be able to use this knowledge to help them sound out words like *crime*, *slime*, and *mime* in their reading. Even for longer words, onset and rime are useful tools. When faced with an unfamiliar word like *gerrymander*, do you break the word into individual letters, assign each a sound and then blend them back together? More likely, you break the word into chunks and look for familiar patterns: *ger*, *ry*, *man*, *der*. There are two cases of the rime *er* and most students can recognize *an* as in *man*. Even if students have not seen *ry* before, they have enough information to make a good guess at the pronunciation of the word. When taught with analogy strategies, onset and rime are empowering tools, as they give students confidence in sounding out unfamiliar words by looking for familiar patterns. The same approach also helps students spell words that they hear.

A Junior High School Reading Program

Now let us see how phonics, whole language, and phonemic awareness might work in a Japanese junior high school English class. Two overriding constraints faced by teachers are (a) limited contact time with students and (b) a corpus of vocabulary and grammar that must be covered in preparation for examinations. So, reading instruction needs to be incorporated into existing lessons. This suits a whole language approach, in which reading instruction is not divorced from content. Where student contact time is limited, mini-lessons can teach reading skills efficiently. Phonics (or phonemic awareness and analogy strategies) lends itself to designing one-point mini-lessons. So, by choosing what works best from available schools of thought, we can increase the effectiveness of our reading instruction and also help our students to be more confident

readers and writers.

What can be learned from these methods? Well, in general, teachers should have students reading from the start and building discrete reading skills as they progress. Teachers should not wait for students to learn a mountain of skills before allowing them to open books. They can bring in picture books, posters, brochures, and anything else that motivates the students to read in English. A word wall can be created, where words containing useful rimes are displayed. Students should be taught English to be used as a resource when sounding out unfamiliar words. Teachers should model analogy strategies for students, showing them how strategies can be used to help them sound out unfamiliar words when reading and how to spell unfamiliar words when writing.

What follows is an attempt to pull all of the above ideas together to come up with a sequence of skills for successful readers. I have added these skills to the language taught in the typical junior high textbook. (I am using *New Horizon* [1997] but this would work with any text.) Finally, I have divided the skills and language into three levels to arrive at a reading curriculum to cover the three years of junior high. This is not intended as another “best way” to teach reading, but rather as a place to start when planning curricula to meet the needs of specific classes and students.

Year One (*New Horizon 1*)

Some students begin junior high with a less-than-perfect command of the English alphabet, especially the small letters. So, students still need work with the names of letters and their sounds. In addition to matching games, random letter circling can give teachers a good idea of where students’ strengths and weaknesses are. For this activity, students can be given a page of letters written in random order. Students can then circle letters as they are called out.

Teaching rimes can help students build vocabulary. The teacher can take the rimes from the textbook vocabulary and then teach additional onsets to help students see how

many words build on each rime. Students should be encouraged to use their knowledge of rime to help them spell unfamiliar words. For example, after the rime *og* (as in *dog*) is taught, students can be asked to try and spell *log, fog, frog*, and so on. Students still need practice at the mechanics of writing, too, so writing words and sentences gives them valuable practice at letter proportion and spacing between letters and between words.

Sight words should be taught in the context of text conversations and reading passages. The teacher can show the students how to predict the story's content from the title, pictures, and other graphic clues. In general, having students talk about a reading passage will be more productive in their first language.

The teacher can have the students practice breaking words into phonemes (i.e., syllables). Japanese students are already familiar with syllables because of their knowledge of *kana*, but they need practice in understanding how the individual sounds in English combine to make syllables. They can try guessing the number of syllables in words. Analyzing syllables has additional benefits later when trying to explain stress in English, and how the plural *s* adds syllables to some words.

When presenting reading passages, students can be encouraged to predict what the passage will be about before reading it (e.g., by looking at the pictures or by reading the title). Then the students can read the passage silently. The students can be asked to answer some simple comprehension questions and true or false statements, giving them a chance to see how much they can understand even before they know all the words. Then the teacher can focus on vocabulary, pronunciation, or anything else he or she wants to teach. Finally, the teacher can ask the questions again and let students answer the questions that they could not answer the first time.

Year Two (*New Horizon 2*)

The teacher should continue working with phonics, introducing consonant blends,

vowel digraphs, and diphthongs in onsets and rimes, using words from the text and the Ministry of Education word list. Spelling patterns can continue to be taught (e.g., doubling consonants before affixes, and changing *y* to *i* before adding *es*). The teacher can continue building vocabulary with families of words that include the same rimes. The students should be kept reading—not just the text, but also English advertisements the students have brought in, or oversized books which can be read together in class. Short chapter books written for beginning readers (32 pages or less) can also be productive at this level. The point is to help students become comfortable with reading for meaning even if they don't know every word. *Scholastic*¹ is an American book club that allows students to purchase English language books inexpensively through their teachers, and they will ship overseas. Each month students receive a four-page catalog. If books are chosen by reading level rather than grade level (it is geared toward U.S. schools, not EFL) there are many books that can work in a foreign language classroom.

For writing practice, narratives in the text can be used as models. For example, a pen pal letter is included in *New Horizon 2*. Writing to real pen pals might still be too tough at this level, but students can have fun using pen names and writing to each other for pen pal practice.

When students encounter unfamiliar words in readings, the teacher can model for them how to figure out meaning. The teacher can show the students how to use their knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary as well as the context of the sentence and the paragraph to make intelligent guesses at meaning. The teacher can also show them how to look for familiar rimes to make intelligent guesses at pronunciation.

Students should begin to learn how to identify the main idea of a reading passage. Before reading, the teacher can have students guess the main idea. The teacher can model for them how to use titles, pictures, and key words to make intelligent guesses. Then, after

reading the passage, the teacher can check to see if the students' ideas have changed. The actual words used in getting students to analyze a reading passage are not nearly as important as the act of getting them to look at context as a means of helping them understand what they read.

Year Three (*New Horizon 3*)

At this level, students should have plenty of opportunities to enjoy the language they have spent two years learning. Vocabulary building should continue with compound nouns and affixes (e.g., *un-*, *pre-*, *-er*, *-est*, *-ly*, *-y*, *-ion*) taken from readings and lessons. The teacher should try to find whole language projects that allow students to develop their own interests. At this level, the students should be ready to write to real pen pals. They can also work together to publish a class newspaper or a book of stories, or anything else that interests them.

In reading practice, students should start to see that written English follows a logical pattern, and to recognize the words that signal order (e.g., *this*, *that*, *therefore*, *then*). The teacher can copy reading passages and separate them into paragraphs. Students can be asked to put the paragraphs in order by examining the context and key words. Since the teacher should only be looking for a logical order and not an exact replication of the original story, the final order students arrive at may be different from the text. The point is for them to use their knowledge of the language to analyze the content.

The teacher should continue using the reading passages as writing models. Students can also write using teacher-created models. For example, depending on interest, students can write letters requesting information from a foreign city's Chamber of Commerce or tourism office. Or, they can write to a favorite actor or singer requesting an autograph or photo.

Students can be allowed to select and read books based on their interests. The process of selecting books from the Scholastic book club catalog can be a valuable lesson in skimming and scanning for information. The

teacher can ask students to evaluate what they read. Book reports can be as simple as, "I liked this book because it was exciting." The goal is to introduce students to reading that is not tested, and to get them to think critically about what they read.

Conclusion

There is much to be gained by incorporating both phonics and whole language in foreign language reading and writing instruction. Students do not come to our classes with the passive knowledge of letter and sound correspondence that native speaking students have. Phonics or phonemic awareness provides an invaluable tool for us in teaching this knowledge. Students do not come to our classes from an environment rich in English. We can, however, provide a language-rich environment in our classrooms. Whole language reminds us to let our students see the big picture of written English right from the start, and to let them start with books even before they have all of the words necessary to understand everything. And both approaches remind us that learning to take chances and to make mistakes is one of the most important skills our students can acquire in their English adventure.

Notes

¹ For more information about Scholastic book clubs, contact Scholastic Inc., 2931 E. McCarty St., P. O. Box 3745, Jefferson City, MO 65101, USA. Fax: (573) 635-7630. E-mail: Schcsintl@aol.com. Give them your name and address, the name of your school, and the grade that you teach. The book clubs with the most books appropriate for Japanese junior high school students are "See Saw" and "Lucky" (even though they are actually American kindergarten through third grade students). If you have additional questions about Scholastic book clubs, please feel free to contact me through LIOJ (or by e-mail at miku@pop.mars.dti.ne.jp).

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Designing Tasks for Teaching English

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As a new teacher in the field of EFL, I had believed I could “teach” my students (give them clear grammatical building blocks and accompanying vocabulary to practice and study). I was shocked to discover that they were, in fact, going through the process of learning English at their own pace. I was forced to re-examine what I was doing in the classroom. It meant that I needed to learn to resist the temptation to teach by presenting language at my pace, and instead to create circumstances in which students could learn language at their own pace by using it, even at a simple level, to work out meanings and solve problems involving communication. The traditional model of learning—with the teacher as caretaker of knowledge and the student as receiver of pre-packaged pieces of knowledge that would fit neatly together to make language—was shattered.

It is now widely accepted that teacher-centered methodologies of language instruction such as grammar translation and PPP (presentation-practice-production) are not effective at equipping students to use the language for real communication outside the classroom (Long & Crookes, 1992; Skehan, 1996; Ellis, 1993). As Skehan (1996) suggests, “learners do not simply acquire the language to which they are exposed, however carefully that exposure may be orchestrated by the teacher” (p.18). Unfortunately, the shift away from methods like grammar translation and PPP towards more communicative language teaching has left many teachers—especially teachers preparing their students for non-communicative exams, or non-native English speaking teachers who have themselves most likely learned English in a

traditional manner—ill-equipped to create lessons that are truly communicative.

For most of the past year I have been experimenting with a task-based methodology based on the task cycle proposed by Willis and Willis (1996). This methodology takes into account new findings in second language research and provides teachers with concrete yet flexible guidelines for constructing tasks that promote language learning with communication as the goal.

The tasks that I will introduce here are based on my own interpretation of the Willis and Willis model, and have worked successfully in my junior high classes at LIOJ. The lessons have all been designed to:

- increase learner motivation, if not because the learners want to learn the language, at least to carry out tasks using the new language, which in itself provides a chance for language learning;
- allow learners to use the language that they already possess in order to communicate with their teacher or each other, or to use a spoken or written text. The lesson is not exclusively English-focused, but invites learners to find something out, create something, express their ideas, or solve a problem through English;
- provide a chance for the learners to analyze language features for themselves, even at a very rudimentary level, so that those features can then form part of their developing communicative language system.

What does all of this mean in the classroom? In the next section, I would like to outline a sample lesson plan and provide an explanation of the reasoning behind the procedures.

Communicative Task Idea 1: Describing People

The techniques used below can be applied to a variety of topics in addition to “describing people.” Within any chosen topic, it is possible to examine many different vocabulary areas. In the case of “people,” these include physical characteristics, items of clothing or clothing styles, and emotions, along with different grammatical features such as word order for multiple adjectives, *have* + noun versus *be* + noun, third person *-s*, present continuous, and so forth. The task below was originally based on a topic in a textbook prescribed for beginning junior high students. One goal of the lesson was to highlight *have* + noun in comparison to *be* + noun.

Stage I: Procedure

1. Bring into class large pictures from magazines of different kinds of people.
2. Allow students to look at pictures, and elicit vocabulary (either hold them up and elicit words from the class spontaneously, or ask questions (e.g., “What color is his hair?”, “Is she beautiful?”))
3. As learners produce vocabulary, put the items on the board. It is important not to reject words produced by learners on the basis that they do not exactly fit the categories that you as a teacher had imagined before the lesson started. Accepting a variety of answers that can be used for the given stimulus will hopefully encourage learners to take risks later on in the lesson. I have seen students become very excited and interested in a lesson when their humorous or unexpected answer was added to more mundane responses. If you ask learners to categorize the words they have generated, it can be surprising to see what they come up with.

Stage I: Rationale

The initial steps of the lessons are not designed to focus learner attention on correct use of form as dictated by their text or teacher, but rather to prepare learners for the task and to stimulate interest by introducing a subject area and asking learners to contribute what

they know. The element of choice in learning is important. Focusing on what learners already know and want to know helps assure that in the next stage that they can use the language they possess to communicate and solve the designated task. This stage gives students a chance to display what they already know in response to a stimulus, creates a need for them to expand their existing vocabulary base, and prepares them to carry out the subsequent task.

Stage II: Procedure

4. Put students into small groups and instruct each group to create a drawing of a person. Give them a definite time limit, and explain that they will need to write sentences to describe that person on a separate sheet of paper.
5. As the students work, resist the temptation to correct all errors. Instead, help learners find the correct word or phrase to express their ideas, correct students who ask for correction, and generally encourage participation in the group project.
6. Remind students of the time limit and clearly explain that their sentences will be shared with the entire class. The fact that they may be called upon to share their language and art work with the whole class generally has the effect of encouraging students to produce or ask for help in producing the best work that is within their ability (Foster, 1996).
7. Display all of the pictures and ask one group to read its description and the others to guess which picture it is. As the students read, write on the blackboard the sentences (making minor corrections if necessary) that illustrate the grammatical point that you hope to focus on. I have written sentences like “She has short hair,” “She is old,” “He has a blue nose,” and so on, as they were produced. Not only do students feel good when they have produced language that the teacher wishes to use as an example, but you can be assured that the learners understand their own sentences, and that they will pay closer attention when those sentences are used in the next stage.

Stage II: Rationale

The task itself allows students to use English without obvious teacher supervision or intervention. This lets the learners focus on the message rather than the form of communication. It also gives students the freedom to negotiate meaning and ask questions in order to carry out the task, or to ask for assistance when they need it.

Stage III: Procedure

8. When a number of groups have had a chance to present their creations and to see their sentences added to the board, ask students to look at the sentences and look at the verbs *be* and *have*. Ask them to look at what comes after each verb. If learners do not see the difference between *be* and *have*, point it out to them so that they can see the feature and analyze it. You can call on students to come to the board to circle or underline the verbs in different colors.

Stage III: Rationale

In this part of the lesson the instructor guides learners to look at examples of language that they have produced themselves and to find grammatical patterns. This helps them to process and not simply memorize points of grammar so that they may become part of the learners' working language system and can be readily accessed for communication in English.

Stage IV: Procedure

9. It is helpful to have learners practice correctly inserting verb forms into similar sentences using a worksheet, drill practice, or whatever method you prefer.

10. Repeat the steps in Stage II, asking students to describe themselves, classmates, other teachers, or family members.

Stage IV: Rationale

The last part of the lesson corresponds to the traditional practice and performance stages of the PPP methodology and gives students an opportunity to practice using the language point that they have just analyzed

by performing a new but similar task. In the first part of the lesson, they were given the freedom to focus on meaning without worrying about form; they are now asked to practice using a grammatical structure which they can observe and understand for themselves, and then to perform the initial task again. This provides an opportunity for them to improve their performance in light of what they have just found out.

Communicative Task Idea 2: Food

The second activity is designed for introducing countable and uncountable nouns, as well as food vocabulary. The rationale is the same as for the previous lesson plan.

Procedure

1. Bring a large drawing or picture of a refrigerator to class. Ask learners what it is and write the student responses on the board, correcting if necessary.

2. Next ask (and gesture if required) "What do you find in a refrigerator?" Write all answers on the board.

3. Circle some items on the board and explain that you have them in your own fridge at home. Instruct learners to pair up and ask each other what they have in their refrigerators.

4. Once they have started working on the task, tell them that they should take notes on the answers and prepare to share their information with the class.

5. When the time limit is up, call on some of the learners to report to the class. While they are presenting, write a new list on the board, inserting *some* and *a* where appropriate.

6. Take a vote to see which items most people have in their refrigerators at home.

7. Ask learners to look at the list again and to compare the words that have *some* and *a* before them. This can be linked to a discussion of countable versus uncountable nouns in English and counters that we use.

8. If possible, have the students listen to a recording of two people performing the same task. (I was able to do this because it appeared in a textbook, but it is possible to make your

own recording.) Focus their attention on what foods are found in the speakers' refrigerators.

9. Introduce exercises, drills, or games practicing *a, some, any*, counters, and so on.

10. Assign a similar activity such as preparing a shopping list or finding out what foods partners like best, hate, or think are healthy or unhealthy.

Conclusion

Because research has shown that students cannot productively use grammatical points processed and presented to them by teachers, and that learners follow "their own developmental sequence, not a sequence imposed by a teacher" (Skehan, 1996, p.19), many EFL and ESL professionals are experimenting with new ways to work with learners to promote communicative language learning. This article has attempted to demonstrate one way that basic principles can be used to create coherent, communication-oriented lessons. Based on the methodology presented here, language learning tasks can be designed that (a) motivate and stimulate learners, (b) give learners a chance to focus on meaning rather than form, and (c) guide learners to understand the grammatical and structural patterns through analysis rather than teacher-focused, mechanical presentation.

The examples presented here, are just a small sampling of procedures that teachers can employ to assure that language instruction leads to more communicative language learning. Different tasks will be needed for different teaching circumstances and groups of learners, though the tasks outlined in this paper have been used successfully to teach classes of adults as well as junior high school students. It is also possible to design chains of tasks

that could be done in a sequence, such as the refrigerator activity (above) followed by creating a shopping list, menu or recipe, which in turn may be followed by a survey of likes and dislikes, and so forth. With time and experimentation, a large repertoire of techniques and materials can be developed by teachers to expose learners to a wide variety of topics and grammatical features.

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Role Playing as a Contrivance

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We all might be a bit skeptical about the claims some teachers make about the powerful potential of role playing as a fun way of building learners' confidence and increasing their motivation. Such strong claims, and the fact that so many texts provide dialogs designed for role playing, surely suggest that role playing has some value. If we accept that it does, it seems reasonable to list ways to incorporate role playing into speaking activities. And, if some of us have bad memories from our own experiences doing role playing activities, rather than project our negative feelings on others, it might be more profitable to see what aspects of role playing, if different, might have made our bad experiences more positive. Or, if our experiences were positive, we simply have to note what aspects of role playing made them positive.

Textbooks Versus Plays

One way we can discover some positive aspects of role playing is by comparing how it is dealt with in plays, where its role is central, to how it is dealt with in most textbooks, where its role is tangential. In plays, stage directions provide information for actors and actresses that is rarely given in textbooks (e.g., how characters are to say the lines, given a certain personality). For example, in textbooks, those who are going to role play a dialog are usually told simply that one person is to be a customer and another a clerk, or one person a doctor and the other a patient; in plays, on the other hand, it is not unusual to find stage directions to speakers about what kind of a customer, clerk, doctor, or patient they are to be. The stage directions in plays also tell a great deal about the setting in which the characters are to play their parts, including

descriptions of rooms, placement of furniture, and lighting. In addition, they contain precise directions about some of the actions that characters are to perform. Within brackets before the printed lines, it is not unusual to find comments such as "looking at his wedding ring," "moves from her bed to the sink," "in an angry voice," or "looking away." In short, many plays contain stage directions that describe the place where the lines are said, the mood of the place, and specific advice about what characters are to do as they say the lines, as well as advice about how the lines should be said.

In contrast, the criteria actors and actresses have for expressing their lines in plays are absent from the dialogs in most textbooks. Consequently, teachers and students do not have any criteria to determine whether the lines are being delivered in tune with what is needed. In the absence of criteria about how the lines are to be delivered, the only criterion that is left is accuracy. The central questions thus becomes, "Are the lines printed in the dialog and the lines that the student says identical?" One reason we stress the importance of getting the words right (i.e., "learning the lines by heart") is that we rarely have available suggestions for saying the lines *with* heart. (We sometimes get so concerned about getting the lines said "right," as well as heard, that we encourage those doing the role play to say the lines "loudly, so that those in the back can hear," even if the dialog being presented involves two people in a telephone conversation, where speaking loudly can be quite inappropriate.) The fact that so many learners stand stiffly and face each other during many role plays is no doubt related to the absence of criteria for the delivery of lines.

This absence of criteria may be one of

the reasons some might recall with some distaste saying lines from dialogs in front of a class. Doing a role play by saying words one is looking at in a book or that one has memorized are very common experiences in schools. But being told that saying lines from a dialog that one has memorized or is looking at as one is saying them is called role playing simply because the recitation is being done in front of the class does not necessarily mean that the task is different from simply reciting lines while standing or sitting at one's own desk. The mechanical, muted applause that is often proffered at the end of "role plays" in many classes suggests that everyone is going through motions rather than expressing and reacting to meanings that are in tune with criteria.

Textbook Dialogs: Adding Stage Directions

If we believe that criteria for performance above and beyond getting the words right are potentially positive aspects of role playing, stage directions can be added. It is not as difficult to add stage directions to dialogs in textbooks as it is to write stage directions for a play because, for one thing, there is no character development in the short dialogs in textbooks, nor are there plots. Consequently, whether we assign anger to a customer or to a waiter, calmness to a doctor or a patient, or vice versa, it does not matter in most cases. Any criteria can be assigned to any lines; the important thing is that the lines have to be delivered in tune with the established criteria.

In establishing criteria, we have to describe details of both the setting and the characters. Of course, the settings themselves are usually noted. What we have to add are details about the settings. For example, if the setting noted in a textbook is a bus, what details could we add? Asking each person in a class simply to write down one word that comes to his or her mind when we mention the word "bus" produces more than enough details. Here are some free associations some students made when asked what words came to their minds when the word "bus" was mentioned: "crowded," "empty," "hot, even

with the windows open," "air conditioned," "windy," "moving quickly along a street with little traffic," "stuck in traffic and moving slowly," "in a noisy area," "in a quiet area," "modern, with a smooth, quiet running engine," and "old, with a jerky, noisy running engine."

Once we have a range of details, all we have to do is write a few on the board that we agree to use as criteria for the role play. If we write on the board stage directions such as "crowded, hot, moving slowly, in a noisy area, with a noisy running engine," then the speakers will have to speak loudly and stand close to each other. They might act a bit nervous as well. They might also, from time to time, wipe their foreheads with a handkerchief. If we write on the board stage directions like "air conditioned, moving slowly, in a quiet area, with a quiet running engine," then the speakers can speak in a normal tone of voice, or even whisper. They can sit calmly rather than stand, and there will be no need to wipe their foreheads with a handkerchief.

Following Stage Directions

Since it is difficult to meet two sets of criteria at the same time, it is probably better to do role plays in stages. In stage one, the goal is to match the delivery of the lines to the setting. For example, if a bus is crowded, the learners have to stand close to each other as they say their lines; if it is noisy, then the lines have to be said loudly.

After those in our classes play with saying the lines differently so that they are in tune with different settings, we can move to stage two: delivering lines in tune with explicitly stated characteristics of the characters. If, for example, one of the bus passengers is nervous about getting off at the right stop, frequent looks out the windows are likely. If both passengers are angry about having waited for the bus, they might say their lines without smiling.

