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JACET 教育問題研究会 会誌



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Language Teacher Education and Its Relevant Fields

August 2014

JACET SIG on English Language Education

<http://www.waseda.jp/assoc-jacetenedu/>

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Foreword

We have completed compiling three versions of Japanese Portfolio for Teachers of Languages (J-POSTL). They are J-POSTL Full Version for English Teacher Education, J-POSTL for Pre-service English Teacher Education, and J-POSTL for In-service English Teacher Education. These portfolios are the adaptations of the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) published by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), Council of Europe, in 2007. The JACET SIG on English Language Education has obtained the copyright to translate and adapt the EPOSTL in February, 2014.

This project would not have been possible without the assistance of many individuals, both in Japan and overseas. Space constraints do not allow us to thank every person who contributed to the making of J-POSTL but we are especially indebted to the two EPOSTL authors, Dr. David Newby (Professor Emeritus, University of Graz) and Dr. Barry Jones (Emeritus Fellow, University of Cambridge), for their helpful advice and guidance.

Publication of the J-POSTL is only the first step in this important policy-relevant process. The value of the project is contingent on how broadly it can be disseminated and accepted in Japan.

Taking advantage of this occasion, we have decided to publish our SIG journal not only to publicize J-POSTL but also to contribute to the improvement of language teacher education as a whole in Japan.

This journal will be produced semi-annually on-line and/or in print: in both Japanese and English. Although this publication is intended mainly for our SIG members, we would like to welcome contributions from all the stakeholders of language teacher education as well as foreign language education.

August 5, 2014

Hisatake Jimbo, Managing Editor
Ken Hisamura, Editor in Chief
JACET SIG on English Language Education

Language Teacher Education Vol.1 No.2

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J-POSTL: Specification of Descriptors and Strategies for Implementation

Ken Hisamura

Introduction

In the 2013 report of the JACET SIG on English Language Education (hereafter, SIG), two different sets of survey results related to the Japanese Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (hereafter, J-POSTL) conducted in 2012 are analyzed and discussed. One is about the national survey among in-service English language teachers (number of responses: 5,658) on 62 self-assessment descriptors extracted from the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (hereafter, EPOSTL) (Newby, et al., 2007). A number of statistical data are provided as the foundation for specifying the descriptors for didactic competences of in-service English teachers and for categorizing them into the four stages of teaching career in the Japanese context. They are, for example, combined ratios of ‘appropriate’ and ‘somewhat appropriate’ responses to each descriptor, cross tabulation among school types, analyses by indicators of means and standard deviations on differences by teaching experience, significant differences in didactic competences depending on the length of overseas experience, etc. In addition, the 19 descriptors in the EPOSTL which were omitted both from the J-POSTL for Pre-service Teacher Education (hereafter, J-POSTL (Pre-service)) and from the 2012 national survey are carefully re-examined to explore the possibilities to include them either in the J-POSTL (Pre-service) or in the J-POSTL for In-service Teacher Education (hereafter, J-POSTL (In-service)).

The other is about the second annual survey about the 100 descriptors in the J-POSTL (Pre-service). In this survey, student teachers at several selected Japanese institutions were asked to evaluate themselves by using the descriptors three times between the fall of 2011 and that of 2012, whereas two times in the first survey conducted between 2010 and 2011. As a result, important statistical data concerning a degree of difficulty of the 100 descriptors are collected and presented.

This article aims to describe the process of how the data obtained by these survey results were integrated to specify self-assessment descriptors for each of the two variants of the J-POSTL and to discuss strategies for implementing the J-POSTL in the pre- and in-service English language teacher education.

1. Specification of Descriptors for In-service English Teachers

1.1 Descriptors Used in the National Survey

The first question is whether all the 62 descriptors used as questionnaire items in the 2012 national survey are acceptable in the Japanese context. Since the reliability of aggregate results of this survey is very high ($\alpha > 0.9$) and five-scale ratios of all the responses show normal distribution, mean scores and combined ratios of ‘appropriate’ and ‘somewhat appropriate’ (i.e. positive responses) are used as the data for this question (See Appendix 2 of the 2013 annual report for complete data).