As part of either the first or the second stage, we need to provide the means for our students to have props to use in their role

playing. Props seem to provide a distraction from attention to words for their own sake, for both the audience and the players. Holding a pencil, meant to represent a screw driver, for example, has the effect of drawing attention to the meaning of the action and the words related to the action. The meaning of a line such as, "I can't loosen it [a screw]; it's too tight" becomes the focus of attention if we say the line as we pretend to loosen an imaginary screw with a pencil we are attributing the characteristics of a screwdriver to. Our imaginations might also be tapped more when we use props to represent various objects than when we use the real objects themselves.

Props can also have an effect on the strength and power of the delivery. Using a pencil to represent a microphone often both distracts the speaker from worrying about the loudness of the words that need to be said and, simultaneously, increases the decibel level. It seems to be the rule that when we speak into microphones or telephones during long distance calls, we tend to (ironically!) raise our voices.

In addition, when props are part of a role play, the characters have a built in excuse for a few seconds of getting accustomed to being in front of an audience. When actors and actresses enter the stage to start a scene, they often move around a bit, adjust a glass on a table, or fiddle with their gloves, as if they need to feel a part of the new scene before they speak. Props used in role plays can provide a way for students to meet this need, while giving them a few moments to get accustomed to a scene and enabling them to focus on producing their lines in a fashion that is in tune with criteria that have been jointly established by learners and teacher.

Preparation Activities

To enable learners to connect lines, settings, and emotions quickly, we should ensure recognition of the established criteria. One way of doing this is by saying lines in a particular way and asking the learners to indicate the emotion we used. For example,

we could precede asking learners to say lines as if they were in a "crowded, hot bus," or an "empty, air conditioned bus," by asking them to indicate which lines we deliver are angry and which are patient, or engaging. Learners can do this in a number of ways, for example, pointing to a sketch on the board of an angry face as opposed to a happy face.

Once learners can identify the emotions our lines are in tune with, and also say different lines that are in tune with the stage directions, they can practice delivering lines. Practicing in small groups allows more individuals to play with the lines at the same time. This can also provide groups with time for further clarification of the criteria before delivering the dialog in front of the class. Also, if only two or three are going to deliver lines to the whole class, small group work allows the rest of the class the chance to apply the criteria in their own production. To ensure that those in each group are attempting to deliver the lines in tune with the criteria, each group should have both an observer and a person representing each character in the role play. The role of the observer, which each in the group can assume in rotation, is to note gestures or facial expressions or write down groups of words that are delivered that are or are not in tune with the criteria.

Other Sources for Dialogs

Textbook dialogs are not the only materials appropriate for role playing. Nor is it critical that each dialog or exchange be long and contain a wide range of grammatical points, language functions, or word usage. The main purpose of role plays has never been to teach set pieces to be produced outside the class. Rather, lines in role plays provide samples of a wide range of functions and grammatical points which we can learn to recognize during role plays. The activity also provides opportunities to manipulate and play with language in class, with the hope that we will feel more ready to speak to other individuals outside class.

Because only one goal of role playing is to illustrate grammatical points, language

functions, or word usage, almost any individual line in any text can be used for role playing. Since all textbooks contain loads of directions, they are one natural source of lines. "Match the words with the definitions. Look carefully at the following exercises," and other directions printed before each activity, can be played with not only to deepen understanding and mastery of imperatives; they can also provide opportunities to discover how our delivery of directions is perceived by those in our classes.

To elicit criteria for stage directions for the directions in the textbooks we use and for the directions we regularly give, we can ask those in our class to write down words that come to their minds as we say a particular direction. Their words will reveal how they perceive our delivery. Here are a few descriptions from some learners: "matter of factly," "with enthusiasm," "for a beginning class," "neutral," "like a tape in the lab," and "as if speaking to babies."

We might discover that the directions we say in what we consider a helpful way, (e.g., stressing each word and speaking ever so slowly) are perceived as being condescending by some who hear them. Over time, we might alter the way we give directions as a result of learning that our perception of our delivery and the perception of those in our classes are sometimes radically different. We might change our roles as a result of stage directions those in our class think we have been following which we in fact do not want to be following.

Social Language

From directions we normally give in our classes to directions in our textbooks, we can move to even more rudimentary samples of language. Greetings, introductions, leave takings, expressions of gratitude, and all other formulas lend themselves to role playing. Those in our classes not only need to be able to express a greeting with energy and delight, but also with coolness and reserve. Some people who are greeted by complete strangers with great energy become suspicious, wonder-

ing what the stranger wants. Such information is a key part of language learning. For example, just as those in our classes have to realize that their own greetings can have different meanings depending on the way they say them, they also have to be able to recognize when greetings are made to them sarcastically, or as an insult, as well as in a friendly, positive way. If they are not reminded that even "thank you" can express negative emotions, they are not learning a vital part of the target language. Without being given experience in both recognizing and producing such formulas, with both positive and negative emotions, they are likely to misinterpret many interactions.

Eavesdropping

Since a key part of role playing is the need to recognize a range of meanings that can be expressed by the same words, in the same sequence, with identical grammatical patterns, it makes sense to ask those in our classes to eavesdrop on exchanges they hear outside class and write down what they hear. While audio taping such exchanges provides better data and more chances for producing accurate written versions, many people are offended by being taped without being told. Of course, taped exchanges from videos and movies can be listened to repeatedly in order to accurately transcribe the exchanges. Information about the settings as well as the people speaking should be added so some criteria will be available for future role playing involving the recorded exchanges.

The short exchanges below were overheard and tape recorded at a counter in a department store where an employee was trying to sign customers up for charge accounts. The role of both speakers is quite constant, and thus easier to catch than in exchanges where the roles change.

1. Clerk: Excuse me, would you like to open a charge account?
2. Customer: No thanks. I already have one.
3. Clerk: Good evening, would you like to open a charge account here?
4. Customer: No, sorry.

5. Clerk: Good evening, would you like to open a charge account?
6. Customer: (ignores question and walks by)
7. Clerk: Good evening, would you like to open a charge account?
8. Customer: (pauses at counter)
9. Clerk: It won't take too much of your time.
10. Customer: O.K.
11. Clerk: Are you employed?
12. Customer: Yeah.
13. Clerk: How long have you been at your present job?
14. Customer: Almost two years.
15. Clerk: Good. If you step over here, we can fill out the form.

The repetition of the same question poses not a language challenge but a role playing challenge. How can a person say the same line repeatedly so that it sounds new and inviting each time, rather than mechanical and stale? Of course, after many, many repetitions, it is hard to imagine that a learner would not master the line, and will perhaps even remember it longer than most lines. But many would relish repeating the line over and over to see if they could vary their delivery to make it engaging each time, more than if they simply had to repeat it as a means to try to memorize the line.

Collecting exchanges outside the classroom, either from live exchanges or films or videos, reminds us all of how secondary the words we say are to the relationships that they establish or maintain and the feelings that they express. Consider the many meanings possible in the following exchanges in an elevator.

1. Man: Hi.
2. Woman: (looks at the arrow going up)
3. Hi.
4. Man: I'm afraid you're going to take a little ride.
5. Woman: (after several seconds)
6. That's all right; the company's pleasant.
7. Man: And, how are you?
8. Woman: Just fine, thanks.
9. Man: (arriving at his floor)
10. Well, that wasn't too bad. Take care now.
11. Woman: Goodnight.

The lines exchanged by the man and woman provide data for a wide range of stage directions. Adding a direction to "smile" here, "frown" there, or to say a line with "suspense" rather than "relaxation," can provide very distinct roles.

Incidentally, the numbers next to each line of the exchanges above are not trivial additions. Before stage directions are added, it is useful to have those in our classes number all the lines. Directions can then be related to specific lines more easily: for example, "Add 'takes off his hat' to line 1." We can also easily ask someone to say a particular line, since all we have to say is, "Please say line 10, as if you are exhausted."

Dialogs that we collect from live exchanges or films or videos lend themselves to rewriting as much as any textbook dialogs. In both cases, we are free to attribute emotions to the characters (which changes the meanings of the words), alter their movements, as well as provide opportunities to change the words themselves. Adding "(takes out a gun)" to line 3 would force a number of subsequent word changes, and quite different renditions of the subsequent lines. Using actual dialogs, thus, can allow for just as much use of the imagination as dialogs written to illustrate particular points in textbooks.

The novelty of even the most dramatic exchanges from movies or live conversations can wear thin after a while. As those in our classes tire of words that others have said or written, they can be invited to compose their own dialogs, based either on pictures in the textbooks they have, pictures they bring to class, sketches they draw to develop an exchange, or on their own imaginations.

Reflections

Because of the need for more contrivance, some will consider the characterization of roles (e.g., personality traits, interests, and motivations) and settings (e.g., temperature, noise level, number of participants, and postures of participants) quite unnatural. There is no question that characterizations of roles and settings is unnatural. Nor is there any

question, however, that role playing itself is unnatural, even when we simply say one person is to be a waiter and one a customer in a cafe. Nor, if we continue the argument, is there any question that having x number of people in a room to learn a language is unnatural. Schools and classes are contrivances! But so are travel agencies, banks, post offices, car showrooms, assembly lines, computing offices, and just about every other setting in which we participate.

Just as we provide details of settings and people, so those in our classes have criteria beyond getting the words right. Therefore, we need criteria to see whether the alternatives we try produce any differences in our students. Are those in our classes saying lines with a greater range of movement and voice modulation as we characterize roles and settings? Is the polite, restrained applause that often

follows the usual formal, stilted "role plays" replaced by some laughter, expressions of astonishment, jeering, a few bravos and bravas, and some stomping of feet? Are the scripts those in our classes produced with more vigor and interest, and are they more varied, less mechanical, and more engaging when written by learners who assume a range of personality traits and roles that match real world settings in which people have to write certain things for very specific audiences and with precise purposes? Along the way, is there a bit of confusion? Mystery? Annoyance? Wonderment? Wonderful! A range of emotional reactions suggests a range of involvement, which is normal in the real world outside of the classroom. Contrivances in the classroom can make people natural, just as people are natural in a range of contrived situations outside the classroom.

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Making the Text Speak

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The idea of reading texts aloud in class does not seem to fit in very comfortably with the current emphasis on communication in language teaching. It conjures up pictures of students sitting in serried ranks, waiting to be called on by the teacher to read a few sentences, before the ordeal is handed on to the next student. Inevitably, the students read badly, with inaccurate pronunciation, little understanding, and no expression. It is rightly regarded, by students and teachers alike, as a dreary expedient for passing the time. It is hardly surprising, then, that “reading aloud” has been stigmatised by contemporary language teaching methodologists.

However, it does not have to be like that. If texts are performed aloud rather than simply read mechanically, they can form the basis of some highly communicative interaction, as well as provide a lively and motivating activity which energises the class.

In this article, I shall first of all explain how this can be done, using a poem as an example. I shall then proceed to detail the psychological and practical advantages of using texts in this way.

Reading for Effect

How then can we go about reading the text for effect? It is important to remember that texts such as poems and dramatised extracts are not being read primarily for their referential meaning. That is to say, their factual, information content is not the focus. We do not read the “Ode to a Nightingale” to find out about the zoological characteristics of this bird. For that we would go to a textbook on ornithology. The main concern is the aesthetic effect that such texts have on us. So, when reading them, we need to be concerned not simply with understanding their surface

meaning, but interpreting their effect on us and conveying that effect to an audience.

To do this, we need to make the best use of the resources of the human voice, and of the fact that there are many different human voices in the classroom. In fact, it may help to think of a group or a class as an orchestra or instrumental ensemble.

Voice Parameters

We can vary the way the text is read in a number of ways in order to make it more interesting to listen to. The following are the most commonly used:

- *Volume*. Some parts are better if they are spoken loudly, others more softly.
- *Pace/pausing*. Likewise, there may be portions of a text which can be spoken more quickly, whereas other parts need to be slowed down. It is especially important to decide where to pause, and for how long. The pauses in a performed text have a variety of purposes, but most often it is to give prominence to whatever words follow the pause. Pace is also concerned with the rhythm and variations in the rhythm.
- *Pitch level/pitch range*. (Pitch means whether a voice sounds high or deep in quality.) For much of the time, we only use a very limited pitch range (somewhere around the middle of our range) but we are all capable of stretching our range considerably. Reading texts in this way offers an ideal opportunity to bring more variety to the pitch we use. For example, we might use a higher pitch to express surprise or a lower pitch to express a threat.
- *Intensity/energy*. We can also vary the energy we put into our voice. This is not the same as volume; even a whisper can be spoken with a lot of energy.
- *Voice quality/manner*. (this means varying

the physical quality of the voice.) The words we have for describing these qualities are very inadequate, but they would include “whisper,” “cackle,” “creak,” “husky,” “cold,” “warm,” “liquid,” “nasal,” “muffled,” “booming,” and so on (Boon, 1991; Maley, forthcoming). It is especially important to draw on this range of voice qualities if you want to convey a character in the text.

• *Mood/tone.* Variations in mood, such as “eager,” “impatient,” “overjoyed,” or “disappointed,” can be conveyed through the voice tone.

Performance Modes

As well as the ways we can use the voice, it is possible to enhance effects by “orchestrating” the voices within a group or class. For example, some lines or sections of a text may be spoken solo, with just one voice. Others may use two or three voices speaking together. And some parts may be spoken chorally, with everyone speaking together.

More sophisticated ways of orchestrating a text include:

• using part of the text as a background “drone” against which the rest of the text is spoken (e.g., in “The Dark Wood” [see below], a small group of students might keep repeating “dark, dark” softly, as a background to the rest of

the poem);

- making an echo effect (e.g., some of the students might repeat part of a line more and more softly, like an echo);
- overlapping lines, where two students or groups read different lines at the same time, as in a round;
- adding sound effects (e.g., in the well-known poem, “The Highwayman” by Alfred Noyes, there are horses’ hooves, the sounds of soldiers’ boots, a shot from a gun, etc., all of which could be added to the performance of the poem).

These then are some of the resources we can draw upon for making a text sound more interesting. How might this work in practice? Directions have been added to the poem below to show how it might be performed. Of course, this is only one possible way of performing it. In fact, asking students to discuss alternative ways of speaking the poem is one of the important communicative spin-offs from this activity. (Note that where “Voice 1,” etc., is mentioned, you could equally well have “Group 1.” You could also have one group to produce the sound effects for each line after it is spoken and before the next line comes on. Note also that I have chosen a poem which lends itself quite well to group

MORNINGS

Rustling sheet, (Voice 1. Soft. Slow.)

Shuffling feet, (Voice 2. Slightly louder. Slow.)

Creaking bones, (Voice 3. Slightly louder. Low pitch on “bones.” Slow.)

Stifled groans, (Voice 4. Slightly louder. Long, low sound on “groans.” Slow.)

Chirping, crowing, (Voice 1. Louder, faster. High pitch on “chirping,” low on “crowing.”)

Noses blowing, (Voice 2. Louder, faster. High on “noses,” low/booming on “blowing.”)

Toilets flushing, (Voice 3. Louder, faster. Imitate flushing sound.)

Bath taps gushing, (Voice 4. Louder, faster. Imitate gushing sound.)

Coffee cups’ clatter, (Voice 1. Even louder, faster. High energy on “clatter.”)

Breakfast chatter, (Voice 2. Louder, faster. Echo effect on “chatter.”)

Neighbours singing, (Voice 3. Louder, faster. Echo on “singing.”)

Telephones ringing, (Voice 4. Louder, faster. Echo on “ringing.”)

Radios tuning, (Voices 1 & 2. Faster still, louder still.)

Traffic booming, (Voices 3 & 4. Faster, louder. Deep note on “boom.”)

Motorbikes thrumming, (Voices 1 & 2. Faster, louder. Throaty note on “thrumming.”)

Power drills drumming, (Voices 3 & 4. Faster, louder. Deep note on “drumming.”)

Jet planes thunder — (Everyone together. Very loud. Deep note on “thunder.” Pause.)

I just wonder (One voice only. Very soft. Long pause.)

At the NOISE! (Everyone together. Very loud, very long, tailing off to silence.)

-Alan Maley

performance. Obviously, each teacher would need to decide what would be suitable for a particular class in terms of subject matter [see below, Criteria for Selection].)

Advantages of this Approach

Psychological Advantages

1. This activity offers a secure framework for learners. Many students find it difficult to speak in free conversation; they cannot think of what to say, or they are embarrassed about mistakes they might make in front of their fellow students. This approach gives each student a part to play, and the parts can be decided partly on the basis of the language competence of each student. ("From each according to his capabilities; to each according to his needs.") By taking the pressure off having to think about what to say (the text tells them what to say), it also gives students time for thinking about how to say it.

2. If the activity is made a regular part of each classroom lesson, this adds to a sense of predictability, hence security. Such activities also tend to warm students up for more intellectually-demanding parts of the lesson. This is especially important in highly intensive school programmes, where the students are expected to shift rapidly from one curricular subject to another. A predictable, yet enjoyable introductory activity helps to mark the change from the previous lesson and to put them "in the mood" for English. As Appel (1995) says, "Recitation touches another side of the students' consciousness....I have more than once had the impression that when I do not start the lesson with the recitation activity, something is missing, namely the momentum for other activities" (p. 84).

3. The approach requires quite intense concentration on a piece of text. While the students' attention is focussed on how to speak the text, other aspects of the language are being absorbed sub-consciously through their peripheral awareness. This peripheral learning principle is a key concept in some contemporary approaches to learning, such as Suggestopedia. Yet we cannot have peripheral awareness unless our attention is

focussed somewhere! In this case, it is on the performance of the text.

4. Because the activity is non-threatening and leads to interesting outcomes in performance, it enhances motivation. Students are also more inclined to play with the language in this context. Very often they will exaggerate ways of speaking words or phrases in a way they would never do in more conventional activities. Daring to play with the language, not to be afraid of it, is a crucial step forward for anyone learning a foreign language.

Pedagogical Advantages

1. The approach fosters interactive discussion. Students have to decide how the text is to be performed. There will be different views on this. These views must somehow be reconciled through the discussion. Teachers will probably need to teach or pre-teach a minimal set of expressions for this discussion. For example, "I prefer Hiroko's idea," "I think it's better to..." or "No, I don't think that will work." Note that the discussion is about something "real," (i.e., their performance), not about something contrived. To this extent, students find it much more meaningful.

2. To perform a text in this way inevitably involves multiple repetitions of the text, but this kind of repetition is meaningful because it is oriented to a final purpose. It is therefore accepted much more readily than the meaningless repetition of drills. In fact, students will strive for a degree of perfection undreamed of in other, more traditional activities. Students "in theatre work will accept a degree of discipline and impose on themselves a relentless standard of perfection, which no one would ever dream of in the teaching context... In the overall context of theatre work, details of intonation, articulation, body movement are corrected to a degree which no other situation would allow" (Schwanitz, 1989, p. 151).

3. Likewise, memorization is a natural and accepted part of this kind of work with the text. Whether or not the text is intentionally learned by heart, fragments of it will inevitably lodge in the memory of those performing it.

Over time, students will both consciously and unconsciously acquire a substantial amount of vocabulary and typical structural phrases in this way.

4. Pronunciation is another inevitable aspect of this way of working with texts. In particular, it leads to a closer consideration and understanding of prosodic features of the language; that is to say, features such as rhythm, stress, and intonation. Unlike the phonemes of the language, these are difficult to separate out from the stream of speech and teach directly. They are best acquired as part of a more comprehensive, meaning-oriented activity. Adams (1976) has pointed to the value of using rhymes and poetry to inculcate the typical speech rhythms of English, as has Abercrombie (1965): "The rhythmic basis of verse is thus the same as that of prose (and it should be added, of conversation too...In fact, any smallish sequence of words taken out of verse could be a bit of conversation, and any smallish excerpt from conversation could be a bit of verse." More recently, Deborah Tannen has drawn attention to the verse-like structure of much conversation (Tannen, 1989).

5. There has been much talk of the whole language approach, which seeks to integrate rather than separate out the elements of the language to be taught. This corresponds with the principles adopted by the Rudolf Steiner Waldorf Schools. In particular, stress is laid on the need to involve the student physically and emotionally, as well as intellectually, in the learning activities: to feel as well as to think. The approach to performing texts being described here meshes closely with these beliefs. The very act of performing the text integrates physical activity (e.g., breathing, posture, movement, speaking with rhythm) with intellectual activity (e.g., deciding how to read the text, reading with understanding, giving an interpretation of the words on the page). As such, the contention is that it affords greater opportunities for learning "in depth," according to the theory of depth of processing (Craik & Lockhart, 1972).

6. The approach enhances the way texts

come to be understood by the students. In most approaches to reading, the aim is an intellectual comprehension of the text. Yet the text remains largely external to the students: They remain outside it. Here students come to apprehend the text, to "get a feel" for it in a way which goes beyond mere comprehension. By working intensively with it, they "get inside it." It is no longer external to them, for they have made it part of themselves: It belongs to them. This is particularly relevant for an understanding of literary texts. "Reciting—the speaking of texts—is a holistic, practical, and much less complex exercise than talking about a text. It can therefore be a good way to encounter literature, especially with younger (or less advanced) students" (Appel, 1995, p. 84). The same applies, of course, even to much more advanced literary texts. In my own teaching, I have found that the best way to an understanding of Shakespeare's sonnets is to ask students to think about, then demonstrate, how they should be spoken. The complex relationship of sense and sound, of thought and emotion, of the particular and the universal, then becomes much more readily grasped.

Criteria for Selection

Clearly, in deciding which texts to use, much will depend upon the level and interests of a particular group or class. In general, however, the following criteria can be applied.

- *Length.* Texts which are too long should be avoided. But the text needs to be long enough for the performance to be worthwhile. The texts which follow have been found to be about the right length.

- *Difficulty/complexity.* Generally, it is best to start with relatively simple texts which do not contain excessively difficult language, or present complex problems of interpretation. Shakespearean sonnets would not be a good place to start. More suitable are poems written for children, such as "Mornings," discussed above.

- *Multiple voices.* Texts which lend themselves

to division into parts for different voices are ideal. Some poems are even written in dialogue form. See, for example, "All there is to know about Adolf Eichmann." Others explicitly give voices to different characters, as in "The Responsibility."

• *Rhythmicality/repetition.* The pieces which work best have a strongly marked rhythm. It also helps if parts of the text are repeated, as

in a refrain, because these can be performed as a chorus.

• *Interest/humour.* It is best if the students can relate to the subject matter actively, by comparing it with their own experience and interests.

Below are four further examples of texts which can work well with the approach described above.

THE RESPONSIBILITY

I am the man who gives the word,
If it should come, to use the Bomb.

I am the man who spreads the word
From him to them, if it should come.

I am the man who gets the word
From him who spreads the word from him.

I am the man who drops the Bomb,
If ordered by the one who's heard
From him who merely spreads the word
The first one gives, if it should come.

I am the man who loads the Bomb
That he must drop, should orders come
From him who gets the word passed on
By one who waits to hear from him.

I am the man who makes the Bomb
That he must load for him to drop,
If told by one who gets the word
From one who passes it from him.

I am the man who fills the till,
Who pays the tax, who foots the bill
That guarantees the Bomb he makes
For him to load for him to drop,
If orders come from one who gets
The word passed on to him by one
Who waits to hear it from the man
Who gives the word to use the Bomb.
I am the man behind it all;
I am the one responsible.

-Peter Appleton.

HE NEVER SENT ME FLOWERS

He never sent me flowers.

He never wrote me letters.

He never took me to restaurants.

He never spoke of love.

We met in parks.

I don't remember what he said.

But I remember how he said it.

Most of it was silence anyway.

-Lescek Szkutnik.

THE DARK WOOD

In the dark, dark wood, there was a dark, dark house.

And in that dark, dark house, there was a dark, dark room.

And in that dark, dark room there was a dark, dark cupboard.

And in that dark, dark cupboard, there was a dark, dark, shelf.

And on that dark, dark shelf, there was a dark, dark box.

And in that dark, dark box, there was a GHOST!

-Anonymous.

ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT ADOLF EICHMANN

EYES : Medium

HAIR : Medium

WEIGHT : Medium

HEIGHT : Medium

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES : None

NUMBER OF FINGERS : Ten

NUMBER OF TOES : Ten

INTELLIGENCE : Medium

What did you expect?

Talons?

Oversize incisors?

Green saliva?

Madness?

-Leonard Cohen.

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Section III

Focus on Asia

Reflections of Japanese and Thai Teachers and Students on a Non-native Team Teaching Partnership

Jim Kahny

Language Institute of Japan

“It was the most wonderful experience that I’ve ever had. ...[T]his made my attitude toward English education change.”

The above quote is a comment that a Japanese teacher of English offered on her participation in the Thailand/Japan Team Teaching Exchange. Her remark represents one of many positive reactions to a non-native team teaching experience.

Background of the Program

Since 1993, the Language Institute of Japan (LIOJ) and the Srinakharinwirot University (SWU) Department of Linguistics in Bangkok have jointly conducted a team teaching exchange program for Japanese and Thai secondary school teachers of English. In this program, each Japanese teacher of English (JTE) stays at the home of, and team teaches in Thailand with, a Thai teacher of English (TTE) for two weeks in August. The Thai teacher comes to Japan and stays at the home of, and team teaches with, the same Japanese partner for two weeks in October.

The goals of the Thailand/Japan Team Teaching Exchange are as follows: (a) to provide the opportunity for Japanese and Thai teachers of English to team teach together and host each other in their homes; (b) to foster among Japanese and Thai participants a greater awareness of the education, culture, and language of each other’s country; (c) to provide participants with alternative perspectives on Thai and Japanese societies

thereby breaking down existing stereotypes of Japan and Thailand; (d) to encourage the use of English as a means for promoting international understanding and goodwill between Japanese and Thais; (e) to promote professional development among participants by encouraging the exchange of ideas and techniques in the field of communicative language teaching; (f) to provide the opportunity for participants to share their perspectives as non-native English teachers; and (g) to introduce Thai teachers of English to the team teaching approach and to provide the opportunity for Japanese teachers of English to experience team teaching from the perspective of the visiting teacher.

This exchange is unique in several respects. First, the teachers in this program are all professional non-native teachers of English. (In contrast, all Japan Exchange and Teaching [JET] Program assistant language teachers [ALTs] teach their native language.) Second, this program offers JTEs the opportunity to teach English in a secondary school outside of Japan, and experience team teaching from a new perspective. Third, JTEs participating in this exchange have introduced the concept of team teaching to Thai secondary school EFL education.

This paper will provide an informal evaluation of the program by looking at teacher and student comments. From these comments, a brief conclusion will be drawn regarding the efficacy of a non-native team teaching partnership.

Teacher Comments

Twenty-eight teachers—14 JTEs and 14 TTEs—participated in the exchange from 1993 to 1996. At the end of the program in Japan, all participating teachers were asked to reflect on various aspects of the exchange, including the non-native team teaching partnership, by way of an anonymous, open-ended questionnaire in English. Below is a sample of Japanese and Thai teacher observations on teaching with a non-native colleague.

Question 1: [to both teachers] How would you describe your experience team teaching with another non-native speaker of English? [to the JTE only] How does the experience teaching with a non-native speaker compare to your experience teaching with a native speaker?

Japanese Teachers

Among Japanese teachers, these questions elicited two common reactions. The first concerned the teaching of pronunciation and whether it might be disadvantageous teaming with another non-native speaker. The second common reaction was the expression of empathy for the situation of the ALT in Japan. Other comments focused on how the L1 is used in team teaching class and how a non-native partnership can provide a good model for students. The following are some examples of comments from JTEs.

- “Pronunciation, but...”

I realized that it made little difference whether I team teach with a native speaker or a non-native speaker. It is true that team teaching with a non-native speaker would have some disadvantages in terms of teaching pronunciation and English usage, but it successfully got students to [think of] English as an international language and a tool for communication. My partner has been teaching English using a communicative way and had enough experience to take initiative in both planning and [conducting] lessons. She gave me some hints on teaching strategies.

- “Pronunciation, but...”

A native speaker can understand what I say if my pronunciation is bad. But we were

both non-native and we had some difficulties understanding each other's pronunciation. But I didn't have difficulty in team teaching class. I don't have difficulty if she is a native speaker or not.

- “Empathy for ALT”

As for me, I learned a lot by having an experience as a visiting teacher in the team teaching class. I usually host ALTs. But this time, I could see team teaching from the other side: (a) introducing myself like ALTs do in Japan; (b) sometimes I had to wait while the Thai teacher explained the instructions in Thai; (c) many students always around me asking questions or asking me to write their names in Japanese or for my autograph; and (d) discussing teaching plans which the Thai teacher made. Since both of us had our own teaching style, we needed to have frank discussion to understand each other. During my two weeks, I often considered the situation of the ALTs who work with me. To become a visiting teacher was quite a strange experience, and at the same time, I found some interesting points which I could see only from the visiting teacher's side. This experience has been a valuable lesson to me.

- “Use of Japanese in class”

The team teaching experience with a non-native speaker was significant. I had to cooperate equally in the classes because [the students and I] had no common [first] language. In Japan we tend to use Japanese with both students and native speakers.

- “Advantages to both native and non-native speakers”

It was very interesting for me. I think it is good for showing the students that we can communicate in English as well with non-native speakers. Both native team teaching and non-native team teaching have good aspects in English classes. We should put them to practical use.

Thai Teachers

Feedback from the Thai teachers indicated that the non-native aspect of the program was no more or less novel than was team teaching itself. (It is important to keep in mind that this exchange offered the first team teaching experience to Thai teachers.) The following are some examples of comments

from TTEs.

- “No problems”

I had no problems in team teaching with another non-native speaker of English. We can communicate with each other in English as well as with native speakers.

- “Same goal”

Even though my partner and I are different nationalities, we can understand each other. We have the same goal. When I had a problem, I could discuss with my partner and we met half way. I learned lots of things in team teaching with my partner and I hope she learnt from me.

- “Model of communication”

We planned the lesson together. We shared ideas. In class, we communicated by giving examples from our roles and the students were the center of the class. They tried to repeat and then do by themselves.

Question 2: [to both teachers] How is team teaching as a visiting teacher (VT) abroad different from team teaching as a host teacher (HT) in your own school?

Japanese Teachers

In comparing their experience as visiting teacher and host teacher, Japanese teachers again raised two main issues. The first was the expression of empathy for the ALT. The second was the issue of leadership in team teaching; that is, which teacher, the HT or the VT, should take the initiative in planning and conducting lessons.

- “Need explanation” / “Empathy for ALT”

There is not enough explanation to the visiting teacher. My partner explained a lot, but most of the Thai teachers—even English teachers—didn’t explain to me about what they were thinking to do in their classes or what they were talking about among themselves in Thai. We sometimes do that to ALT teachers. So I have to be more careful about that.

- “Visiting teacher should lead”

I asked my partner to accept my proposal for Japanese culture class. She wanted to give them basic conversation at stores. I felt I was a little pushy, but she can teach that topic without me at any time. I’d like to ask her to propose whatever topic or way that

she wants to do when she visits us [in Japan]. The visiting teacher should lead the team teaching class.

- “Host teacher has busier role”

It’s different. The host teacher knows her students well, but the visiting teacher doesn’t. And the host teacher has to think about the lesson plan more than the visiting teacher. So being the visiting teacher is easy and interesting. Also, the TTE used English in class so I understood what was going on.

- “Empathy for ALT” / “Host teacher should lead” / “Need to observe first”

I could understand how a visiting teacher feels in a team teaching lesson. I think the success of team teaching depends on how well a host teacher takes an initiative in [making] the lesson procedure. My first team teaching didn’t go as smoothly as I had expected. I should have been given a chance to observe my partner’s English lesson before we team taught so that I could [become familiar with] her style of teaching.

Thai Teachers

In comparing the HT and VT experience, Thai teachers also raised the issue of leadership in team teaching. Their responses included other various observations on the team teaching experience.

- “Lead teacher”

[Team teaching as a VT] is very different from team teaching in Thailand. In Thailand, I gave my partner a chance for writing the lesson plan and helping me make the materials. We shared ideas and [discussed the lesson plan]. In Japan, at first she did it by herself and refused to write a lesson plan. After I talked with her, she and I [worked toward] the same goal and learnt lots from each other.

- “Students’ listening”

For the visiting teacher [in Japan], Japanese students often listen to their own teacher. They didn’t understand when I gave instructions to them. They waited until their teacher spoke in Japanese. So I had to follow their teacher. As a host teacher, my students listened to my partner.

- “New experiences” / “Sharing ideas”

As a visiting teacher, I learned how to teach English with three [Japanese] teachers who have different styles. I had conversation

classes with two foreign teachers: an American teacher and a Canadian teacher. I got much experience. As for team teaching as a host teacher, we shared ideas with each other.

• “VT’s effect on class”

Students [learn] about another country, [its] people and students. They’d like to know about [other] students’ lives. The visiting teacher makes students alert in learning language.

Question 3: [to the JTE only] Has this experience changed your perspective on regular team teaching with an ALT in Japan?

Japanese Teachers

Participation in this exchange prompted many Japanese teachers to reflect on their own team teaching with an ALT partner in Japan and how English is used in the classroom.

• “Empathy for ALT”

I am convinced that this program would give every participant a valuable experience because it provides us with a unique opportunity to get access to Thai culture—a non-English speaking society—through English. We also can experience the role of a visiting teacher. It would be a great help in team teaching with an ALT in Japan because we can understand our partner better.

• “Need to use more English in class”

Teaching English in English is needed when I teach English in my classes. I’m trying, but it’s easier and I need less time [to teach using Japanese]. I sometimes notice that I teach in Japanese. It’s better to talk a lot with ALT teachers.

• “Need to use more English in class”

I think I have to use English more in class for the ALT’s understanding. Students must try to understand the ALT’s English even if they have difficulty.

• “Meet people” / “English study”

For these two weeks I’ve been thinking about what team teaching is. It looks like a turning point for me....The most precious thing for me was not only team teaching, but that I could meet a lot of people. All of [my colleagues in Japan] said to me, ‘We were very happy to meet [the Thai teacher] and all the students had a wonderful experience.’ One [student] said, ‘I felt the necessity of studying English. So I want to study it.’ So

I was very happy and satisfied. This program gave me an opportunity to study about English education.

Student Comments

From 1993 to 1996, all participating teachers surveyed a random sample of their students following the VT’s stay. The anonymous questionnaire was completed by 1,449 secondary students in Japan and 1,213 secondary students in Thailand in their native languages.

In 1996, the questionnaire was modified to elicit more open-ended responses. For the purpose of tallying students’ responses, similar comments were grouped together. Miscellaneous responses have been categorized as positive or negative if they could clearly be interpreted as such, or as neutral if they could not clearly be identified as a positive or negative statement. The exact numbers of Thai students who gave each particular comment are not available for the years 1995 and 1996. For these years, the most common responses are listed without totals.

The student feedback below is an indication of (a) the degree to which students enjoyed the Japanese-Thai team teaching classes, (b) the need students feel for further English study as a result of the exchange, and (c) the extent to which students’ images of the other country and its people changed as a result of the exchange.

Question 1: Did you enjoy having a Japanese teacher and a Thai teacher together in class? (Table 1)

Table 1 - Student Enjoyment (1993-96)

Student responses	Japanese	Thai
Enjoyed very much	642 (44.3)	913 (75.3)
Enjoyed	531 (36.7)	275 (22.7)
Enjoyed a little	257 (17.7)	20 (1.6)
Did not enjoy	16 (1.1)	3 (0.2)
No answer	3 (0.2)	2 (0.2)
Total	1,449 (100)	1,213 (100)

Note. Raw number of responses (with percentages in parentheses).

The non-native team teaching partnership was well received by an overwhelming majority of the students surveyed. Eighty-one percent of Japanese students and 98% of Thai students responded that they “enjoyed” or “enjoyed very much” having a Japanese and Thai teacher together in class.

Question 2: As a result of the team teaching class, do you see the need for studying English more? (Table 2.1)

Table 2.1 - Need for Studying English (1993-96)

Student responses	Japanese	Thai
Yes	1,196 (82.5)	1,196 (98.6)
No	245 (16.9)	15 (1.2)
No answer	8 (0.6)	2 (0.2)
Total	1,449 (100)	1,213 (100)

Note. Raw number of responses (with percentages in parentheses).

The percentages of students in each country that answered “yes” to Question 2 corresponded closely to the percentages of students who enjoyed the program or enjoyed it very much. The open-ended “why” or “why not” comments from 1996 (Tables 2.2 and 2.3) offer insight into their reasoning.

The total number of Japanese students surveyed in 1996 is 252. Of those students, 214 answered “yes.” Of the students who answered “yes,” 177 offered comments. Similar comments have been grouped together.

If yes, why? (Table 2.2)

Table 2.2 - Why Study English? (1996)

Japanese student comments	
• I would like to talk with foreign people/with the TTE. (52)	
• I did not always understand well so I need to study more. (47)	
• I enjoyed the team teaching class a lot. (25)	
• English is a useful language. (24)	
• Other “positive” responses. (29)	
• Total (177)	

Note. (Raw number of comments in parentheses.)

The total number of Thai students surveyed in 1996 is 247. Of those students, 246 answered “yes.” Of the students who answered “yes,” the number who offered comments is unknown.

If yes, why? (Table 2.3)

Table 2.3 - Why Study English? (1996)

Thai student comments	
• English is an international language.	
• English will be useful for further study.	
• I can use English to communicate with people from other countries.	
• We can use English in our daily lives.	
• Total (246)	

Note. (Raw number of each comment is unknown.)

In 1996, of the 37 Japanese students who answered “no” to Question 2, 24 offered comments, of which 16 were categorized as negative, and 8 were categorized as neutral. The one Thai student who answered “no” in 1996 did not write a comment.

Question 3: Before this program, what was your image of Thailand/Japan and Thai/Japanese people? (Tables 3.1 and 3.2)

One of the goals of the exchange is “to provide participants with alternative perspectives on Thai and Japanese societies thereby breaking down existing stereotypes of Japan and Thailand and the people of both countries.” The purpose of questions 3 and 4, posed in 1996 only, was to assess how well this goal was achieved by asking students to describe their image of the other country and its people before and after the exchange. While the pre-program images included a significant number that could be categorized as negative (Tables 3.1 and 3.2), the post-program images were mostly positive (Tables 4.1 and 4.2).

The number of Japanese students who offered comments on Question 3 was 229 out of 252 surveyed. Because some Japanese students offered more than one image, the

sum of the comments (259) is greater than the total number of students who offered them. Similar comments have been grouped together. For Thai students, the number of comments from among 247 surveyed is unknown.

Table 3.1 - Images of Thailand/Thais (1996)
Japanese student comments (before the program)

- I did not know anything about Thailand or have much of an impression. (42)
- I had a bad image of Thailand/foreigners. (33)
- I thought Thailand was a good/beautiful country; Thais are good people. (22)
- Thailand is a Buddhist country. (21)
- I did not think Thais could speak English. (20)
- Other images: "neutral" (68), "negative" (36), "positive." (17)
- Total (229)

Note. (Raw number of comments in parentheses.)

Table 3.2 - Images of Japan/Japanese (1996)
Thai student comments (before the program)

- Japan is an industrial country with highly advanced technology.
- Japan is a beautiful country.
- The Japanese economy is very good./Japan is a rich country.
- Japanese are polite/peaceful/well-disciplined/well-cultured/lively/intelligent/hard-working.
- Japanese women are beautiful.
- Japanese are serious/selfish/very patriotic.
- Japanese cannot speak English well.
- Japanese look down on people from other countries.
- Total (247)

Note. (Raw number of each comment is unknown.)

Question 4: After studying with the Thai/Japanese teacher, how has your image of Thailand/Japan and Thai/Japanese people changed? (Tables 4.1 and 4.2)

The number of Japanese students who offered comments on Question 4 was 194 out of 252 surveyed. Similar comments have

been grouped together. For Thai students, the number of comments among 247 surveyed is unknown.

Table 4.1 - Images of Thailand/Thais (1996)
Japanese student comments (after the program)

- Thais are gentle/warm/kind/good/polite people. (87)
- Thailand is a good/beautiful country. (33)
- Japan and Thailand are similar. (30)
- Other images: "positive" (28), "neutral." (16)
- Total (229)

Note. (Raw number of comments in parentheses.)

Table 4.2 - Images of Japan/Japanese (1996)
Thai student comments (after the program)

- Japanese people are lovely/kind/joyful/polite/well-cultured.
- The Japanese teacher was very helpful.
- I would like to visit Japan/study Japanese.
- Japanese culture is very interesting.
- Total (247)

Note. (Raw number of each comment is unknown.)

Question 5: Do you have any other comments? (Tables 5.1 and 5.2)

Finally, students were asked to give any further comments on the program. Although this question elicited only a very brief comment from those who responded, once again, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

The total number of comments from Japanese students was 620 from among the 1,449 students surveyed. The total number of comments from Thai students was 388 from among the 582 students surveyed. Similar comments have been grouped together.

Comments of Japanese students are from 1993 to 1996. Comments of Thai students are from 1993 to 1994 only as totals from 1995 to 1996 are not available.

Table 5.1 - General Comments (1993-96)

Japanese student comments

- I enjoyed the team teaching lessons very much. (127)
- I would like to learn more Thai language and culture. (81)
- I enjoyed trying to communicate with the Thai teacher. (64)
- I would like the Thai teacher to stay longer. (63)
- The TTE is friendly/gentle/cheerful/kind/polite. (57)
- I especially enjoyed Thai dancing/singing/games. (50)
- Because of the Thai teacher, I gained confidence/motivation/a positive attitude. (45)
- Other comments: "positive" (112), "negative" (11), "neutral." (10)
- Total (620)

Note. (Raw number of comments in parentheses.)

Table 5.2 - General Comments (1993-94)

Thai student comments

- I would like to have a foreign English teacher more often. (156)
- I would like the Japanese teacher to stay longer. (118)
- I would like to have more team teaching classes. (40)
- I would like to have more Japanese language lessons and cultural activities. (18)
- The Japanese teacher is very helpful/friendly. (13)
- Other comments: "positive" (30), "neutral" (9), "negative." (4)
- Total (388)

Note. (Raw number of comments in parentheses.)

Conclusion

Non-native team teaching partnerships can make a significant contribution to EFL education in Japan and Thailand. Judging from the feedback from the Thai and Japanese students, a non-native team teaching partnership can be an enjoyable and motivating experience for students. At the same time, it can be a means of breaking down stereo-

types and negative images through positive experiences.

For Thai and Japanese teachers, a non-native partnership can prompt reflection on English teaching in general and on team teaching in particular from a fresh perspective. JTEs and TTEs can learn a great deal from each other. Twenty-eight English teachers and thousands of students in Japan and Thailand have benefited from this program. They have experienced in their own schools the role that a non-native team teaching partnership can play in promoting international understanding. In the future, it is hoped that many more teachers and students in both Japan and Thailand will have a similar opportunity.

I would like to conclude with the full comments of the JTE participant quoted at the beginning of this article. She achieved tremendous professional and personal growth as a result of her experience in Thailand.

Before arriving at the Thai school, I wondered if I could get along with the students. I was excited in my heart. However, as soon as I arrived at the school, many students spoke to me in English earnestly. Their jollity and smiles made my fears go away. They invited me to play basketball after school. I can't speak Thai, but I didn't need it because we could communicate with each other. On the second day, I made a speech in front of all the students and joined some ceremonies. Everything was a new experience for me. The Thai school [combines] both junior and senior high school, so I could see ceramic arts and catfish breeding. I have never seen such things in a Japanese junior high school. Moreover, some teachers showed me a lot of [crafts] the students made. They were very wonderful. I was also excited to watch Thai boxing.

In Japanese culture class, I taught Japanese culture, music, dance, and some games. Students couldn't understand English well, [so I tried hard to communicate with them]. Although I'm [not sure] whether they could understand Japan or not, we really enjoyed our time together. I soon felt they were interested in me and

in Japan, so the response of the class was very good. In spite of their noise, I'll never forget that I earnestly gave lessons with much sweat. They listened to my class very hard with their eyes shining, so I forgot that I was in Thailand and I realized that every student in every country is the same. It was beyond description.

In team teaching class, I taught past tense and the progressive form, but I still wonder whether I bothered my partner. I thought about the difficulties of team teaching and the position of the ALT [in Japan]. I made the next day's plan with my partner every evening and we practiced beforehand. But I couldn't do well at first and I sometimes forgot my parts. Every time I made a mistake, she helped me, so I could get through it. In the process of doing so, I got accustomed to team teaching class and my fears went away.

Two weeks passed and the last day came. I was afraid of it and wanted to stay longer. Although there were a lot of insufficiencies in my class, I made an effort to get to know students and we could enjoy being together, although only for two weeks. It was the most wonderful experience that I've ever had. It goes without saying that this made my attitude toward English education change. Thank you very much!

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For Further Reading

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English Education in Asia

“The Language Institute of Asia”

The Language Institute of Japan is located in a building called Asia Center Odawara, which is on a hilltop overlooking the city of Odawara. From the roof of the building, one can see, in detail, the buildings and streets of the city below. There is a beautiful panoramic view of the coast of Japan, which includes the Miura Peninsula to the east and the Izu Peninsula to the south. Looking directly out toward the horizon, you can see the vast expanse of Sagami Bay and, beyond that, the Pacific Ocean.