The questionnaire comprises three main sections as follows:

- Core competences (41 descriptors)
- Intercultural competences (8 descriptors)
- Competences for Independent learning (13 descriptors).

In each section, the acceptability of the descriptors which show both the lowest mean scores and positive responses is examined and discussed.

First, the following two descriptors in core competences are the topic of discussion.

Table 1. Descriptors showing the lowest mean score and combined ratio

Descriptor	Mean	Combined rate
I can plan to teach elements of other subjects using the target language (cross-curricular teaching, CLIL etc.).	2.9	29.3%
I can help learners use relevant presentation tools.	3.0	32.3%

Judging from these data, it is evident that both CLIL and lessons by using ICT tools have rarely been practiced in the classrooms of the secondary schools in Japan. Regarding CLIL, the body of scholarship on its role in EFL classrooms is now significant and convincing in Western countries, and it has recently been introduced in Japan (Watabe, Ikeda, Izumi, 2012; Sasajima, 2013). Furthermore, MEXT (2009) has encouraged the introduction of ICT devices into all schools in Japan. It is likely that access to presentation tools will be made easier for teachers and students in the near future. Presentation activities themselves such as public speaking, debating, discussion, etc. have been encouraged since the subjects of English Oral Communication were introduced in high school EFL curricula in 1993. Taking these developments into consideration, inclusion of these two descriptors in the list seems logical and realistic. Descriptors other than these two are judged as acceptable because their combined ratios of ‘inappropriate’ and ‘somewhat inappropriate’ (i.e. negative responses) are very low (less than 14%) and the modes of responses are mostly ‘somewhat appropriate’.

Next, eight descriptors on intercultural competences are discussed. Although the data does not necessarily suggest the longer the teaching experience the higher the level of intercultural competences, they are judged as acceptable because the modes of all responses are ‘somewhat able.’

Finally, the descriptors regarding competences for Independent learning are examined. Most of them belong to the sub-heading of “Projects”, “Portfolios”, or “Virtual Learning Environments”. The preliminary survey results (SIG, 2012) indicate that the lessons related to these areas have rarely been conducted in the Japanese classroom. However, these descriptors are included as questionnaire items in the national survey to investigate how ‘able’ they are considered by in-service teachers. As a result, the following two descriptors show the lowest level of capability.

Table 2. Descriptors showing the lowest level of acceptability

Descriptor	Mean	Combined rate
I can initiate and facilitate various learning environments such as learning platforms, discussion forums, web pages etc.	2.5	14.1%
I can guide learners to produce materials for themselves and for other learners, and use it in class.	3.0	31.2%

The top descriptor appears far from being acceptable. However, again if the ICT devices are introduced into schools, it will be much easier for teachers to design and conduct these types of lessons. As Sakai illustrates in the previous report (pp. 49-50), classroom activities assumed by both descriptors above as well as the others can be planned and put into practice.

In conclusion, all the 62 descriptors used in the national survey prove to be acceptable in the J-POSTL (In-service).

1.2 Descriptors Excluded from the National Survey

Fifteen descriptors used in the preliminary survey (SIG, 2012) were subsequently excluded from the national survey following the suggestions made by the informants. Hisamura (2013) discusses these descriptors in Section 6 “Future Challenges” of Chapter 1 in the 2013 report, suggesting that they should be included in the J-POSTL: three out of 15 descriptors to be included in the J-POSTL (Pre-service) and the rest* in the J-POSTL (In-service). The consensus among members of the SIG on this matter is reached in favor of his suggestions. Consequently, at this point, the number of descriptors for the J-POSTL (In-service) is 76.

*It is suggested that among the rest, the two descriptors, each of which is made up from two original EPOSTL descriptors, should be separated again into four because they are inadequately combined. Thus, the number of the remaining descriptors is 14.

2. Categorizing Descriptors into Three Competence Stages for In-service Teacher Education

2.1 Data used for Categorization of 62 Descriptors in the National Survey

A diverse set of data are provided in the previous report. Among them, the major data used for categorizing 62 descriptors are as follows:

- mean scores because 5-scale rates of responses show normal distribution,
- positive responses which are thought to reflect confidence of respondents,
- ten types of descriptors classified based on the analyses conducted by ANOVA and TukeyHSD,
- mean scores of each of three stages of teaching career (five years or less, between six and ten years, eleven years or longer).