The view from the roof of Asia Center Odawara is similar in scope to the programs run by LIOJ. Locally, we provide community English courses, special lectures, and team teaching lessons in public junior high schools. On a national scale, we welcome teachers, students, and business professionals from all over Japan to our Workshop, high school intensive courses, and business communication programs. In addition, we look beyond our own shores, to the English-teaching world around us. In our efforts to learn more about and to actively participate in that world, we have taken a special interest in the Asia-Pacific region.

LIOJ faculty members have, over the years, come from countries around the globe, with a number coming from countries in the Asia-Pacific region. In the 1990s, our staff has included teachers from China, India, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

Various activities we are involved in also help us to maintain an international perspective. Every year, the LIOJ International Summer Workshop for Teachers of English features presentations by teachers from around Asia. Recent Workshops have included teachers from Burma, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Laos, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Among these participants are scholars from

Thai TESOL and Korea TESOL. In addition, LIOJ and the Srinakharinwirot University Department of Linguistics in Bangkok are partners in offering a team teaching exchange program for Japanese and Thai secondary school teachers of English (see Kahny, Paper 20). Finally, LIOJ co-sponsors with the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) the Asian Educator Scholars on their “4Corners of Japan Tour.” In recent years, this has included teachers from China, Laos, and the Philippines.

English Education in Asia

To continue our involvement with English education in Asia, we decided to include in this book a special series of articles about English education in Korea, China, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and India. Our aim is to provide readers, most of whom reside in Japan, with a firsthand account of English education in nearby countries and the situations that our colleagues in these countries are facing.

To give the series a common theme, we asked the writers to address the following questions:

- How has history influenced English education in your country?
- What is the nature of English study at each level of education (primary, secondary, tertiary)?
- To what extent is English a component of the secondary school curriculum?
- Generally speaking, how is English taught in secondary schools?
- What opportunities do people have to use English in their daily lives?

We hope that these perspectives will give readers a clearer understanding of English education around the Asia-Pacific region.

the Editors

English Education in Korea

Sungsil Ahn
Nanwoo Middle School

How has history influenced English education in Korea?

Historically, English education in Korea can be divided into three main periods. The first period was from 1883 to 1909, the second period from 1910 to 1944, and the third period from 1945 to the present.

The first public English school was established in 1883 in order to train English interpreters for diplomatic services and trade. At the same time, missionaries such as Alice Appenzeller, Mary Scranton and Horace Underwood came to Korea and founded private schools. They taught English to promote their missionary work and independent thinking. Because these missionaries were unfamiliar and uncomfortable with the Korean language, they taught English in English.

In 1910, Japan invaded Korea. Because Japanese education was enforced by the Japanese government, English education in Korea was weakened. Under Japanese rule, English teachers usually used the grammar-translation method of instruction, placing emphasis on mastering the difficult English grammar as opposed to English usage in daily life.

In 1945, Korea declared its independence from Japan. Since then, English has been taught in middle schools, high schools and universities. When the Korean War broke out in 1950, however, most schools were destroyed, and it was difficult to continue to teach. America provided much aid to Korea during the war, and since then the two countries have maintained a close relationship. This has had a great influence on English

education in Korea.

From 1945 to 1995, Korea underwent educational reform six times. The first reform started with the audio-lingual method of language instruction, which was based on structuralism and descriptive grammar. In a subsequent reform, it was suggested that teaching English through contrastive analysis was the most effective approach. This meant that teachers were involved in the analysis of differences and similarities between English and Korean. This trend evolved into both generative-transformational grammar and cognitive theory. Since the mid 1980s, the communicative approach has been the generally accepted approach to English instruction, and the primary focus has been on fluency and functional grammar.

What is the nature of English study at each level of education? To what extent is English a component of the secondary school curriculum?

Since 1981, English has been taught in elementary school as an extracurricular activity. In March 1997, third grade students started to learn English for two hours a week, and now students from the third grade to the sixth grade study English as part of the school curriculum. Homeroom teachers are in charge of teaching English, and they try to make the classes interesting and enjoyable through the use of videos, games, songs, visual aids, and computers.

According to the sixth educational reform in 1995, middle and high school teachers have placed emphasis on learner-centered, process-oriented and functional-notional approaches.

The aims are to develop communicative competence, to understand other cultures, and to introduce our culture to the world.

In middle schools, students usually have 34 classes a week, four of which are English classes; in high schools, students usually have 38 classes a week, four to six hours of which are English classes. Besides a compulsory English course, high school students can choose an elective course in English conversation, English comprehension or business English. English constitutes about 25% of the university entrance exam. The English component is a test of four skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing—but the main part of the exam focuses on listening and reading comprehension. There are several kinds of texts available, and teachers can choose one suitable for their purposes.

Since 1995, native speakers have been working as assistant English teachers in many public middle and high schools. They generally teach English conversation through a team teaching approach. In addition to texts, the native speaker teachers sometimes prepare their own materials and talk about lesson plans with the Korean English teachers. Through these once-a-week team teaching classes, it is hoped that students can gain confidence in expressing their opinions in English.

In universities, first-year students must take an English course for one or two semesters. These courses are designed to give students an opportunity to develop their oral communication and reading skills, with the main goal of helping students become competent communicators in English. Some university students spend time in English-speaking countries such as America, England, Canada, and Australia studying English. A common goal is to get a high score on the TOEFL or TOEIC, because this will make it easier to get a good job in the future.

What opportunities do people have to use English in their daily lives?

Korean people have few opportunities to use English in their daily lives. However, many English store signs can be seen along

the streets, and Koreans are using more English in song lyrics and brand names than ever before. English is also frequently heard through the mass media. In addition, there are many visitors and workers from other countries in Korea these days, as well as a large number of Korean branches of foreign companies. In these companies, people who are fluent in English often get promotions more rapidly than others.

Generally speaking, how is English taught in secondary schools?

Middle and high schools have large classes, ranging from 40 to 50 students, so teachers encourage students to engage in small-group work as often as possible. This provides a chance for students to interact in a way similar to the face-to-face situations of everyday life. In order to maintain the students' interest, teachers provide variety in the classroom in terms of activity, pace, organization, and voice.

In 1997, the Ministry of Education proposed that students be split up into different classes according to their level for more effective learning. Compliance by schools was voluntary in the first semester and compulsory in the second semester. This requires teachers to spend more time planning and testing the various levels within a grade; however, students and parents support the idea as more effective in meeting students' needs.

Traditionally, English education in Korea was grammar-translation oriented and focused on language analysis rather than the communicative use of language. The university entrance exam required this kind of knowledge, and as a result, most students were able to conduct only basic English conversation. Currently the trend is changing as teachers are aiming towards developing communicative competence. For example, in contrast to their older versions, newly-revised texts emphasize listening and speaking components.

Most Korean English teachers participate in an in-service training program sponsored by the government. In this program, they develop their English and teaching skills

through discussions on methodology with native speakers.

The trend in English education in Korea is toward developing students' (and teachers') communicative competence. Teachers are moving away from a teacher-centered and

toward a more learner-centered methodology. They are also trying to integrate technologies, such as computer assisted language learning (CALL) programs, multimedia, English TV programs, and the Internet, into their classrooms.

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English Education in China

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For the past half century, English education in China has undergone changes commensurate with changes on the domestic and international scenes. In the 1950s, there was an indifference toward EFL teaching at all levels, and in the mid 1960s there was a resurgence in the field. Since the late 1970s, EFL education in China has been steadily improving with the implementation of the country's open door policy and the improvement of China's economy and international relations. Today, English is enjoying an upsurge in popularity among Chinese people because of an awareness of its importance for international communication and career advancement.

How has history influenced English education in China?

In the period immediately following the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the country was cut off from the outside world, except the former USSR and some Eastern European countries under Soviet influence. This international isolation, combined with a pro-Russian policy, inevitably affected foreign language teaching in China. Russian was the predominant foreign language from the early 1950s to the early 1960s, while student enrollment in English language programs in colleges and universities was reduced or, in some cases, stopped altogether.

A similar situation existed in Chinese secondary schools. Before 1954, most high

schools in China offered Russian as the sole foreign language course. Only a small number of schools with church affiliation offered English classes for senior high students. Foreign language courses were removed from the junior high curriculum in 1954, and eventually restored in 1957.

The mid 1960s saw a gradual resurgence of English education at both the secondary and tertiary levels. In 1964, ten tertiary-level foreign language institutions and programs were set up across the country by the central or local governments, with English as the core language. This was a sign of the country's demand for English-trained personnel in response to the country's growing involvement in international affairs. EFL teaching at secondary schools also entered a new phase. During this period, the Chinese Ministry of Education issued a new curriculum which indicated that the aim of English teaching at secondary schools was to enable students to have a basic command of English and to acquire a corresponding ability to read books in English. Contact hours for English classes in the six years of secondary education were increased to a total of 1,238 hours. But the new status of English education did not last long. The Cultural Revolution, which started in 1966, brought all classroom instruction to a full stop, disrupting education at all levels in China.

English education gained importance in the late 1970s with the implementation of the state's open-door policy. In 1978, the Chinese

education authorities implemented an experimental curriculum for ten-year primary and secondary school education. The curriculum plan called for foreign language study to begin in the third grade, and aimed to provide students with a solid foundation in either English or Russian by the end of high school. A subsequent draft of an EFL curriculum emphasized the development of students' reading and self-study skills as the general goal, properly combined with training in the skills of listening, speaking, writing, and translation. Furthermore, the document stated that after eight years of English study, students should know the basics of grammar and pronunciation, and acquire a 2,800-word vocabulary and a number of idiomatic expressions. Upon completing high school, students should be able to read simplified English materials on general topics and gain certain abilities in listening, speaking, writing, and translation in English.

Beginning in 1988 with the implementation of a new nine-year curriculum, standardized textbooks were introduced at the primary and junior high levels, and later at the senior high level. The new series, which included textbooks, workbooks, reading materials, listening cassettes, video tapes, pictures and charts for classroom use, and teacher reference books, were co-edited by the People's Education Press and Longman, Ltd. to ensure the correct use of idiomatic English. These textbooks have been used all over the country and have served to standardize EFL instruction, with only a few exceptions such as the city of Shanghai and the provinces of Guangdong, Sichuan, and Jiangsu, where the level of English education is higher, and local authorities have been allowed to use their own texts and university entrance examinations. English language education has flourished at all levels in the past decade, and currently enjoys a popularity in Chinese secondary schools unmatched by any other foreign language.

Generally speaking, how is English taught in secondary schools?

Textbooks. The state-sanctioned textbooks

follow three principles regarding English language teaching (ELT): ELT should (a) facilitate the development of the student's moral character, (b) emphasize the development of the student's ability in English rather than the student's knowledge of English, and (c) follow an integrated four-skills approach with a variation of skill emphasis at different levels. (For example, at the elementary level, training focuses on listening and speaking with supplementary exercises in reading and writing. At higher levels, the focus is on reading comprehension, combined with supplementary practice in listening and speaking.)

Teaching methods. Until 1988, English language teaching in Chinese secondary schools reflected a teacher-centered, grammar-translation approach. The new EFL textbooks follow a functional-structural syllabus in which listening and speaking are emphasized over reading and writing. This new direction has required teachers to alter their view of English education and their methods of teaching. Transformation from a grammar-translation to a functional-structural approach is in progress, and will require further effort in order to achieve satisfactory results.

Teachers. There are presently about 470,000 secondary school teachers of English in China. About one third are graduates of a four-year, tertiary-level program with a B.A. degree. Another one third have a two- or three-year vocational program certificate. The final one third have only special secondary qualifications. Some of them are self-trained and some have transferred to English from other subjects such as Chinese, math, or biology. In coping with the shortage of well-trained English teachers, various training programs have been held by institutions throughout the country. Current efforts of the education authorities focus on retraining the final one-third of teachers, with the expectation that in a few years' time, these teachers will upgrade their qualifications to university or vocational graduate level.

China has developed rapidly in the past two decades, and now plays a more active role in international affairs. The economy and standard of living have grown steadily. The domestic and international situations have had an impact on English education at all levels in China. Now, in colleges and universities, teachers of English are encouraged to teach additional hours to meet the need. At the elementary and secondary levels, parents have cooperated with educational authorities in raising the status of English education. Because of the importance of English to a

student's higher education and future career opportunities, many parents send their children to private English classes after school.

English is also popular with government and company employees. Besides attending English training programs, many employees voluntarily take part in English conversation activities in their spare time. By the turn of the century, China will hopefully be a nation with a growing population of fluent English speakers. With this achieved, a window to the world will be wide open for the Chinese people.

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English Education in Hong Kong

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How has history influenced English education in Hong Kong?

History plays an important part in English education in Hong Kong, where over 98% of the population are Cantonese-speaking ethnic Chinese. In 1892, as a result of China's defeat in the First Anglo-Chinese War, Hong Kong became a British colony. Hong Kong has since developed into a bilingual society, in which both Chinese (Cantonese and Standard Written Chinese) and English are used.

The superior status of English over Chinese in the legal and official domains in Hong Kong was established at the beginning of the British period of rule. In the early decades of the twentieth century, English was the prestigious language and the official language. Not until 1974 did Chinese become the other official language. However, in some areas, such as law, the English version of official documents has continued to be the authoritative one.

The bilingual nature of the language situation in Hong Kong implied the necessity for students to learn both Chinese and English. With the change of sovereignty from British to Chinese on July 1, 1997, Hong Kong has become a Special Administrative Region of China. As a result, there has been a growing demand for trilinguals who are competent in English, Cantonese, and Putonghua (Mandarin Chinese).

What is the nature of English study at each level of education?

Virtually all kindergartens and primary schools in Hong Kong teach in Cantonese, except for the minority of international schools

for non-Chinese speaking children. Some exposure to English is available in most kindergartens, while English is taught in primary schools as a second language.

Secondary schools are basically of two types: the English-medium and the Cantonese-medium schools. These two groups are referred to, respectively, as "Anglo-Chinese Schools" and "Chinese Middle Schools."

For tertiary education, English is the principal medium of instruction.

What opportunities do people have to use English in their daily lives?

On the socio-cultural level, there are English newspapers, television stations, radio stations, and other forms of pleasure and entertainment. English is an important tool for study and work in schools, trade and commerce, science and technology, various professions, and the civil service. Yet outside the classroom or after work, Cantonese is preferred. In other words, where practical study and work needs are concerned, the use of English is active; where the mass media and "info-tainment" are concerned, the use of English is limited to receptive skills; where daily lives are concerned, Cantonese is used by the majority. To sum up, English is more an inter-ethnic than intra-ethnic language in the territory. Its use is highly compartmentalized and its status is, hence, auxiliary (Luke & Richards, 1982).

To what extent is English a component of the secondary school curriculum?

At the secondary level, the curriculum enables students to consolidate and extend the

English already learned in primary school (Curriculum Development Committee, 1983). At this level, students should be able to speak, read, write, and understand English, using the language content of the suggested syllabus for primary schools, which should be extended by controlled exposure to the target language.

English is one of three core subjects in the secondary school curriculum. The other two core subjects are Chinese and mathematics. The core subjects are taught up to secondary school level five. (Secondary levels 1-7 in Hong Kong are roughly equivalent to grades 7-13 in a North American school system.) At matriculation (i.e., levels six and seven), only English is required. At the majority of secondary schools, English has been adopted as the medium of instruction. At these schools, lessons, textbooks, assignments, and assessments are in English.

Generally speaking, how is English taught in secondary schools?

English is first taught in nursery schools. Rarely does a kindergarten not start teaching the English alphabet. Though the Education Department of Hong Kong advises primary schools to consolidate children's Chinese language abilities before teaching English at junior primary levels (levels two or three), most schools do otherwise. The main reason lies in parents' attitudes towards the significant implication of knowing English for future careers. These attitudes are formed because of the labor-market-driven ideology dominant in the public discourses on language learning in Hong Kong (Lin, 1997).

The Education Department guidelines for the teaching of English in secondary schools (Curriculum Development Committee, 1983) can be summarized in two points: First, a communicative, purposeful, oral-structural approach is preferred over a structural approach; second, little or no Cantonese should be used in English lessons.

Despite the government guidelines and the categories of Anglo-Chinese and Chinese

middle schools, the choice of medium of instruction is, in reality, affected by various factors, which include the English proficiency and the overall ability of the students, and the English proficiency and the overall ability of the teachers and the approach they adopt. While the official medium of instruction in Anglo-Chinese schools remains English, there is a growing trend (with the exception of some prestigious schools with long traditions) for teachers to code-mix between English and Chinese in the classroom for easier communication and better classroom management.

In July 1997, Hong Kong became part of China. Chinese and English remain the official languages. Unlike what it has been, Chinese will be co-official with English for some time, enjoying more or less equal status. However, it may take some time before English loses its present superiority to Chinese. A major move in the direction of elevating the status of Chinese is the promotion of mother-tongue education. In March 1997, the Education Department announced its policy to replace English with Chinese as the medium of instruction in an estimated 75% of secondary schools, beginning in the 1998-99 academic year. Schools to be exempted from this policy have to show their teachers' and students' capability of using English.

For a long time, the Chinese language has been neglected in most schools in Hong Kong. The return of Hong Kong's sovereignty to China in 1997 implies that more attention is to be given to the teaching of Chinese than in the past. English will lose some of the prestige it has had. The present need for English is not exactly the same as before. In order for Hong Kong to maintain its position as an international city, English has to continue to be taught; but, the kind and the amount of English needed is more functional and specific than before. This implies changes in the school curriculum, the medium of instruction, and even parents' and employers' attitudes towards Chinese-medium education.

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English Education in the Philippines

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How has history influenced English education in the Philippines?

English came to the Philippines with the Americans, who established a highly centralized public education system in 1901. From that time until the Philippines was granted independence, except during the years of Japanese occupation, English was the medium of instruction.

Throughout this period, Filipinos challenged the use of English in schools. A Philippine language was thought to be a more appropriate medium for teaching, preserving cultural integrity, and uniting this archipelago of 7,107 islands whose people speak eight major languages and 156 minor ones.

There are currently two basic views on the use of English in the Philippines. Historian Renato Constantino's perspective is that English was detrimental to Philippine nationalism, spawning a Western-thinking people far removed from their roots and lacking a clear identity. However, educator Bonifacio Sibayan suggested that English was positive in that it gave Filipinos a common voice and set them all on common ground; it was the "great equalizer" that provided new opportunities to the poor.

What is the nature of English study at each level of education?

Although the 1974 Bilingual Education Policy mandated the use of Filipino (based on Tagalog, the language of the capital) as the language of instruction at all education levels for humanities subjects, many private schools have ignored the policy. In addition, many non-Tagalog public school teachers have

continued to teach in English and the vernacular because they lack suitable Filipino training. Current government policy recommends that by the year 2000, the dominant vernacular be used as the primary medium of instruction in grades one to three, and Filipino be the medium in grades four through high school. English would be taught as a separate subject.

Most colleges and universities use English as a medium of instruction. However, there is a movement for the use of Filipino language in higher education, led by the University of the Philippines (UP). Since 1997, science and math textbooks written in Filipino have been used in selected classes throughout the UP system. Some scholars object to such use of Filipino in higher learning on the grounds that, unlike Japanese and Korean, Filipino is not yet a "fully intellectualized" language.

What opportunities do people have to use English in their daily lives?

Even in highly urbanized areas, where English is often heard on broadcast media and read in print, the opportunities for using English are mostly confined to listening and reading. Except in private elite gatherings and in some private schools where students are required to speak or write in English all the time, English-speaking environments are rare. In schools and universities where English is supposed to be used for lectures and discussions, students and teachers often mix English with Filipino or the vernacular. However, in small pockets of discussion, English words and phrases are often used. Because of the

American experience and the continuing influence of the mass media, Philippine languages are liberally laced with English loan words and expressions.

Despite its fall from grace, English ability is generally still preferred and valued professionally and personally. English is still perceived as the language of career advancement and higher socio-economic status. Filipinos who want to work abroad believe that improving their English skills also improves their chances of employment. National licensing examinations and legal documents are written in English. The courts, the Church, and the Congress still conduct important functions and compose official communications in English.

To what extent is English a component of the secondary school curriculum? Generally speaking, how is English taught at the secondary level?

Most schools have so far ignored the call to replace English with Filipino as the medium of instruction, mainly because of the lack of teaching materials in Filipino and the lack of teachers who can teach in Filipino. At the moment, teachers teach in whatever language—English, Filipino, or the vernacular—they are most comfortable with.

A great majority of teachers do not have formal training in ESL or EFL. With English slowly becoming a foreign rather than a second language, there is a need for a retraining of practicing teachers and an overhaul of the English education curriculum. Otherwise, teaching English will continue to be on a hit-and-miss basis, with many teachers repeating the methods of their former mentors.

Seven out of ten public school students drop out by grade four or five. Only 30% of elementary school graduates proceed to

secondary school, and only 20% of them graduate. Among high school graduates, only 10% go to college; fewer finish. English does not benefit the poor who need to acquire literacy and the basics of science, health, and nutrition as early as they can. While English may be the international language, the Philippines needs a language to raise the skills and the consciousness of the majority.

Fifty years ago, it seemed that the fate of English in the Philippines was secure. Now, because of the declining English skills of the average public school student in the rural areas, where the majority of the population lives, English has become a medium for confusion rather than communication. If English is to be maintained at all in the future, it will be as a foreign language confined to specialized teaching and graduate schools.

English is moving from the masses to the elite, who can afford private schools, private tutors, and study abroad. Unless a major turnaround in policy is implemented, English will become and remain completely in-accessible to all but the elite.

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English Education in Indonesia

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How has history influenced English education in Indonesia?

For about three and a half centuries, Dutch was the Indonesian official language and the medium of instruction in Indonesian schools. Those who wanted to pursue university studies went to the Netherlands. This colonial education system helped create a group of educated Dutch-speaking Indonesians.

In 1928, Indonesian youth leaders recognized Bahasa Indonesia as the national language. However, the language was not widely used until the Japanese administration (1942-45), when Dutch was banned and the use of Indonesian was encouraged. When the country declared its independence in 1945, Bahasa Indonesia was chosen as the national language.

It wasn't until the 1950s, when the United States became interested in Indonesia for mainly political reasons, that English achieved second language status in Indonesia (Dardjowidjojo, 1997). This did not last long, however, due to the fact that Bahasa Indonesia was also a second language to a large number of ethnic groups. As a result, Bahasa Indonesia was taught as the second language throughout the country. Having another second language (i.e., English) was not politically or educationally plausible.

When Suharto came to power in 1967, schools started the compulsory teaching of Bahasa Indonesia throughout the education system. A vernacular became compulsory from elementary to senior high school, and English as a foreign language became compulsory from junior high school to university.

The teaching of the English language was encouraged for two main reasons: economics and international relations. Scholarships were offered for people to study at English speaking universities, new curricula were devised, and new textbooks were published.

What is the nature of English study at each level of education?

In the Indonesian education system, students take six years to complete elementary school, three years for junior high school, and three years for senior high school. Tertiary education takes an additional four or five years.

English is compulsory at both the junior and senior high school levels. Junior high school students spend three hours (four classes of 45 minutes) a week in English classes. At the high school level, students in grades one and two have four 45-minute English classes each week. Those in the science streams have five 45-minute English classes each week, while those in the language stream have eleven 45-minute classes each week.

It is claimed that the teaching of English at both junior and senior high schools is communication based. In their lesson plans, teachers generally identify the language functions to be taught. However, classroom activities are often characterized by structural analyses of the language. This style of teaching results from the fact that (a) teachers are familiar with structural methods through their own training, (b) there is a serious lack of confidence and ability among teachers in using English communicatively, and (c) test items in the National Final Examination are

generally grammar oriented.

According to the national curriculum, a primary aim of senior high English classes is to enable students to read books in English. A typical senior high reading lesson starts with teachers eliciting vocabulary, and then directing students to read and answer questions. This technique reflects testing rather than teaching aspects of reading: Teachers are more interested in the number of correct answers students get than in helping them acquire effective reading skills.

Though well established at the secondary level, English language teaching at the elementary level is a new trend (although for years, private elementary schools have been teaching English). This is the result of the national policy of education decentralization, which allows schools to introduce elective subjects (e.g., English) that are relevant to their local situation.

What opportunities do people have to use English in their daily lives?

In most places throughout the archipelago, opportunities to use English in real situations are few. Most people in the country never have a chance to speak English to native speakers. Students in urban areas have more exposure to English through local and national mass media such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and billboards.

Television plays the most significant role in encouraging students' mastery of vocabulary. A problem here is that the language of popular commercials, TV shows, and movies is not properly selected and graded for learning purposes. As a result, students tend to acquire bad language easily.

There is a current trend among middle and upper class people to mix English and Indonesian words when speaking to demonstrate their social status. Educated people also use a lot of English-derived Indonesian both in speaking and writing. Words like *globalisasi* (globalization), *kontinuitas* (continuity), and *presisi* (precision) are examples of how English has influenced Indonesian.

In tourist areas, English language teaching is triggered by the tourist industry. In Bali, for example, English-speaking visitors to the island will find relatively little difficulty communicating with the local people involved in the tourist industry.

To what extent is English a component of the secondary school curriculum? Generally speaking, how is English taught at the secondary level?

The 1975 curriculum was based on Chomsky's transformational grammar (Lyons, 1977), and was implemented up to the early 1980s. Keeping up with current trends in ELT, new and more communicative curricula were introduced in 1984 and 1994. However, in both cases, the curricula have been judged as not communicative enough.

The purpose of ELT at the junior high level is to prepare students for senior high education. At the senior high level, teaching focuses on reading in order to prepare graduates for university studies. This has never been achieved because, as stated earlier, classroom activities are geared toward structural analyses of English. As a result, students have poor reading skills and are unable to perform basic communication exchanges in English (Lestari, 1997).

At the tertiary level, English is one of a compulsory subject, and is taught on a weekly basis (one or two classes of 100 minutes each) over a period of one semester (12 to 20 sessions). The aim is to help students boost their reading skills by exposing them to texts related to their major.

Although English is still the only compulsory foreign language, other languages have been introduced at senior high schools and will in the future compete with English within in the school curriculum. The Speak Indonesian campaign and the teaching of local languages as required by the national curriculum will continue to provide competition for ELT.

To truly keep up with societal and educational change, the goals of ELT in Indonesia should be reviewed. Although much

energy and money has been invested in the development of ELT, one area that requires further attention is the development of more meaningful learning activities to motivate students. Educators may be better off sticking with teaching methods that work in their own cultural and situational context, instead of continually adopting new methods. A particular area of concern is the goal of English education. In the education system today, teaching English for communication is simply not realistic. If ELT specialists are to continue developing their profession, they will have to take a more comprehensive approach to addressing students' and society's needs.

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English Education in Vietnam

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How has history influenced English education in Vietnam?

For centuries, foreign language education in Vietnam was restricted to classic Chinese, with the aim of producing leaders for a feudal society. In 1884, the French started teaching French as a second language throughout the country, from fourth grade through high school. Beginning in 1936, English was also taught as a foreign language at some private schools in major cities.

After the French withdrawal in 1954 and the division of Vietnam into North Vietnam (the Democratic Republic of Vietnam) and South Vietnam (the Republic of Vietnam), the governments of both regions made efforts to improve their respective education systems.

In the north, in 1956, French and English were dropped from the primary and secondary school curriculum and instruction in Vietnamese was made compulsory. In 1960, Vietnamese replaced French in all colleges and universities. Chinese and Russian became the foreign languages taught at secondary schools, and English and French were not taught again until 1971. The North Vietnamese government also began to pay attention to the 53 ethnic minorities who comprise more than 10% of the population. Committees worked out scripts for their languages so children in these regions could study in their mother tongue while learning Vietnamese.

In the south, in spite of political antagonism toward France, a French school system with French teachers was retained for children of rich families. In addition, from 1954 until its withdrawal from the Vietnam War in 1973, the U.S. had a great influence on all walks of

life, including education. English and French were taught along with Vietnamese at all levels of education by teachers from the U.S., the U.K., France, and Vietnam. The economic and cultural relations between South Vietnam and countries allied with the U.S. also brought Japanese, Chinese (from Taiwan), and German language education.

Since reunification in 1975, due to the increasing technological, cultural, and educational contacts with other countries, foreign languages have become a compulsory subject in many secondary schools. In 1986, the testing of foreign languages became a compulsory component of the state examination for the completion of secondary school. In the same year, foreign language departments were established at colleges and universities. Russian was the most popular foreign language, with English replacing French as the second most popular.

Since 1989, due to political changes in the former Soviet Union and new developments in Vietnam's economic relations with other countries, English has become the most popular foreign language in Vietnam, followed by French, Japanese, German, Chinese, and Russian. Because of this new demand and the lack of English teachers, the Vietnamese government launched a program in 1990 to retrain all teachers of Russian to become teachers of English.

What is the nature of English study at each level of education?

English is a compulsory subject for twelve years. Primary, junior, and senior high school pupils study English two to four hours

per week. Lessons focus on the four skills and basic grammatical structures. Activities such as role playing, writing letters, and singing songs are used. Recently, a new textbook series designed by education specialists in Vietnam was introduced into primary schools.

Many high schools also offer special English programs which have a stronger focus on English and use more specialized materials. At the beginning of grade six, students have the opportunity to take the special program entrance examination (which focuses on listening and pronunciation skills in English). Successful students receive a scholarship to cover their education fees, and then study six to eight hours of English a week as part of their general education. This system was established to determine which students have special aptitude for learning languages and then to foster them early from the primary level.

At university, about 300 hours of general English are compulsory in the first year and a half. Students are trained in the four skills. In the subsequent two and a half years, students study about 100 hours of English for specific purposes (ESP) and another foreign language. The focus is on reading, writing, and translation, though some classes are taught in English by foreign professors. International examinations such as the TOEFL are used in testing so that students are accustomed to these when they apply for overseas scholarships.

The use of the mother tongue in English classes is limited, though translation is used sometimes. Local and foreign teachers must strictly follow the steps and the timing of each lesson, because in any given week, the same lesson will be taught in all schools in Vietnam. However, in informal teaching situations, such as evening classes in general English, teachers have more freedom to be creative.

To what extent is English a component of the secondary school curriculum? Generally speaking, how is English taught in secondary school?

In 1996, English became a compulsory foreign language at all levels of education. By the year 2000, English will become a

compulsory subject on high school graduation and university entrance examinations.

While many EFL educators in Vietnam hope for a widespread communicative approach to teaching English, the reality is different. In general, English classes have the following characteristics:

1. The teacher is not concerned with material beyond the syllabus.
2. Classes are teacher-centered; students listen and try to remember what the teacher says.
3. The teacher treats the students as a group rather than as individuals, and assumes that all students have the same needs and learning styles.
4. The task of the teacher is to pass on knowledge to the students; the task of students is to memorize what has been taught and prepare for their exams.

This tradition has led to a passive and dependent nature in student learning and tends to suppress student initiative. Students often lack study skills and learning strategies. This tradition also discourages informal communication between teachers and learners, and makes teachers and learners anxious to avoid errors. This results in a general lack of communicative English classes.

Poor materials, learning facilities, and teacher education are among the challenges that teachers are facing. Some internationally-published materials have been used, as well as materials produced locally. However the Ministry of Education has not issued textbooks which use a communicative approach. Furthermore, while learning facilities at universities have improved due to the assistance of international organizations, conditions in primary and secondary schools remain poor. The Ministry of Education has held many conferences and sent teachers abroad in an effort to improve language teaching, though the opportunities for overseas travel have been limited to a few teachers around Hanoi.

What opportunities do people have to use English in their daily lives?

Due to increased diplomatic relations with other countries, the need to gain access

to science and technology, and a new economic renovation policy, the opportunities for communication in English have increased. Vietnamese people often communicate with foreigners, watch TV programs, read magazines and journals, and access information through the Internet, all with English as the medium. In addition, English is spoken in

many places frequented by tourists including restaurants, hotels, post offices, railway stations, and police stations. As a result, the demand for learning English is great. Unfortunately, at present, the number of qualified teachers is limited, and good materials are not affordable for many people.

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English Education in Cambodia

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[The following paper was presented at the 27th Annual LIOJ International Summer Workshop for Teachers of English on August 8, 1995.]

How has history influenced English education in Cambodia?

Cambodia gained its independence from France in 1953 with Prince Norodom Sihanouk as head of state. Cambodia has a long history of English teaching, although there have been a lot of problems in the last thirty years. English education started in the 1960s. The teachers of English were mainly Indian and French, and some of them were Cambodian. But students preferred foreign teachers to Cambodian teachers for learning foreign languages.

In 1970, the Lon Nol regime came to power in a coup d'état and our country became involved in the war between the United States and Vietnam. In that year, students in high school could choose different foreign languages such as English, Russian, German, and Japanese. However, in 1972, the high school system was changed: All subjects were to be taught in Khmer.

In 1975, the U.S. pulled out of Southeast Asia and Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge invaded. The people were forced to the countryside by the Khmer Rouge. During the Pol Pot regime, there was no private property or family, no religion, no machines, and no medicine. Everybody was a farmer. Many schools were destroyed by the Khmer Rouge and some teachers were killed. I remember that some schools became prisons. Children had to live in groups, separated from their families. They worked in the fields with their

chief who was also their teacher. After lunch, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m., children had to study with their chief under a tree. There were no schools, no books, and no chalk. The teachers had no skills, no teaching methodology. Teenagers who had been grade five or six students during the previous Lon Nol regime had to go back to the basics again.

By 1979, when we were liberated by the Hun Sen government, over one million people had been killed. Three quarters of the 22,000 teachers in Cambodia had been killed, and one hundred schools had been destroyed. People returned to their native villages. The government asked former staff who had survived the Khmer Rouge regime to come and work for the government and contribute to the rehabilitation of the nation. The government started to rebuild the education system. It was difficult to reopen schools because so many teachers had been killed during the Pol Pot regime. People who had only a modicum of education were asked to teach in the schools, and the people who had finished only third or fourth grade were taken out of school and asked to train new teachers. As a result, the quality of education was poor.

French, English, and history were eventually cut out of the curriculum. The country was very poor and was supported by the former Soviet Union and Vietnam. Russian and Vietnamese were the foreign languages taught in high school. People worked hard to rebuild the country's education system. The villages helped the government. Teachers built their own schools and worked from memory, without books or aids.

As we worked very hard, we achieved success in rebuilding the country, especially in the field of education. Among our achievements were a 70% literacy rate, an 80% to 90% primary school attendance rate, a 40% secondary school attendance rate, and 50,000 retrained teachers. Now there are lots of schools, teacher training colleges, and a university.

In 1990, English and French were reintroduced into the curriculum. Some teachers who had studied English and French were sent to the training centre to improve their language ability. But they weren't sure how to teach. Cambodia had no textbooks, no resources, and not enough teachers. Some organizations came and helped Cambodian teachers of English and French.

When I started to teach English in 1990

in my school, I had many problems. Some students didn't want to learn foreign languages, and most teachers didn't understand the problems with teaching languages. I had no knowledge of methodology and no confidence.

Today, I find that students are motivated and are quick to learn. They want to learn because English is fashionable and useful for work in hotels, restaurants, and international organisations. Sometimes, but not always, students can practice speaking to foreigners, and they are really proud to speak English.

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English Education in Thailand

Chaleosri Pibulchol

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How has history influenced English education in Thailand?

Since Thailand was never conquered by a Western country, English education did not have a role in Thai society until the reign of King Rama III (around 1850), when foreign missionaries brought the English language to the royal family and the rest of the country. Later, during the reign of King Rama V, there were further contacts with foreign people, and in 1871, English became the primary foreign language of the country. Since then, English has played an important role in the education system, and has become the most widely studied language among the many foreign languages taught in schools.

What is the nature of English study at each level of education?

English was made a compulsory subject at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels in 1960. The curriculum was revised in 1978, however, and English became an elective course at the primary and secondary levels. In 1996, the curriculum was revised again. Although English is still officially designated as an elective course, it is a de facto compulsory subject from the first year of primary school through the secondary level. English courses are offered in most primary and secondary schools because the schools feel responsible for preparing students for study at the tertiary level, where English is compulsory. Also, parents pressure schools to offer English courses because they consider English a necessity for their children to be able to study at a university, get a good job, and gain a higher social status.

The English curriculum is divided into three levels:

- beginner level for primary school pupils (grades one to six);
- intermediate level for lower secondary school students (grades seven to nine);
- advanced level for upper secondary school students (grades ten to twelve);

At the tertiary level, English is compulsory in vocational schools and at universities, except in the field of education, where it is an elective course (unless the student is majoring or minoring in English). English study at vocational schools is linked to the students' specific career goals, while in universities, first-year students must complete six English credits as part of their general education requirements.

What opportunities do people have to use English in their daily lives?

In Thai society, people use English as an avenue to secure high-paying jobs. A person who knows English can gain a higher position and salary than someone who does not. Furthermore, English is used to exchange technological and business information.

Research conducted at Chulalongkorn University (Thananart, 1996) revealed that most students expressed a desire to practice all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—so that they could use English in their daily lives. Their main reasons for studying English were (a) to do research, (b) to get a white-collar job, and (c) to study abroad.

Thai students have come to regard English as more than just an academic subject to

be memorized. English is considered to be the key to international communication, modernization, and economic development. People in Thailand study English for their careers or for other practical reasons. The Thai language is still the only language used on a day-to-day basis. However, the use of English loan words in the Thai language—in cases where there is no appropriate translation—has increased. For some, particularly the educated, using English loan words is a sign of prestige. For others, however, this is seen as a corruption of the Thai language.

To what extent is English a component of the secondary school curriculum?

The 1978 curriculum (revised in 1990 and 1996) designates the three years from *Matayom* one to three (grades seven to nine) as “lower secondary” education, and the three years from *Matayom* four to six (grades ten to twelve) as “upper secondary” education. The English curriculum at the lower secondary level consolidates and builds upon the language content of the primary curriculum.

The curriculum for both lower and upper secondary levels is divided into two courses: “Fundamental English” and “English for English Concentration.” Fundamental English is designed to develop students’ ability to communicate using the four skills in preparation for further study and future employment. English for English Concentration, on the other hand, is an elective course designed around students’ individual aptitudes and interests. The former focuses on the intensive development of English proficiency, while the latter is geared toward encouraging students to use English in real situations outside classes.

Generally speaking, how is English taught in secondary schools?

According to the guidelines given by the Ministry of Education, the teaching of English at the secondary level should:

- emphasize a learner-centered approach using teacher-student and student-student interactive activities, thereby nurturing positive attitudes towards English among students;
- focus on teaching/learning activities which allow students to use English communicatively in and outside class;
- encourage the creative use of language both receptively and productively through co-operative learning, in order to equip students with the English they need to access information and enhance their employment opportunities;
- avail students to various English media so they can be knowledgeable of the world and of people of other cultures.

English is regarded as the most important foreign language in Thailand. It is included in the curriculum from the elementary level and is also required for entry into the tertiary level. Since the introduction of the revised curriculum, a communicative approach to language teaching is used at the primary and secondary levels requiring careful preparation on the part of teachers.

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English Education in India

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How has history influenced English education in India?

When the British introduced their system of education as part of the colonization process in the 1800s, the teaching and learning of English became mandatory. Gradually, English took over in all spheres of official including the legal, administrative, and business fields.

Prior to India's independence in 1947, English was imposed on Indians by their colonizers. After independence, however, Indians themselves awarded English the seal of approval by giving it constitutional status in 1952. In a multilingual country with over 600 languages, English served as a neutral language. (The choice of Hindi as the official language of the Indian Union after independence was rejected by those in the south.) Today, English enjoys permanent official status along with 20 major Indian languages.

In the 1960s, the central government proposed a three-language formula for public education. Every child up to grade eight was required to learn three languages: the mother tongue, English, and one modern Indian language. Although the formula is in existence today in most states, in some states it has been modified to a two-language formula: the mother tongue and English.

Since the 1960s and 1970s, political parties have tried to gain a following with their anti-English trends and stress on using the "language of the soil." However, their "*Angrezi Hatao*" (Ban English) campaigns have ended in failure since there is a general consensus that English is necessary if India is to be a player in the global market. With the liberalization of the economy in 1991, and the

entry of multinational corporations into India, the role of English has grown in importance.

What is the nature of English study at each level of education?

There are two systems for teaching English at the primary and secondary school levels. In the government school system, where the national or regional language is the medium of instruction, English is introduced from grade five as a second or third language. In private English-medium schools, English is taught from the pre-primary level onwards. In order to graduate from high school and enter university, students in grade ten are required to pass a board examination in seven core subjects including English.

At primary and secondary schools, English texts are prescribed by the state boards of education. Secondary level texts include selections from Indian writers, and focus on grammar, reading, and writing skills. At English-medium schools, English is taught an average of six periods per week, with three focusing on reading, two on grammar, and one on composition. There is a wide spectrum of methodology, ranging from the grammar-translation method to the communicative approach.

At the tertiary level, English is the medium of instruction in the faculties of science, education, arts, and commerce. Although at some universities, subjects such as sociology, political science, and economics are taught in Indian languages, students are often required to consult the original English sources since the majority of material on these topics is in English. In the teaching of English literature, greater importance is being given to writers from Third World countries. Indian English

is now accepted as a standard variety of English, and, in contrast to the past, there is a demand for the Indian variety of English to be taught rather than British English.

Although there is general agreement that English is important, the quality of English education is lacking because as yet no effective teaching methodology has been widely adopted. The overwhelmingly large classes—averaging between 60 and 70 students, even at the primary level—make it difficult, if not impossible, for students to gain proficiency in English. English is therefore taught mostly in the written form, with little focus on improving speaking skills. It must be added, however, that although the quality of English instruction is poor, the demand for English language learning is phenomenal, since English is seen as a passport to a better life. Most parents are keen to enroll their children in private English-medium schools to give them a head start, even if they themselves do not speak the language. To keep up with the demand for English, the number of English medium schools has shot up dramatically in the last few years.

What opportunities do people have to use English in their daily lives?

For many Indians, English is a language of prestige at the personal level, not merely due to the heritage of its colonial past, but because of its international appeal. In daily life, in terms of numbers, a very small percentage of Indians use English extensively, whereas a few more use a fair amount of English. For the most part, however, English in India today is the preferred language of the elite.

English is considered the language of opportunity, since those who have access to it benefit from it, particularly in the job market. English is a must for any job in the federal union (e.g., civil services) and is necessary in any communication with the central government. Ironically, while English continues to

be the language of communication between the central and state governments, its importance is diminishing at the state and grassroots levels. It is losing its place as the official, political, judiciary, and administrative language at the state level, and is being replaced by local languages. As part of the educational policy in some states, the regional language is emphasized, and is taught in all secondary schools. In many states—with the exception of the northeast, where English is used extensively because of the existence of various tribal languages—all official correspondence is in the local language. There is an interesting contradiction in that, despite the official anti-English policy of various state governments and the conscious attempt in many parts of the country to increase the use of local languages for administration, the use of English is constantly increasing in both the social and commercial sectors.

English in India has both its positive and negative aspects. In recent years, Indian writers have made considerable waves on the English literary scene. However, the promotion of English has led to a rejection of Indian culture. At the same time, English has played a mediating and constructive role in promoting the development of a composite culture: A lot of the literature written in Indian languages is first translated into English and then into other Indian languages.

English is here to stay in India. It will continue to be the intellectual language for the elite in India, who are growing in numbers and for whom English is almost a first language. Although English is a legacy of the colonial past and is perceived as such by many, it is also the language of international trade, science, economy, international relations, law, and diplomacy. In a world of globalization and a single economy, the significance of English in India is bound to grow since the country is potentially a major international economy.

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Section IV

Classroom Activities

The Writing on the Wall: A Reminiscence

Elizabeth King
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My first real job as an English teacher was in a boys' secondary school in the then newly-independent country of Tanzania. The location was beautiful—a windy hill overlooking Lake Victoria. But in terms of amenities, the school was sorely lacking. Blackboards were just that: none-too-smooth wood slabs painted black. The whitewashed walls of some classrooms were covered with English sentences, equations, and other formulae. When the space on the wall was used up, another coat of whitewash was applied. I remember enjoying the atmosphere of hard work reflected on the walls of that classroom, and respecting my students who were able to improvise in almost any way, in order to learn.

Years later (and an ocean apart) in Japan, I found myself in quite a different teaching environment; and yet, the similarities to my first workplace were striking from the first day. Asia Center's sweeping view from above Sagami Bay brought a wave of nostalgia. Another similarity struck me: In those days the basement classrooms of LIOJ left much to be desired in terms of state-of-the-art equipment and ambiance. Yet, to my surprise, within days after a new term started, the yellowed walls were covered over with huge sheets of butcher paper, hand-lettered with an array of information, tacked up at eye level, available to students at a glance. My first impression on seeing the writing on these classroom walls was that learning was going on here, and I fondly recalled my Tanzanian classroom with its educational graffiti.

In the 1980s, LIOJ's Business Communication Program brought together employees from a number of Japan's top companies

and placed them in classrooms according to English proficiency level. Thus a freshman trainee from Japan Radio might find himself studying in the same classroom with a top manager from Shimizu Construction Company, a rare "cross-cultural" event. Furthermore, most teachers came to LIOJ "right off the boat" from their countries, and students and teachers were exposed to one another's thinking and culture in a fresh and energetic way.