2.2 Categorizing 62 Descriptors into Three Stages

All the data obtained are processed on an Excel sheet. As a result, the descending order of mean scores of five-year or less teaching career turns out to be the most coherent. Therefore, based on this order, 62 descriptors are grouped based on the criteria as follows:

- **Apprentice:** Positive responses are more than 60%, and whole mean score 3.7 or above. In addition, significant differences are found among three stages: mean scores go up significantly stage by stage. The top 18 descriptors meet these criteria.
- **Practitioner:** Positive responses are between 50 and 60%, and whole mean score 3.4 or above. In principle, significant differences should be more or less found between stages. The next top 21 descriptors are the candidates for this category. However, seven of them do not climb stage by stage in terms of mean scores. They are considered impossible to decide which stages they belong to. In this connection, 14 descriptors are involved in this group.
- **Senior Practitioner:** The remaining 23 descriptors are examined. Only eight descriptors among them show differences in mean score between stages, and they are classified into this group.
- **Open:** The descriptors which do not indicate any significant differences in mean score between stages are included in this category. Many of them are the descriptors of intercultural competences or independent learning. They number 22.

Finally, Table 3 shows the summary of grouping.

Table 3. Categorization of 62 descriptors used in the national survey

	Apprentice	Practitioner	Senior Practitioner	Open
No. of descriptors	18	14	8	22

2.3 Categorizing 14 Descriptors Exempted from the National Survey

As is stated in 1.2, there are 14 descriptors for in-service teachers which are not used in the national survey. They also need categorizing. The survey results among supervisors at boards of education (18 responses) and in-service teachers (36 responses) conducted in 2011-2012 (Kiyota & Hisamura, 2012) are used in this case. Seventy eight descriptors including these 14 as questionnaire items in this survey are statistically analyzed and classified. By adjusting this result to the criteria used in 2.2, the 14 descriptors are categorized in Table 4.

Table 4. Categorization of 14 descriptors excluded from the national survey

	Apprentice	Practitioner	Senior Practitioner	Open
No. of descriptors	4	6	1	3

3. Specification of Descriptors for Pre-service Teacher Education

3.1 Descriptors for Pre-service Teacher Education

In the final version of J-POSTL (Pre-service), there are 65 self-assessment descriptors for student teachers of English. They are composed of 62 out of 100 descriptors in the first adaptation of J-POSTL (Pre-service) and three out of 15 descriptors unexplored in the national survey (see 1.2). The process of specifying the above 62 descriptors for student teachers is as follows:

Several surveys regarding 100 descriptors in the first adaptation have been conducted; especially two of the survey results between 2010 and 2012 (Takagi & Nakayama, 2012; Nakayama, Yamaguchi & Takagi, 2013) provide data essential for defining the degree of difficulty of the descriptors. The data indicate that there are 40 descriptors whose average scores are low and show no or almost no significant increase in more than one period. The members in charge of this project suggest that these 40 descriptors are difficult for pre-service teachers but appropriate for novice teachers. As the result of close examination among the SIG members, 38 of them are excluded from the list of descriptors for student teachers.

3.2 Descriptors for Novice Teachers

There are 31 descriptors for novice teachers included in the J-POSTL (Pre-service). Among them, 30 descriptors are extracted from the 38 descriptors stated in 3.1 through the following process: two surveys other than those between 2010 and 2012 described above were conducted by the SIG. Sakai (2010) reports that seven descriptors indicate low mean scores in the survey results conducted in 2010 among 33 novice teachers. These seven descriptors are all listed among the 38 descriptors. In the other survey, seven novice teachers were asked to give a response to the same questionnaire twice: one in October 2011 and the other in January 2012. The results showed little difference (Sakai, 2012). With the data obtained from these two surveys, 30 out of 38 descriptors are specified for novice teachers, and eight for apprentice teachers.

There still remains one descriptor unexplored in the list of the EPOSTL. After due consideration, it is classified into the list for novice teachers. As a result, the number of descriptors for novice teachers is 31.