With rapid economic and cultural changes in Japan in the late 1980s, the atmosphere of LIOJ also changed. As more teachers were hired from within Japan, the pioneer spirit became more a thing of the past. As the computer age took over, LIOJ replaced its aging computers with more up-to-date equipment. Likewise, teaching techniques became more streamlined and professional. Lest we forget the friendly, funky, energetic atmosphere of those old LIOJ classrooms, let me describe the writing on the wall I best remember, and the techniques I still use and adapt in other classrooms today.

Personal Information Charts

On the first day of class in a four-week intensive program, many teachers set their students' thumping hearts at ease by unrolling large sheets of butcher paper on which was designed a simple "personal information chart." The first vertical column on the left of a large grid was labeled "NAME," with a space below for each class member. Each remaining vertical column was labeled according to the personal information the teacher wished to elicit. Typical columns included

"AGE," "HEIGHT," "WEIGHT," "COMPANY NAME," "DEPARTMENT," "TITLE," "FOREIGN TRAVEL," "MARITAL STATUS," "FAMILY," "SPORTS & INTERESTS," and, with an eye to using the chart for future lessons in the term, such categories as "SHOE SIZE" and "WORKING HOURS PER WEEK." With this chart taped to the wall, the first lesson commenced. As most students fell into the intermediate range as English speakers, they could generally proceed with confidence to review essential basic question forms learned long ago in school as they got acquainted through filling in the chart. Depending on the class level, this could be done directly, as a simple round-robin interview activity, or in the case of a more advanced class, the students could interview one another simultaneously, and report the information to a "secretary," who would record the information on the chart. Classes of six to eight members were small enough to hold the group's interest throughout the interviews. For a large class, separate charts could be devised, and permanent working groups of six to eight students could be formed.

This chart was displayed throughout the term. It was useful in itself for reference as class members got to know each other and in later lessons (e.g., "Whose shoes are larger, Kenji's or Makoto's?" or "Who works longer hours, Kenji or Makoto?"). Real information about one another was of much higher interest than that in a course book. Members from other classes would sometimes stop in during the tea break and get to know one another through reading the charts. Such a simple and adaptable aid was an indispensable wall adornment, and provided a multipurpose initial lesson which helped to instill confidence.

Vocabulary Charts

From the first day as well, some teachers also posted a large piece of paper for vocabulary. The vocabulary chart was blank, and students were encouraged at any point in the day-long classes to select words from the lesson that they were personally interested in remembering and using, and write them on the chart.

Often students selected business-related vocabulary that could help them speak about their jobs, but any other words were also welcome. It took some training for students to stand up in the middle of a lesson to write a word down, but this very act drew attention to and reinforced the word for all class members. During a class break, a diligent student could do a self-test just by looking at the chart. The teacher could then test the vocabulary on the sheet as it was filled up, or incorporate it into the next day's lesson. Again, during break time, a student from another class would often enter the room, look at the current vocabulary list, and ask questions.

"Control" Charts

The next paper to go up on almost every wall followed a teacher demonstration about "controlling" an English conversation, and displayed the basic sentences to stop a speaker (e.g., "Excuse me,..." or "Pardon me?"), to understand (e.g., "Speak slowly, please." "Please repeat that." "What does that mean?" and "How do you spell it?"), and to check comprehension (e.g., "Did you say...?" or "Do you mean...?")

This paper remained on the wall throughout the term. While almost every new text in the field now includes these strategies in an early lesson, many teachers (especially those with larger classes) complain that their students learn them but never use them. With the butcher paper on the wall, an LIOJ instructor, with pointer in hand, could immediately point out the appropriate control phrase when a student got stuck, thereby enabling the student to control the conversation with minimal interruption of the communicative exchange. After four weeks of this kind of encouragement, students could easily see the benefits of controlling a conversation (i.e., understanding without breaking the flow of communication, learning a lot of new vocabulary in context, and experiencing a real conversation), and were using the phrases enthusiastically.

"Gambit" Charts

Other communicative strategy lists (or

“gambit charts”) joined the control list one by one: language for explaining an object or concept (e.g., “It’s a kind of...” “It looks like...” “It’s made from...” “It’s made by...” or “It’s used for...”); a chart for expressing degrees of certainty and probability, (e.g., 100%: “I’m absolutely certain!” 90%: “I’m sure”) and other functional phrases. (The functional syllabus was then enjoying great popularity.) A chart showing how to describe a process, organizing it into steps and stages, was of help to many company people who were required to give presentations. A student hesitating in the middle of a description of how *miso* is made, for example, had only to cast an eye at this chart and could make a new start without a serious communication breakdown.

In LIOJ classes, presentations were milestones, and students were required to give several of increasing complexity throughout the term. In the lower-level classes, a prompter

paper was tacked on the back wall, where a nervous presenter could easily see the basic outline he or she had learned for the speech. With this reassurance, many students produced near-professional presentations without having to look down at notes, gaining confidence for the future when they would need to give a report or presentation overseas for their company. Many students wrote letters one or two years later saying that they had given a presentation in Europe or Asia, with the confidence gained at LIOJ.

Sometimes now, when I have occasion to visit a Japanese school, I notice bare walls and an impersonal feeling, and think fondly back to the cluttered classroom walls at LIOJ. As the advances of technology affect the teaching profession, perhaps it is a good idea not to lose sight of some of the old and simple ways of creating a productive and personal classroom atmosphere.

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Drama in the Secondary School EFL Classroom

Lisa Brickell

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Renowned drama teacher Keith Johnstone, in his book *Impro-Improvisation and the Theatre* (1981), wrote:

As I grew up, everything started getting grey and dull. I could still remember the amazing intensity of the world I'd lived in as a child, but I thought the dulling of perception was an inevitable consequence of age—just as the lens of the eye is bound gradually to dim. I didn't understand that clarity is in the mind. I've since found tricks that can make the world blaze up again in about fifteen seconds, and the effect lasts for hours. (p. 2)

These “tricks that can make the world blaze up” are drama games and activities that can transform a sometimes dull, uninspiring English class into a highly motivating, creative, student-centred learning environment. In this article, I will look at the benefits of using such tricks in the EFL classroom.

What Is Drama?

Brian Way, in his book *Development Through Drama* (1967), defined “theatre” as being “largely concerned with communication between actors and an audience,” whereas “drama” is “largely concerned with experience by the participants irrespective of any function of communication to an audience” (p. 23). The focus of this article is on drama as opposed to theatre, on experiencing rather than performing.

Why Use Drama Activities in the EFL Classroom?

Drama activities involve action; they exercise the imagination and permit the

expression of emotion, both linguistically and paralinguistically. They are experiential and appeal to the whole person, rather than simply the intellect. “Their application implies that the learner is not only a thinker but an emotional and imaginative person as well” (Dougill, 1987, p. 145). As Alan Maley and Alan Duff point out in their influential book, *Drama Techniques in Language Learning* (1982), “Language is not purely an intellectual matter. Our minds are attached to our bodies, and our bodies to our minds. The intellect rarely functions without an element of emotion, yet it is so often just this element that is lacking in teaching material” (p. 7). Because drama gives students the opportunity to express their emotions and draw on their own experience, they become much more personally involved in the learning process.

Drama activities also allow for unpredictability in language use and therefore provide a bridge between the classroom and the real world. Additionally, drama overcomes resistance to the foreign language by creating a need to speak which results in a reduced awareness of using the language. Further-more, drama activities improve students' awareness of stress and intonation, and the effect these have on meaning. Finally, cooperation amongst group members is vitally important in drama activities. This results in positive group dynamics.

Because many junior and senior high school students are afraid of looking foolish in front of their peers, it is important that teachers give drama a slow, careful introduction into the English class so that neither teacher nor student feels at risk. It is also very

important that the teacher be enthusiastic and have confidence in the activities he or she is about to introduce.

Both teacher and student should always be aware of the aim of the activity. As Charlyn Wessels (1987) points out, "Drama requires meticulous planning and structuring, and the ability to create a learning situation which will ensure a constant supply of stimuli to the students, which will keep them active and alert" (p. 21). Maley and Duff (1982) give further advice:

- Give precise and unambiguous instructions for each activity.
- Keep close control over the time; avoid the temptation of letting an activity outgrow its own limitations It is better to stop too early than too late.
- Decide what your own role is going to be; how much you are going to intervene (if at all) (p. 19).

In drama activities, the teacher's role is peripheral rather than central. Teachers need to relinquish centre stage and let students express their creativity and take responsibility for their own learning.

The following activities are especially suitable for large groups of junior and senior high school students. The ideas have been broken down into four categories: warm-up, vocabulary review, grammar practice, and fluency. The ideal room set-up for the majority of these activities is desks pushed to the sides of the room (or no desks, if possible) and chairs in a large semi-circle.

Warm-up

1. Musical Groups

Procedure. The teacher plays some music. While the music is playing, students move (e.g., walk, jump, hop, dance) around the class. When the music stops, students stop moving and the teacher gives a command (e.g., "Shake hands with everyone in the class," "Find someone whose birthday is in the same month as yours and stand together," "Stand in groups of four and sing an English song," "Find someone who has the same

number of people in his or her family and stand together;"). The process is repeated five or six times. The game can be finished off by the teacher calling out numbers (e.g., "Four!"), and the students getting into groups of that size as quickly as possible. Anyone who is not in a group of the right size is out and has to stand (or dance) in the middle of the circle while the game continues.

Comments. This game works particularly well as an icebreaker at the beginning of term, when students do not know their classmates very well.

2. Alphabet Ball

Procedure. Students sit in a circle. One student (student A) sits in the middle and has her eyes closed. The other students pass a ball around the circle, reciting the alphabet as they go. When student A says "stop," the student who is holding the ball (student B), must then say three words starting with the letter that he just said (e.g., if student B's letter is *p*, he could say "paint, pig, pineapple"). The other students pass the ball silently around the circle while student B is attempting to say the three words. If student B successfully says three words before the ball reaches him, the game continues as before. However, if the ball gets back to student B before he says the three words, he becomes the new student A.

Comments. The lively, fast-paced nature of this game makes it an ideal warm-up activity. This game can be made easier or more difficult by changing the number of words that the students have to say.

3. The Hotel Receptionist

(This idea comes from *Drama Techniques in Language Learning* [Maley & Duff, 1982].)

Procedure. At least ten slips of paper with one sentence written on each should be prepared in advance for each group. (See example sentences below.) The teacher divides the class into groups with no more than ten students in each. One student in each group is given a slip of paper. This student is staying at an imaginary hotel and is unhappy

about something. She complains to the other students in her group, who are all receptionists at the hotel. The guest, however, has temporarily lost the power of speech and must convey the complaint to the receptionists without using words. The receptionists can ask questions to discover what the voiceless guest wants to communicate. The guest continues miming until the exact content of the message has been conveyed. Once the guest's message has been understood, she rejoins the reception group and the next student takes a turn. The team that finishes all ten sentences first, wins.

Example sentences:

- I found a fly in my corn flakes.
- I dropped my room key down the toilet.
- The person in the room next to me plays electric guitar every night and I can't sleep.
- There's a big spider in my shower.

Comments. The more unusual the complaints, the funnier the activity becomes.

4. Musical Hat

Procedure. The teacher should prepare several slips of paper with a question or task written on each. These questions or tasks could review vocabulary or structures taught in previous lessons (e.g., "Name six parts of the body," "Mime the following adjectives: happy, sad, angry, scared," "What are the past simple and past participle forms of the following verbs: eat, drink, watch, run?" etc.). Students sit in a circle. The teacher plays music while the students pass a hat around the circle. When the music stops, the student who is holding the hat must put it on. This student takes a slip of paper and answers the question or performs the task. The other students decide if he is correct, then the game continues.

Comments. This is a great activity to do before a test as it is a fun way to review material. If students do not like the idea of sharing a hat, a ball could be used instead.

Vocabulary Review

1. Stickers on Backs

Procedure. The teacher should prepare

for this activity by writing review vocabulary items on small blank stickers. Each sticker should be different, and there need to be enough so that each student in the class can have one. For example, to review job vocabulary, words such as "doctor" and "dentist" could be written on the stickers. To begin the activity, a sticker is placed on each student's back. The aim is for students to guess—with the other students' help—what is written on their stickers. Students stand up, walk around, look at what is written on the other students' backs, and find a partner. Students then either mime the words for each other or ask questions about their words. When asked a question, students can only answer "yes," "no," or "I don't know." For example, if student A's word is "doctor," she could ask, "Do I work outside?" or "Do I make a lot of money?" Student B would reply "no" to the first question and "yes" to the second. After asking two questions, each student finds a new partner. The activity finishes when each student knows what is written on his or her back.

Comments. This activity provides good practice of question forms. It works especially well when reviewing lexical areas such as jobs, adjectives, verbs, or adverbs.

2. Mime Jump

Procedure. The students should be divided into pairs—one student in each pair facing the board, the other facing away from it. The teacher writes a word he wants to review on the board, and the student in each pair who can see it, mimes the word to her partner. When the partner guesses, he jumps around to face the board and shouts out the word. The first pair to guess the word gets a point. The students then change positions, and the teacher writes the next word on the board.

Comments. Because students are all miming at the same time, they become less self-conscious. This game also forces students to project their voices.

3. Just a Minute

Procedure. Cards should be prepared

with seven words under a particular category on each. For example, if the category is sports, the card might look like this:

Sports:

1. basketball
2. tennis
3. soccer
4. baseball
5. bowling
6. golf
7. rugby

(Examples of other categories include: animals, jobs, words that begin with *I*, activities, food, and weather.) The teacher arranges students in two big circles, one inside the other. The students are divided into pairs facing each other, and each student in the inside circle is given a card. These students tell their partners (in the outside circle) the category. The object of the game is for the students with the cards to mime all seven of their words in order so that their partners can guess all the words correctly within one minute. Points are awarded to the pairs that finish all seven words within the time limit. Students then pass their cards in a clockwise direction to the next pair. Students switch roles and the game begins again.

Comments. This activity has been highly successful with large groups of high school students who come to LIOJ for residential intensive programs. However, in order for it to succeed, it is important that the teacher give very clear instructions and model the activity. Using a whistle is a good way to signal that the one minute time limit is up because the students tend to get a little noisy!

Grammar Practice

1. Chairs

(In this activity, students practise using a verb tense such as the present perfect.)

Procedure. Students sit on their chairs in a circle. Student A stands in the middle of the circle and asks the other students a question using the present perfect tense (e.g., "Have you ever eaten Italian food?"). All the

students who can answer "yes", stand and quickly find another chair while student A sits down. One student is left without a chair, and this student then becomes the next student A.

Comments. This game can also be used to practise the question forms of other verb tenses (e.g., "Did you...?" or "Are you...?"). Additionally, vocabulary areas such as colours and clothes could be reviewed in this activity (e.g., "Stand up if you are wearing red socks.").

2. In the Manner of the Word

(In this activity, students practise using adverbs of manner and imperatives.)

Procedure. As a class, students brainstorm for at least ten different adverbs of manner (e.g., happily, sadly, quietly, noisily) and the teacher writes them on the board. Student A leaves the classroom and the other students secretly choose one adverb. Student A comes back into the class and orders one student to do something (e.g., "Walk around the classroom") in the manner of the chosen adverb. Student A then tries to guess the adverb. If he cannot guess, he commands another student to do a different action. When student A guesses the correct adverb, the next student leaves the classroom and a new adverb is chosen.

Comments. This activity is a lot of fun, especially if a more confident student goes first.

3. Running Dictation

(Running dictations can be used to practise any grammatical structure, or simply to liven up a text.)

Procedure. To prepare for this activity, the teacher should write about eight short sentences on a piece of paper. For example, if the target grammar is the comparative or equative forms of adjectives, the first few sentences of the running dictation might read:

John is taller than Mariko.
Peter isn't as tall as Mariko.
Mariko is shorter than Kyong-Mi.

This sheet of paper should be posted on a wall outside the classroom. The teacher divides the students into pairs, and tells one student in each pair to take out a pencil and paper and write what their partner tells them. The other students are directed to where the paper is posted on the wall. They read what is written on the paper, try to remember as much as they can, then run back into the classroom and dictate the sentences to their partners. After they have dictated the first four sentences, the students switch roles and continue. The first pair to finish dictating and writing down all eight sentences, wins. As pairs finish, they can be given the correct version and asked to check their own for mistakes. While they are doing this, the teacher can write on the board:

1. Who is the tallest?
2. Who is the shortest?

Students answer these two questions as fast as they can with their partners.

Comments. This is a highly successful, fail-safe activity in which even very shy students actively participate.

Fluency

1. Mini Dialogues

(This idea comes from *Vocabulary Games and Activities for Teachers* [Watcyn-Jones, 1993].)

Procedure. The teacher should prepare sets of adjacency pairs on different cards. For example, one card may read, "Hi! How are you?" while the other would say, "I'm fine thanks. How are you?" There should be enough cards so that each student in the class has one. Once cards are handed out to the students, they practise reading them with appropriate stress and intonation. Then the students stand up and try to find the appropriate answer for their question, or vice versa. When students have found their partners, they continue the conversation for as long as possible. The pair which talks the longest, wins.

Comments. There is a variety of possible questions and answers on pages 46 and 47 of

Peter Watcyn-Jones' photocopiable book, mentioned above.

2. Improvise the Ending

Procedure. The teacher should write or select in advance a short two- or three-person script which involves some kind of unresolved conflict. The script should be copied, so that there are enough for each group of two or three students to have one script, and cut into strips. In groups, students are given a script, which they must put in order. They then practise reading the script with the correct stress and intonation, and improvise the ending. The teacher can choose some groups to perform in front of the class. The students then discuss which ending they prefer.

Comments. This idea could be extended to a scene from a movie or television programme. Students watch most of the scene, improvise the ending, then watch the original ending and compare it with their own.

3. Television News

Procedure. Before this activity, the teacher should invent or take some headlines from the newspaper, and cut them in half (e.g., "Mother Attacks Alien Visitor" becomes "Mother Attacks ..." and "... Alien Visitor"). There should be enough so each student in the class has one half headline. Once the students have been given the half headlines, they should walk around and try to find someone with a half headline that fits well with their own. They then sit down with that person and write an interesting, action-packed article based on the combined headline. After this, students cast and dramatize their newspaper articles, turning them into exciting news items. The program is then filmed by the teacher, complete with an announcer's introduction, news items, commercial breaks and theme music (see Sansone, Paper 37).

Comments. Students particularly enjoy watching the other groups perform while they are being filmed and then watching the finished product as a class afterwards. There is a variety of possible headlines to cut up

and match in activity 14 of *Writing Games* (Hadfield & Hadfield, 1990).

The activities presented in this article are only a small selection of those available and are intended as a starting point for teachers who wish to inject more fun and vitality into their classes. Although drama activities may be very different from what many teachers are used to, they are not as daunting as they may seem. Drama not only makes classes more motivating for students, it makes teaching more exciting too!

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Secret Friend Journals

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Among Japanese teenagers and young adults today, it seems almost out of fashion to be without the latest communication technology. Many teenagers and young adults use Pocket Bell pagers or hand-held phones to communicate with their friends over the airwaves. Many enjoy using these gadgets to try to find new friends without revealing their identities. For example, someone with a pager can ring up potential friends simply by using their pager and a guide book containing addresses of numerous Pocket Bell users. Another recent trend among Japanese teenagers is to collect photo stickers, or *puri-kura*, and give them to friends and acquaintances. Many students boast of having hundreds of photo stickers which are pasted onto their date books. As for global trends for this age group, many students have ventured into the personal computer networking craze called "Net surfing." The Internet has become a powerful instrument which can be used to acquire information and keep in touch with the world. These recent trends, both within Japan and on a larger scale, seem to give a clear message: Young people today exhibit a strong desire to develop and maintain contact with their peers.

Secret friend journals are a teaching tool that has been used for just that purpose: developing friendships. However, instead of exploiting technological devices like pagers and phones to open new avenues of communication among friends, students use pencils and notebooks. The underlying intent in using secret friend journals is to help students develop writing fluency, skills to organize their thoughts, and to help them start thinking in English. Students are able to write freely without being overly concerned with potential grammar and spelling mistakes, because the

focus is on content rather than on form. (Accuracy can be addressed later once writers gain confidence and grow accustomed to writing to a "live audience.")

The aim is to give students an enjoyable experience with writing. Journal writing is an opportunity for students to showcase their creativity: They are not limited to using only words, but can express themselves through, for example, personal drawings, pictures, photos, and stickers. The added twist to this activity is that the identities of those corresponding is kept a secret (hence the expression, "secret friend journals").

Writing Topics

Teachers should explain to the class that they will have the opportunity to write about any topic that interests them or their secret friend, but they cannot reveal too much about themselves in their journal. They may not disclose their real name, but they can use a fictitious name. Topics can include personal information (e.g., family, hobbies, dreams, and relationships), school (e.g., sports, classes, projects, problems students might have with English, writing, assignments, and things students are learning), social issues, opinions and feelings about life, and questions students may have about anything else.

Although it is not necessary to give students a minimum length for their journal entries, they should write at least one paragraph to begin with. Later they can write as much as they want, in any fashion they desire, possibly similar to letter or diary style, with dates noted at the top of each page.

Preparation and Procedure

The teacher can set up the activity between two classes (A and B) that he or she

teaches. Alternatively, the teacher can collaborate with a teacher of another class or school. The teacher(s) must first prepare the materials and then coordinate the journal writing assignment due dates. There should be enough notebooks so that each secret friend pair can share one (i.e., if there are 40 students in each class [a total of 80], 40 notebooks will be needed). Each notebook should be labeled with a number (in the above example, the numbers would be from 1 to 40). When distributing the notebooks to students in class A or B, students should remember the number on their notebook as they will be using the same ones throughout the period. From this point on, making a journal entry will be a weekly homework assignment for the students. The process of exchanging journals between secret friend partners could be as follows:

1. Class A students turn in their journals on Friday to the teacher.
2. The class A teacher gives the notebooks to the class B teacher on the same day.
3. The class B teacher distributes the notebooks to each student in class B during class on the same day.
4. Students in class B write in their journals over the weekend and turn in their finished assignment on Monday or Tuesday.
5. The class B teacher collects the notebooks and hands them to the class A teacher.
6. The class A teacher passes out the journals to students on either Monday or Tuesday to be completed and handed in on Friday.

Getting Started

Teachers can begin in class with the fundamentals. In the first journal entry, students can introduce themselves and write about their hobbies, family background, and other personal information. The formation of *wh*-questions can also be introduced or reviewed, so that students may be ready to utilize them in their writing. Teachers should also heighten students' awareness of the practicality of asking (and responding to) questions which elicit past, present, and future information. Post or pre-vacation questions,

for example, allow students to ask each other what they did during their summer break or what they plan to do for their upcoming vacation. Other routine questions could include topics such as what the students are doing now, what they have done on a particular day or the previous week, their plans for the weekend, their plans for the next week, and so on. Once the students are comfortable with exchanging basic information in writing, they can advance to expressing more complex ideas by asking and sharing opinions on global, national, and educational issues, and then giving reasons for their opinions.

Grading

Teachers should remind their students that this form of journal writing is a communicative writing activity and that the focus is on content rather than form. Students should meet the weekly deadlines so that their peers can respond. In a case where a student is absent and has possession of the journal, the partner can write his or her entry on a separate sheet of paper (with the notebook number written at the top of the page), which can be inserted in the journal once the absent student returns. Teachers can mention that students' grades will be based on writing content, creativity, improvement, and their ability to turn in their work on time.

Options

Teachers can approach this writing activity in various ways.

1. Students participate with minimal teacher intervention. Teachers can monitor students' writing patterns and address common writing errors or problems in class rather than in the journal.
2. Teachers can have stronger input by writing comments in the journals between notebook exchanges. (They should be careful, however, not to discourage the students from writing by overcorrecting errors.)
3. Teachers can enlist partners from a third class, so that the writing interaction involves three writers.
4. Time can be set aside for students to write

in class rather than for homework. This allows teachers to establish writing workshops where students can freely elicit spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and organizational suggestions, if they desire.

Conclusion

Motivation is the key to writing secret friend journals. Student writers are motivated as they realize that there is a person on the receiving end who will read the work and respond to it. Since the true identities of the participants are withheld, there is a sense of adventure which naturally brings writers to

search for clues about one another. They can do this by generating questions to acquire needed information.

The highlight and closure to this journal writing activity can be when both classes attend a year-end party, where students of both classes can meet their secret friend partners. Anticipation and excitement builds as the students from each class line up facing the other class and wait. The party reaches the climax when the teacher calls out journal numbers, and the secret friends make contact in person for the first time.

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Quick and Fun Vocabulary Activities

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"Teacher, this week I am learning the 'A' words. Next week I will learn the 'B' words. In twenty-six weeks I will learn all of the words," smiled a student. He was explaining his new way of learning English: He had made a vocabulary list of one hundred words for each letter and was memorizing them. As teachers, we know that this method of learning vocabulary does not often work. But what does work?

Many language teachers build vocabulary lessons on the following basic principles:

1. Students will learn and remember words that they want to learn and remember. For example, when I was studying Spanish in junior high school, I learned the vocabulary for sea creatures. Why? Because I was interested in them. Why do some of my students know all of the "dirty words" in English? Because that is what they want to learn.
2. Vocabulary is learned best when it is organized. Students should organize their own word lists based upon general themes or their own interests or needs. Teachers can help students do this through a variety of exercises and activities.

Below are three quick, tried and true (and fun!) activities that are based on these principles.

Activity 1: Verbs

Materials

- a picture of people doing many different things (one copy per two students).

Procedure

1. The teacher gives one copy of the picture to each pair of students.
2. The teacher directs the students to label as many things as they can in the picture. (The

teacher should encourage the students to use the language learner's best friend: the dictionary.)

3. When the pairs have had enough time, they combine to make groups of four and compare answers.
4. The teacher puts the picture on the overhead projector and elicits the new vocabulary from students.

Activity 2: Adjectives

Materials

- a picture which shows many variations of the same object (e.g., a picture with many cars of different colors, sizes, styles, and shapes) (one copy per student).

Procedure

1. The teacher gives one copy of the picture to each student.
2. The teacher directs the students to individually write adjectives that describe the objects (i.e., one adjective per car).
3. Students make pairs and compare their adjectives. (They now have two adjectives for most of the car.)
4. The teacher directs the pairs to write a third word (that neither student has used before) for each car.
5. In groups of six (three pairs of students combined), students decide upon the most creative word for each car.
6. The teacher elicits the most creative words and lists them on the board.

Activity 3: Favorite Words

Materials

- dictionaries (one per 5 or 6 students).

Procedure

1. The teacher asks the class to come up

with a topic (e.g., sea creatures, fruit, or weather).

2. For homework, the students write down two words related the chosen topic. (As a variation, the students could write the words in a sentence.)

3. The following day, the teacher asks a few students to write their words on the board.

4. The teacher assigns one student to collect the words from the rest of the students and to make a glossary for the whole class. (As a variation, the student can draw pictures for each word.)

5. (follow up) The teacher writes seven words from the glossary on the board.

6. Students make pairs and write a story or a paragraph using all seven words.

7. The teacher invites students to read their paragraphs in front of the class.

8. The stories are posted.

These are just a sample of vocabulary-building activities that can be used to help broaden students' vocabulary. Such activities are attractive because they are simple and adaptable to different teaching situations. In addition, teachers should not forget the motivational benefits to students of learning new vocabulary. Learning new words is an easily-observable indication to a student of his or her own progress. This knowledge of personal progress can, in turn, be a strong force in moving a student toward his or her ultimate goal of successfully learning the language.

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Warming Up Texts

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Teachers of English in Japanese junior high schools today are confronted with various challenges. Limited time in which to cover curriculum material, uninspiring textbooks, and large classes of sometimes unmotivated students are some of the challenges that may deflate a teacher's motivation to plan creative English classes.

Although there are many resource books available that contain creative and effective teaching ideas, the preparation required to put such ideas in practice is often time consuming. An alternative is to follow the textbook slavishly from page to page, from lesson to lesson. This takes little preparation, but is probably not the most exciting or effective way to teach or learn English.

Below are two simple activities which require minimal preparation and can be used in conjunction with textbooks to liven up junior high school English classes.

Activity 1: Focus Objects

A "focus object" is a real object that the teacher can use as a starting point for a lesson. The object should be related in some way to the topic of the day's lesson. For example, for a lesson on leisure activities, the teacher might bring in a tennis racket or another item used in a hobby.

The focus object gives students something to look at, and, depending on the object, something to touch, listen to, smell, or taste. Also, it captures students' attention from the beginning of the lesson and arouses their curiosity about the object and the day's lesson. Another purpose of a focus object is that it can be used in a warm-up activity.

In using a focus object, the teacher gives a brief description of the object and some interesting information about it (e.g., where

it was bought, how much it cost, what it is used for, and whether there is any personal sentimental meaning attached to it). The teacher should, as much as possible, present this information in English. If the teacher has some interesting information about the object that would not be easily understood in English by most students, a quick translation can be given. This warm-up can take as little as a few minutes if the teacher simply wants to capture the attention of the class at the beginning of the lesson, or longer if the teacher wants to focus greater attention on such things as vocabulary, listening comprehension, or asking questions.

To keep students' attention focused throughout the teacher's presentation, the students could be given a task to complete either during the presentation or when the teacher has finished. For example, in pairs or small groups, students write down three questions to ask the teacher relating to the presentation. Alternatively, the teacher could provide students with several comprehension questions (or other types of questions) to be completed during or after the presentation.

This kind of focus object warm-up provides a link between the real world outside the classroom and the subject of the day's lesson. The lesson becomes more meaningful, and students are focused and prepared for the transition from the warm-up to the material to be covered during the lesson. Another benefit of the focus object warm-up is that teachers have an opportunity to give students a glimpse of their lives outside of school. The teacher becomes less "teacher" and more human, which helps encourage trust between student and teacher.

Eventually, teachers may want to try a more student-centered variation using focus

objects with their classes. Students can bring in objects that are important to them, or that relate to a particular theme. For some students, a show and tell in English may seem quite daunting. In such cases, students can take turns presenting in front of small groups of students rather than in front of the whole class. Each lesson, a different student from each group presents to their group. The teacher monitors as students present their objects to their groups simultaneously. Students should be encouraged to write and ask questions at the end of their group's presentation as is done for a teacher presentation.

Many Japanese junior high schools use the *New Horizon* text series (1997). Below are some specific examples of focus objects that can be used in conjunction with *New Horizon 3*.

Unit 1 "Soccer"

This unit presents a dialogue about soccer between two students and an interview of a professional soccer player by a reporter. A focus object could be a photograph of the teacher's favorite J-League player. The teacher gives details in English such as the player's full name, birthday, height, weight, and a brief history of the player's soccer career. As a follow up, the class does a survey of students' favorite soccer players.

Unit 3 "The first woman in Kyogen"

A focus object could be a program from a theater production that the teacher has attended. The teacher discusses the production such as when and where it was performed, what it was about, how much a ticket cost, and which, if any, famous cast members were in it. The teacher asks for a show of hands from students who have attended a live performance of some kind (e.g., a rock concert, a musical, or a theater production), tallies the numbers on the board, and elicits information from students about their experiences.

Unit 5 "Rock music from the '50s to the '90s"

A focus object could be the teacher's favorite

music from this period. The teacher tells students about the performer and plays a song for students' enjoyment and asks students whether they like it. Also, students could complete a cloze activity of the song as they listen (i.e., the song's lyrics with some words blanked out which students fill in as they listen). Students then ask each other in English about their favorite music and complete a class survey.

Unit 7 "Why should we study English?"

The teacher could bring in his or her passport and discuss an experience visiting a country and whether English was useful for communication there. The teacher then asks students to share any experiences they have had traveling in foreign countries.

These are just some examples that show how a simple object can enhance a lesson and link it to real life experiences. The idea of a focus object is simple and flexible enough to be adapted to suit any classroom or teaching situation.

Activity 2: Brainstorming

Another simple idea that requires minimal preparation and can be used with a text is "brainstorming." This involves thinking and writing ideas within a strict time limit in response to a question, topic or category. Brainstorming should be spontaneous, therefore spelling and grammar are not the primary focus. Brainstorming is a good activity for reviewing vocabulary.

The teacher chooses a topic (e.g., "leisure activities") and directs students in small groups to write down as many activities as they can think of in two minutes. Time can be added for lower level students. Spelling is not important at this stage. When time is up, the teacher asks each group how many activities they wrote down, and elicits examples from each group and writes them on the board. The teacher then asks students to copy the list into their notebooks, paying attention to spelling. This kind of brain-storming activity takes less than ten minutes, and is a simple

way to review vocabulary or to warm up the class.

A variation of this is "hot potato," an activity which involves brainstorming different categories of words on pieces of paper that are passed quickly from one group of students to another according to a strict time limit. To begin, the teacher gives each group a colored marker and a large piece of paper. Each paper has a different category (e.g., "countries"). The teacher designates one student in each group to write down the words as the group brainstorms ideas which correspond to their category. When the teacher says "change," students pass their paper to the next group and receive a paper with a different heading. This continues until each group has brainstormed words for each heading. To limit the number of categories, the teacher can divide the class in half and run two identical hot potato activities simultaneously. This allows for comparisons between the two groups at the end of the activity.

A hot potato activity can be done in response to a picture that relates to the topic being studied. Students refer to the picture as they brainstorm. For example, for the street scene on pages 72-73 of *New Horizon 1*, categories such as "things," "outdoor activities," and "sounds" can be used. Students

brainstorm everything they see in the picture that relates to the category.

The hot potato activity can be adapted and used for a variety of topics to review language, and once elicited, this language can be used in a variety of activities. Using large pieces of paper and colored markers allows for papers to be posted in the classroom for all students to see. The language brainstormed can then be used further; for example, in the picture response activity mentioned above, students use the brainstormed language to write five sentences describing the picture.

Teaching the material from junior high school English textbooks that students will be tested on is obviously a high priority for teachers. It is possible to liven up text material by using simple activities that complement the text. The two ideas presented here require few resources, little preparation time, and can be used in conjunction with the text. In addition, they are fast-paced, student-centered, and enjoyable.

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Tried and True: Recipes for the Classroom

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What are the key ingredients of a great language class? Do the terms “student-centered,” “content-based,” “teacher-as-facilitator,” “all-students-actively-involved,” “communicative,” “motivating,” and “fun” all spring to mind? What if you could have all of the above *and* ensure that at the end of the lesson there is a tangible reward for both you and your students? Now you’re cooking!

Welcome to the kitchen in a classroom. While the prospect of conducting a cooking language lesson may seem too challenging in a junior or senior high school, in fact, the process of lesson planning can be almost identical to that required for any ESL or EFL class. Activities involved in a cooking-based lesson should ideally achieve the same goals set for regular classes, and you do not need a fully equipped kitchen to be a success.

The first thing to consider when planning any lesson is what goals you hope to achieve. Cooking is a perfect example of a real context for achieving objectives that are linguistic (e.g., imperative verb forms, countable and uncountable nouns, and contextualized vocabulary), cultural (e.g., dishes and table manners from other parts of the world), and communicative (e.g., students asking for repetition as they clarify directions). Cooking also provides a way to focus on any of the traditional four skills: listening (e.g., instructions on a tape), speaking (e.g., directions to a partner), reading (e.g., a recipe), and writing (e.g., taking notes on the process).

A teacher might have other unique

reasons to try a cooking lesson, such as breaking down gender stereotypes (yes, men can put on an apron!), bringing out quieter students (shy, silent, and a great chef!), teaching basic survival (e.g., boiling water for instant noodles), or preparing a typical dish from a country the students have studied. Another important reason could be simply to create a learning environment that is flexible, novel, and enjoyable, especially for classes which may have developed a listless routine.

Apart from goals, there are other questions for the teacher to keep in mind while planning a cooking activity. What level of language is required of the learner for both comprehension and production? How complex is the recipe in terms of the number of steps, required culinary expertise, and necessary equipment? How can the lesson be student-centered rather than featuring the teacher as head chef? Will the students work individually, in pairs, or in groups? And how many students are realistically involved in each task? (Are all students doing the same thing at the same time, or are different students responsible for different stages of the recipe? Ideally, everyone should have something to do during the lesson.)

As for cooking considerations, it is important to be practical. Cost is critical, not only because institutions and teachers operate on limited budgets, but also because there is a greater chance that students will try the recipe at home if ingredients are accessible and inexpensive.

Food volume is also a concern. The teacher doesn't need to prepare an entire dish for each student: It is enough to provide everyone with a taste. And taste certainly is a major consideration. This simplest of recipes can, in fact, contain elements of both the everyday and the exotic. Students may be used to the key ingredients, but not in certain combinations. Familiar ingredients provide students with a form of security, while novel combinations pique curiosity and, hopefully, tempt students to try a taste. Also, the recipe should be foolproof. Teachers should remember that cooking goals are subordinate to linguistic goals, and that both the recipe and the language should be challenging, but within the students' reach.

Even a simple recipe combined with appropriate language tasks can fall flat as a soufflé if the classroom set-up and necessary equipment are not carefully arranged. Even with simple cooking procedures, everyone can be involved if the placement of ingredients, utensils, and furniture is carefully planned. For example, one table should be positioned where the tasks involved in the recipe are identified, another one where the ingredients are placed, another one where food is prepared, and a final table where the finished product is eaten. Or, if two groups are working simultaneously, the room can be divided in half with identical sets of stations on either side. As the class is being set up, the teacher should try to visualize where students will be located. Who reads or listens? Who speaks or follows directions? Most importantly, is everyone involved?

So, the food is beautiful, the language has been mastered—and a student is headed for the hospital! Safety is also a major consideration in the cooking classroom. Heat sources and sharp knives are potentially hazardous, while allergies are often overlooked. How dangerous is the lesson? You should find out who cannot eat what, and avoid flames and sharp edges. There are a variety of safe recipes to be found in the categories of hors d'oeuvres, dips and spreads, salads, dressings, sandwiches, desserts, and

drinks.

Once a recipe has been successfully prepared in the classroom, you might want to try more. Organize your endeavors by keeping a box of recipe cards in your office or classroom. Sources include clippings from magazines, your friends' savory secrets, or the culinary experience of your students (have them teach you!). Organize your box so that it can be referred to easily, and recipes can be categorized as is often done in cookbooks, using the recipe headings mentioned above. On the back of each card, you can write (a) necessary language and how to present it, (b) possible activities for using the recipe in class, (c) ways to adapt for smaller or larger groups, (d) what problems to anticipate, (e) which class you used the recipe with, including the date, and (f) feedback from students.

After determining your objectives and keeping in mind the other considerations mentioned above, the next step is to choose a recipe and activities. At the end of this article, we have provided two selections from our own box of cooking activities, as well as a great recipe to try for the first cooking class. While clear objectives, careful preparation, and appropriate activities are important, the key ingredient in any cooking class is the recipe, and our all-time favorite, the West Coast Cheese Ball, is foolproof and delicious! Whichever dish you decide to prepare, cooking in class can be tried with any type of student, whether child or adult, homemaker or business person. The key factor is that the teacher must be prepared and convinced the lesson will be worthwhile. If students can realize the value of the activities in language learning terms, they are sure to enjoy the actual preparation (and consumption!) of the dish. Try a cooking language lesson, and really give your students a taste of something different!

Activity 1: Reading and Clarification

Preparation

1. Divide the class into groups of four to six students.
2. Set up a work station (i.e., a table or desk) for each group.

3. Prepare a centrally located table with the ingredients and necessary utensils for all groups.
4. Give one copy of the recipe, which contains challenging vocabulary and directions, to each pair of students. (Each student receives a copy once the food has been prepared.)

Procedure

1. Groups sit at their work station and, in pairs, underline any words or phrases they do not understand on the recipe handout.
2. Students discuss meanings with other pairs. If there are words or phrases that no one understands, the group should ask the teacher for definitions. In order to encourage students to request clarification in English, teachers should not volunteer help unless asked, and should encourage students to ask complete questions rather than just pointing at their recipe worksheets. If students have difficulty pronouncing a word they do not understand, they can ask questions by giving the spelling (e.g., "What does *m-a-s-h* mean?").
3. Once a group understands the recipe, selected members go to the central table and collect the necessary ingredients and utensils. (Or the teacher can distribute items as students politely request them.)
4. Groups follow the recipe and prepare the dish at their stations. As groups finish, the teacher should distribute a copy of the recipe to each student and answer any questions. Once everyone has finished, groups sample dishes. (It is a good idea to have plastic wrap handy so students can take home leftovers.)

Activity 2: Fill-in-the-Blanks Recipe Worksheet

Preparation

1. Divide the class into groups of four to six students.
2. Prepare a work station for each group, with the ingredients and necessary utensils.
3. Prepare (a) a tape of the recipe, giving ingredients, utensils, and directions; (b) a tape recorder (the teacher should check that each station can hear clearly); and (c) a recipe

worksheet with selected deletions (e.g., measurements for ingredients). Depending on the level of the group, worksheet deletions can range in difficulty. For example, for a lower class, the deletions can be minimal, with possible answers listed in scrambled order at the bottom of the worksheet. For higher-level students, only the headings "ingredients," "utensils," and "method" may be given on the worksheet. Students then listen and write only essential information (i.e., students listen for gist, not for every word [as in a dictation]).

4. Give one copy of the recipe worksheet to each pair of students. (Each student receives a copy once the food has been prepared.)

Procedure

1. Groups sit at their work station and, in pairs, listen to the tape, then fill in the blanks.
2. Once the worksheet is completed, selected pairs write the recipe, ingredients, directions, and so on, on the board. Details should be confirmed or corrected.
3. Groups now follow the recipe and prepare the dish at their stations.

Variation

The recipe text can be written with deletions on the board. Selected students can operate the tape recorder as volunteers fill in the blanks at the board. Once finished, students should fill in their own worksheets and prepare the dish in groups.

The West Coast Cheese Ball

Ingredients

- 1 cup of tinned or smoked fish (mashed)
- 1 teaspoon of lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon of *neri wasabi* (or for a Western taste, 2 teaspoons of horseradish)
- 1 teaspoon of soya sauce (or for a Western taste, 1 teaspoon of Worcestershire sauce)
- 1 teaspoon of minced onion (optional)
- 6 tablespoons of chopped parsley
- 1 package of cream cheese
- 1/2 a cup of chopped nuts
- crackers

Equipment

mixing bowl, cutting board, serving dish, knife, fork, (optional items include an apron, newspapers to cover the work tables, and plastic wrap for leftovers)

Directions

1. Mash the fish.
2. Add *neri wasabi* and soya sauce (or horseradish and Worcestershire sauce), lemon juice, 3 tablespoons of chopped parsley, and minced onion. Mix well.
3. Add cream cheese and mix for a short time. (Mix quickly or the cream cheese

becomes too soft.)

4. Form into a ball, then slightly flatten it into a wheel shape.
5. Roll the wheel in the chopped nuts and remaining parsley until the outside is covered.
6. Put the wheel on a serving dish and decorate with parsley sprigs and olives or capers. Serve in wedges on crackers. (This dish tastes better if it is refrigerated for a few hours, or overnight. Teachers might want to prepare a sample dish in advance to familiarize themselves with the recipe and to eat in class. Then students can take their creation home.)

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Project Work: Making a Town Tourist Brochure

Margaret Hearnden
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Project Work: What Is It and Why Do It?

Project work can be a very productive and useful activity in terms of language and cultural exploration for any age and level of student. It can be enjoyable for both the students and the teacher and it has a wide range of applications. It does, of course, have its own set of considerations and potential difficulties, and needs to be carefully planned to ensure that the maximum benefit is gained. Every situation is unique and changes must be made accordingly. Project work can represent a change from the usual methods of language teaching and learning, and, if planned appropriately, can greatly encourage students to think and speak more freely in the target language.

Project work is a group activity based around a common goal or objective. It has the advantage of encouraging teamwork and team building whilst involving individual research and responsibility towards the group as a whole. In this sense, it is an "all around" activity. Project work can involve any theme relevant to the needs of the students taking part and can cover a multitude of language areas and functions. It has unlimited scope for exploitation. It can be used with mixed age and ability groups. Above all it is interesting, fun, and informative, both in terms of language usage and the topic being researched.

The example of project work that I will describe is the creation of a town tourist brochure. It is based on my own teaching experience with high school students in France, but it can be adapted easily to any country and culture. My objectives in using

project work are (a) to encourage students to work as a team, (b) to promote free conversation in English, (c) to consolidate students' knowledge of English, (d) to encourage students to explore culture through language, and (e) to encourage students to explore ways of self-expression in journalistic style.

Making a Brochure

Considerations. Before beginning, the teacher should think about the following points.

1. How many students will take part in the project?
2. If more than one class is to be involved, exactly how will tasks be assigned and coordinated? (It may be easier for each class to create its own brochure.)
3. How long will the students spend on the project in terms of class and homework time?
4. What materials are available (e.g., photocopying and printing facilities, photos and pictures) and are there any limitations (e.g., copyright laws)?
5. What are the language considerations? In this case, students need to be familiar with grammatical structures for describing location, attractions, and events. They need to have a basic understanding of the appropriate style (i.e., journalistic) and register suitable for a tourist brochure (i.e., simple, but interesting and informative). Whilst this kind of activity is probably most effective with intermediate level students and above, with careful planning it can be adapted to any level (e.g., research could be done in the native language, then reworked in English through group classroom activities and some individual

homework assignments).

6. What are the research options? Students could be allowed to leave school premises during school time to undertake research at a local library, though this would require special permission or supervision depending on the age of the students and school regulations. If this is not possible, research can be set as homework assignments, perhaps with parental assistance.

7. Are there any further activities that can be linked to the project work? In this case, any number of communication activities can be linked to information gathered by the students. For example, research into leisure facilities in the town can be used for a further class on hobbies and interests and the use of the simple present for habitual activities.

Procedure. When the above points have been carefully considered, the teacher can prepare for the activity itself. The following represents a sequence of steps that need to be planned.

1. Begin with a brainstorming session. What do the students know about their town and the surrounding area (e.g., history, industry, statistics, sights, tourist attractions, facilities, festivals, famous inhabitants)?
2. Discuss what kind of information should be gathered. For example, what kind of information would tourists want to know about a town? What is or is not relevant to them?
3. Review any available tourist information on the town. Encourage students to discuss content, style, and language. Pre-project tasks could be set requiring each class or group to do a reading task using relevant texts.
4. Discuss suitable research methods (e.g., going to the reference library, calling city hall or the local tourist information bureau).
5. Assign clear and specific tasks to each group of students, ensuring that within each group each student has a role and fully understands what is expected of him or her. Be very clear about deadlines and how much the students are expected to write.
6. Allot specific classroom and homework

time to project work. It should continue alongside other language work which can be used to tie in with the project (e.g., a grammar lesson on comparatives and superlatives can help with the descriptive pieces of the project).

7. Assemble the brochure. Once all the information has been gathered, articles written, photos taken, and so on, everything needs to be put together in a clear and logical order. It is important at this stage that the decisions are student centered with the teacher acting as an advisor, and if necessary, final judge.

Difficulties. With any activity, there are potential difficulties which need to be addressed. Whilst the teacher should be aware of these difficulties, they should not be overestimated. Here are some points worth considering:

1. Keeping students using and speaking English naturally can be a challenge. If there is a lot of information already available in English, students may tend just to read back what is written rather than using their own words. It may help to practice gist reading and summarizing skills before you begin the project. If most of the information is only in the native language, the students might become stuck in trying to express themselves in too complicated sentences by trying to translate directly into English. Material should be used as a starting point only. Perhaps after the initial research is finished, any published material (whether in the native language or English), could be kept by the teacher and used for reference only (e.g., for dates or statistics).
2. Stronger students may dominate discussions and contributions to the project. Make sure each student's role is known to the whole class so that everyone feels his or her effort is important. Encourage students to help each other and be supportive. It may be a good idea to appoint a coordinator for each group who is responsible for making sure their group is running to schedule and that if anyone is having difficulty (e.g., lack of information on

topic they have chosen to research) that the teacher is made aware.

3. There could be disagreements about who will research each topic. Be sure that subjects are allocated fairly (perhaps pulled from a hat) and equally weighted in terms of level of difficulty and amount of research required.

4. It is important that the teacher is aware of where the students get their information from. They should be encouraged to use their own imagination and creativity. It should be

clear that this is not an exercise in copying someone else's English tourist guide.

Project work is a rich and exciting activity and can provide an endless source of off-shoot activities which, as mentioned above, can be exploited in subsequent classes. Above all, it is fun. The most effective language learning takes place when students forget they are actually learning and are fully engrossed in the activity itself.

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TV Commercials: A Motivational Learning Experience

Laurie Sansone
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Everyone is familiar with TV commercials; most of us can sing the jingle to at least a few of them in our own language. As a result of international marketing, advertising slogans have crossed borders and language barriers and have made an indelible impression on the minds of many adolescents. For these reasons, making TV commercials can be a fun way for students to use English in the classroom. In this article, I will (a) discuss the reasons why I started making TV commercials with my classes, (b) look at some of the benefits of making TV commercials with students, and (c) provide a comprehensive lesson procedure for making TV commercials with junior and senior high school EFL students.

Developing Positive Group Dynamics

At LIOJ, junior and senior high classes are ninety minutes long, and held only once a week. Because our students come from different local high schools, they have not usually met each other before their first class together, nor do they see each other between classes. It is, therefore, not uncommon to find that even after several weeks of pair and group activities, students still do not know or feel at ease with one another.

For this reason I tried making TV commercials in class with senior high students as a means of developing positive group dynamics. I chose this activity because I was faced with a class of extremely shy students who did not know each other well and whose English was at a very low level. It seemed that the students were reluctant to speak in class because they felt uncomfortable among their classmates. I decided that having them

work together on a project with little teacher involvement would require some degree of creativity and personal investment, and would provide a good exercise in cooperation and group bonding. In this regard, the activity was tremendously successful. The students began friendships that continued to evolve throughout the remainder of the semester.

Other Benefits

Making TV commercials is a task-based, student-centered activity which creates real language needs for students. Students learn new vocabulary as they search for the right words to express their ideas. They remember the vocabulary easily because it is acquired as the result of their effort and creativity, both of which are required to complete the process of formulating and acting in TV commercials.

Because TV commercials are short, students have to promote their product clearly and directly, using as few words as possible. This enables them to work on intonation and clear pronunciation while learning to use body language and facial expressions effectively.

On a practical note, making TV commercials is a highly flexible activity in terms of time and necessary resources. You need only a video camera and some products to advertise. The whole process can be completed in one class (if time is limited) or extended over a series of classes. This activity can be conducted easily by one teacher, and more easily by two as in a team teaching class with a JTE (Japanese teacher of English) and an ALT (assistant language teacher). Finally, TV commercials can be extremely entertaining to watch, especially when the performers are

friends and classmates. Viewing the finished product provides a reward for a job well done, and is a nice wrap-up which students and teachers enjoy together.

Activity Procedure: Set Up

Filming TV commercials with many different groups of high school students (often under severe time constraints), I have developed a lesson procedure which is fast, fun, and teacher-friendly. The steps are as follows.

1. Preview the activity (before the day of the activity, if possible). Briefly tell the class about the activity, then put students into groups of four to six students and give them a few minutes to agree on a product to bring in and advertise. Making a decision about what product to advertise should increase learner motivation by getting students personally involved from the very beginning of the activity. In addition, the process of selecting a product to bring in will naturally lead students to think about what product they like most and why they like it, helping prepare them for the task ahead. If you're unable to do this step before the day of the activity, you can gather a variety of commercial products and bring them in yourself; Coca-Cola, HiTop washing powder, Meiji chocolate, Ritz crackers, VO5 hair spray, and Pringles potato chips are a few examples.

2. Arrange space for each group to put together and practice its commercial. If individual rooms are not possible, each group can practice in its own space within a shared room. In this case, it is best to have the camera in a separate room so that you will be able to film each group making its commercial without interruptions, background noises, or unwanted observers.

3. Post a schedule indicating where groups will practice and what time each commercial will be recorded. A three-minute slot for each group will be enough as long as you follow the "one practice and one take only" rule. A precise schedule is critical in order to get all the groups filmed smoothly. To determine the time for each film slot, decide what time you'll

need to finish, then work backward in three minute increments, leaving a minute or two between each group for transition time. For example, in a 50-minute class which runs from 1:00 p.m. to 1:50 p.m., with five groups, the film schedule would appear as follows.

group #:	film time:
group 1	1:27-1:30
group 2	1:32-1:35
group 3	1:37-1:40
group 4	1:42-1:45
group 5	1:47-1:50

(If you have a class of students who are particularly slow at making transitions, keep this in mind when making the film schedule and provide a cushion by building more transition time into the schedule between filming slots.)

4. Choose a convenient and appropriate place to film, then set up the video camera. Experiment with the camera to decide which part of the room will be best to use as the "stage." Also determine how far right, left, forward, and back students can move and still be seen by the camera. (You should plan to hold the camera when filming rather than set it on a tripod. This will give you more flexibility to move with the action swiftly and smoothly.)

Activity Procedure: Tips for Motivating Students

From the outset, students must be encouraged to be creative and dynamic. The most important aspect at this stage of the process is for the teacher to be highly energetic and excited about the activity, and to make clear to students the fact that a TV commercial must be fun and exciting, never slow, long-winded, or dull. Points to remember include the following:

1. Energize students. Tell students they will make commercials which the whole class will later watch on TV. (Knowing they will be seen by all their classmates gives students an added incentive to work hard to make a good, fun commercial.)

2. Be Specific. Elicit from students the important elements of a good commercial and write them on the board (e.g., “exciting,” “interesting,” “fun,” “dynamic,” “active,” “short,” “few words but plenty of action,” “lots of facial expression,” “plenty of singing and dancing”). Remind students that actions in commercials should be big and dramatic rather than small and barely noticeable, and that the key is in clarity and impact rather than length. Commercials should last ten to thirty seconds and not more. Strongly recommend the use of a song or dance. It is important for you, the teacher, to be highly energetic throughout this brief presentation to give students a model for the level of excitement that will be expected of them when filming.

3. Tell students the rules for filming:

- Commercials must be between ten and thirty seconds.

- Each group will have three minutes for filming. Within this film slot each group will have time for one rehearsal and only one take. Once the filming begins for a group, it doesn't stop until they have finished the commercial. Therefore, if students make a mistake they must not stop.

- The commercial must be performed entirely in English.

4. Let students choose the product they will advertise. If you bring products to class yourself, give groups a few minutes to look at the selection and choose a product.

5. Refer groups to the posted schedule. Assign a practice place and filming slot to each group and confirm that students know exactly how much time they have for preparation and at what time they need to be in front of the camera. Precise timing is the crucial element in completing the filming without a hitch (i.e., “Your film slot is from 1:32 to 1:35. Make sure you're here by 1:32 ready to step in front of the camera.”).

6. Set groups working. When students have understood the instructions and the rules, allow them to get started immediately.

7. Circulate, suggest, and animate. Once students are in their respective practice areas, you can circulate and answer questions, help

with vocabulary, volunteer ideas, and remind students that their commercials need to be dynamic and fun. Encourage students to practice their commercials in front of you. They will probably be eager to hear your feedback and will pay close attention to your suggestions. Seize this opportunity to correct pronunciation and work on intonation, gestures and facial expressions. If the commercial is lacking in energy or enthusiasm, remind students again that their actions need to be lively and exaggerated. Finally, check one last time to see that they remember the time at which they need to appear before the camera for filming.

Activity Procedure: Filming

1. As groups of students come in for filming, remind them that they will have one practice and one film take.

2. Show them the front, back, left, and right limits of the stage.

3. Let students arrange the stage. (They may want to use a few desks, chairs, or other props).

4. Tell students that you will indicate a silent “3-2-1-go” countdown so that your voice won't be recorded, and demonstrate by showing three fingers, two fingers, one finger, then pointing at them to “go.”

5. Give students one practice. Do this as though you were recording, complete with the silent countdown. Look through the video camera during this practice and experiment with the zoom, getting a feel for which students will move where, and when to move the camera and use the zoom.

6. Give students any last-minute suggestions you have (e.g., “smile more,” “talk a bit louder”). Keep it simple. At this point it is too late and time is too limited to make any major changes.

7. Tell students to take their positions for the film shot and remind them that if they make a mistake they need to continue because you will not stop filming. Start the camera, count down, and film the commercial. When students have finished the commercial, let the camera continue filming for an extra three

seconds. This is necessary to keep the cuts between commercials smooth.

8. As soon as one group finishes filming, congratulate the students on their good work and send them on their way quickly so that the next group can be filmed.

9. Repeat the above process with each group until all the commercials have been recorded.

Activity Procedure: Wrap Up

1. Before the next class, rewind the video and watch it once to make sure that all the commercials were recorded without any problem and to see how long it is.

2. Select a convenient time (e.g., the last five minutes of your next class) and show the video from beginning to end. Students love seeing themselves and their friends on TV and seem to enjoy this part of the activity most of all.

While the process of making TV commercials requires some attention to detail and plenty of energy, I think you will find that the many benefits of this activity far outweigh any inconvenience. For both teachers and students, this activity presents an enjoyable diversion from daily classroom routine while providing exciting teaching and learning opportunity.

Laurie Sansone was an instructor at LIOJ from 1997 to 1998.

Section V

Thirty Years of LIOJ

Thirty Years of LIOJ

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Tokyo Jogakkan Schools for Women

When we began this experiment in English language education—which was later christened “the Language Institute of Japan”—it was the desire of the co-founders to work toward improving Japan’s ability to communicate smoothly and interact productively with the outside world. An obvious route toward this goal would be to improve the nation’s proficiency in English, which we intended to do to the best of our ability. But we also felt that we should go beyond language teaching and try to address more fundamental communication problems which have troubled Japan in its relations with the rest of the world. These problems could be traced to various sources, one of which was the nation’s history.

During the Meiji period, Japan paid little attention to the consequences of its own rapid modernization. The full scale industrialization of a country with such limited natural resources was bound to bring about a resource crisis, and would subsequently lead Japan down a hazardous road of procuring resources from abroad. Likewise, Japan’s lack of understanding of the effect of its rapidly-growing military strength on the balance of power in Asia was, at least in part, the source of various conflicts, including the exhaustive war with Russia at the turn of the century.

One factor contributing to Japan’s ignorance of its position relative to the rest of the world may have been an intense pre-occupation with its own actions. This left little room for consideration of how other people might see, or hope to see, Japan. The country focused on its own economic development and the building of its armed forces. Predictably, such a penchant was not conducive to formulating a reasonable and well-balanced foreign policy, which could have prevented

the nation from later plunging into a reckless and disastrous war in the Pacific.

One would assume that the trauma that accompanied defeat in World War II and the subsequent occupation by the Allied Powers should have cured such insensitivity and made Japan more observant of its place in the world. As it turned out, however, Japan appeared to have learnt little from its past, as shown in the way post-war Japan once again committed itself to its economic development: quite oblivious to a variety of strains and conflicts, economic as well as political, which the country would soon encounter and which were primarily a result of its own success.

Looking for solutions to the country’s communication problems, then, it was clear to LIOJ’s founders that language education alone, however effective, would not be a panacea for the nation’s basic socio-cultural problems. However, we believed that the difficulty which Japan encountered in dealing with the world was closely related to the difficulty which many of its people faced when they studied foreign languages.

For example, in order to fully acquire a foreign language it is necessary to understand the way of life of the speakers of the language. If one remains within one’s own cultural confines, as Japanese often do, it is difficult to get the feel of the language in question. Therefore, we reasoned that, if LIOJ was to be effective in its mission, we had to provide students with an environment in which they could live like the native speakers of the target language.

On this assumption, LIOJ centered its activities around residential language courses at the Asia Center building in Odawara. The institute tried to create an English-speaking “island” floating in a Japanese sea, in the hope

of accelerating an attitudinal change in the students. The co-founder and first principal of the institute, Mr. Rowland Harker, took great care to organize the daily life of the students in such a way that they would be exposed to American lifestyle as much as possible. Mrs. Terttu Harker put a great deal of effort into reproducing in the building a style and rhythm of life resembling that in the United States.

In spite of our efforts, we were not able to produce an exact replica of American lifestyle in Odawara. This was partly due to the somewhat meager standard of living which prevailed in Japan at that time. However, judging from the instant success of the courses that LIOJ initially offered—Asia Center was regularly filled to its capacity by students—the idea seemed justified.

Encouraged by the attention thus generated throughout the country, LIOJ was quick to implement two of its most important programs, the annual International Summer Workshop for Teachers of English and the four-week intensive course for business professionals. The LIOJ Workshop was designed to expose Japanese teachers of English to the latest ideas and practices of language education, as presented by leading scholars who came from prestigious educational institutions throughout the English-speaking world. The annual visit of these eminent lecturers was valuable as a source of information and intellectual stimulation, and their presence helped enhance LIOJ's visibility around the world.

Likewise, the business communication course seemed to meet contemporary needs, as it attracted an ever-increasing number of applicants from Japan's leading companies, many of whom were placed on a rather long waiting list. For LIOJ's non-Japanese teachers, the program provided an opportunity to interact with well-educated people, executive elites who represented the ethos of the Japanese business world.

The launching of the business program was timely, in that it coincided with an important turning point in Asia's post-war history. Toward the end of the 1960s, many countries in the region were growing out of

their post-independence euphoria, embarking on practical endeavors for social and economic development. The war in Vietnam was moving toward a stalemate, causing considerable fear and uneasiness throughout the region. In order to fend off the dangers and uncertainties which the end of the war might bring to the region, five nations in Southeast Asia formed ASEAN in 1967. This was a clear indication that a new type of indigeneous relationship was beginning to evolve in the region. At the same time, Japan's economy was experiencing robust expansion; its goods and services were literally circling the globe.

Unfortunately, the nation's relationship with the world was still handicapped by the age-old linguistic and psychological barrier, which may have been a factor in the anti-Japanese riots and embargo which spread throughout Southeast Asia in the early 1970s. These and other similar developments underscored in Japan the importance of language education. It also became increasingly clear that English was the *lingua franca* for regional dialogue in Asia; many of the region's intellectual elite had earned degrees from Western, mostly American, institutions.

On the international scene, the 1970s turned out to be another decade of great change. First came President Nixon's bold initiative in rapprochement with China which sent a shock wave from Korea to Indonesia. Then came the oil crisis which knocked the entire world economy off balance. Being so heavily dependent on imported oil, Japan went through a period of rampant inflation and saw a drastic deterioration in its terms of trade. Fortunately, Japan's industry somehow managed to come out of the crisis with a series of new, energy-saving products, from cars and TVs to machinery. Toward the end of the decade, the Japanese economy was booming again and becoming a major factor globally.

The growth of Japan's economy fundamentally altered its position and role in the world. Japanese investment and economic assistance were eagerly sought after in Asia as an indispensable underpinning for the

region's economic development. China's decision at the end of the 1970s to turn toward a market economy boosted Japan's importance as a source of investment and an aid for infrastructure building, which the fledgling economy of China needed desperately. Japan became a member of international organizations, such as the Trilateral Commission and the G7. In a sense, Meiji Japan's ambition to become a major partner in world management appeared to have been realized.

Despite these great international steps, the difficulty Japan has had in communicating with the rest of the world has persisted, although the need is still not confined to language alone. In fact, the nation's level of English proficiency has improved steadily in recent years. With a staggering 10 to 15 million Japanese tourists travelling abroad annually, and hundreds of thousands of families living abroad, Japan's internationalization has advanced a great deal. However, with its influence expanding rapidly, Japan is now expected to provide far more sophisticated leadership than it has in the past. For example, the nation is now counted upon to take the initiative in bailing Asia out of its current economic crisis, or to play a central role in combatting environmental problems throughout the world. In the face of these new responsibilities, although the concept on which LIOJ was founded may still be valid, the institute may need to develop a new strategy with a format relevant to the needs of the 21st century.

In commemorating the 30th anniversary of LIOJ and its International Summer Workshop for Teachers of English, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has taken part in the birth and growth of this unique institution. Through the workshops,

we have been able to meet and make friends with many English teachers from various countries in Asia, whose presence adds to the international dimension of the work of LIOJ. This has been most gratifying. It has also been a joy to live and work with successive groups of LIOJ teachers. Some have chosen to continue language teaching as a career, while others have ventured into academic disciplines involving intercultural communication. My wife and I have fond memories of attending many weddings born out of the life of LIOJ, and of even playing the role of go-between at some.

Special thanks go to successive directors, from Bill Harshbarger to Jim Kahny. Each has had to work under substantial constraints, saddled with considerable responsibilities, and yet everyone of them has carried the institute splendidly forward. They have been able to maintain LIOJ's unique system of management which, being neither American nor Japanese, can perhaps best be described as a productive hybrid of East and West. I hope that their experience with LIOJ has been useful in their subsequent growth, both personal and professional. Similarly, I am grateful for the outstanding contributions made by successive business managers, from Masami Takahashi to Kazumi Masuda, who have had to negotiate the challenging task of working between the two very different cultures and lifestyles.

Finally, LIOJ would not have been conceived and born without Mr. and Mrs. Harker. Their all-out commitment and selfless service laid the groundwork for the institute and gave it a lasting inspiration. We greatly miss Rowland Harker, who passed away in Oregon in May 1996, and pray for his soul to rest in peace.

Masahide Shibusawa is director-CEO of Tokyo Jogakkan Schools for Women. He is co-founder of LIOJ and executive director of MRA House, Inc., which oversees LIOJ.

A Message to Japanese Teachers of English

Toneko Hirai

It gives me great satisfaction to know that LIOJ and its International Summer Workshop for Teachers of English have continued now for thirty years. The Workshop originated from the conviction that a higher level of English proficiency among Japanese English teachers was a priority. Many of the teachers themselves have recognized the necessity to further their own training, and over the years they have sacrificed vacation time to attend these seminars.

Although great strides have been made in English teaching methodology in Japan, criticism still abounds regarding Japanese people's inability to communicate adequately in foreign languages. Some have claimed that English is no longer a necessity in Japan. However, the reality is that English has secured its place as the dominant international language. Today, acquiring English skills is not just a matter of passing examinations or getting good grades, nor is it simply a means for obtaining employment: It is a matter of survival for Japan in the 21st century. English teachers should be aware that their students will be the men and women who

determine the future of Japan.

Japanese industries are active in many fields, in all corners of the earth, and in space. For example, the recent construction of the English Channel Tunnel linking France and Britain was made possible by the use of huge excavators built by Japanese Kawasaki Heavy Industries. Japanese industries have created springs smaller than one millimeter that are used for testing semiconductors, as well as built the Tokyo Bay Aqualine, the world's longest undersea tunnel for motor vehicles. To remain active on such a scale, it is important to recognize and address the fact that the vehicle for international communication is English. This has become even more apparent in recent years with the rapid growth of the Internet.

With such a global, developmental perspective, the importance of English language ability is obvious. While foreign language learning has often been viewed by Japanese people as difficult, there is no time to delay. Time marches on, and Japanese teachers of English must be prepared for the great task set before them.

Toneko Hirai (nee Kimura) has taught at various schools, including the Keio High Schools. She is co-founder of LIOJ and the LIOJ Workshop.

Perspectives on Secondary School EFL Education

POSSEE is a collection of articles concerned with both theoretical and practical aspects of EFL acquisition and instruction, intercultural training and learning, international language teaching with a special emphasis on Japan, and English as an international language. The topics are relevant to junior and senior high school EFL teachers in Japan, as well as to the larger group of language educators worldwide.

The authors of *POSSEE* are educators who represent a variety of perspectives from fourteen countries, including Australia, Cambodia, Canada, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Vietnam.

POSSEE is divided into five sections as follows:

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- Thirty Years of LIOJ, Masahide Shibusawa • A Message to Japanese Teachers of English, Toneko Hirai

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