Finally, all the self-assessment descriptors for the J-POSTL are categorized as shown in Table 5. (See Appendix: J-POSTL—Self-assessment descriptors)

Table 5. Categorization of self-assessment descriptors for the J-POSTL

	Student	Novice	Apprentice	Practitioner	S. Practitioner	Open
No. of descriptors	65	31	30	20	9	25

4. Strategies for Implementing the J-POSTL

4.1 The Challenge of Dissemination of the J-POSTL

Publication of the J-POSTL is only the first step in this important policy-relevant process. The value of the project is contingent on how widely it spreads in Japan. In fact, about 10 years ago, MEXT attempted to implement a portfolio, but it turned out to be a complete failure (Teacher Education Research Group, 2004).

In one of the action plans for “Cultivating Japanese who can use English” (MEXT, 2002), the retraining programs for all the secondary school teachers of English were designed and executed by every local board of education for five years. The number of teachers who participated in these programs amounted to as many as 60,000. MEXT compiled a portfolio and asked these teachers to make use of it. However, the portfolio was neither accepted nor used by most of the teachers (*ibid.*). This is because a portfolio itself was not familiar to in-service teachers. We are facing the same obstacles today. If

J-POSTL is only distributed among pre-service and in-service EFL teachers, the probability of successful and broad implementation is low. In order to ensure systematic and effective practical use, researchers, supervisors, and all the stakeholders should be consulted and actively engaged.

4.2 Strategies for Implementing the J-POSTL Both in Pre-service and in In-service Training

There are two documents regarding the use of the EPOSTL: one is an anthology of case studies entitled “Using the *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL)*” (Newby, Fenner, Jones, 2011), and the leaflet “Strategies for Implementing the EPOSTL in Teacher Education” which was developed to ‘institutionalise’ the EPOSTL. These two documents are mostly described within the scope of pre-service training. In the case of J-POSTL, the strategies should be structured in two ways: one for pre-service and the other for in-service teacher education. The following is an adaptation of the strategies based on the above two documents — headings and statements are adopted or adapted from the leaflet. The subjects of the statements are as follows:

(For pre-service)—designers of language teacher training programs, language teacher educators in charge of specific course(s) such as language study, methodology or pedagogy, teaching practicum, practical seminar for language teaching, etc. and mentors.

(For in-service)—designers or supervisors of language teacher professional development opportunities on-site or at the training centers of education boards, organizers or lecturers of teacher certification renewal seminars at universities, and other stakeholders.

Getting started

1. Familiarize yourself with the content and rationale of the J-POSTL.
2. (For pre-service) Identify what is relevant for your language teacher training programs, your course(s), or your teaching practicum programs, and decide which you should use, J-POSTL (Pre-service) or J-POSTL (Full version).
(For in-service) Identify what is relevant for your teacher development opportunity or certification renewal programs, and decide which you should use J-POSTL (In-service) or J-POSTL (Full version).
3. (For pre-service) Integrate the J-POSTL into your existing courses or programs.
(For in-service) Integrate the J-POSTL into your teacher development opportunity or certification renewal seminar programs.
For example, choose categories or descriptors you should mainly use.
4. Consider possible ways of introducing the J-POSTL to your students or participants; for example, choose a section you should start with: Personal Statements,

Self-assessment Descriptors, or Dossier.

5. Discuss with your colleagues and illustrate how the J-POSTL can enhance your students' or participants' didactic and reflective competences; for example,
(For pre-service) record a micro-teaching on DVD and get students to reflect on their teaching by using descriptors. And/Or share the values of the J-POSTL with mentors and make use of it during teaching practice.
(In-service) provide a workshop in which participants discuss examples of recorded classroom teaching using the J-POSTL.
6. Raise students' or participants' awareness of the J-POSTL's use as an international self-assessment tool in teacher education; for example, download necessary materials from the web-sites of the SIG (<http://www.waseda.jp/assoc-jacetenedu/>) and ECML (<http://epostl2.ecml.at>), and make use of them.
7. Explore different ways of using the J-POSTL.
8. Collect students' or participants' feedback.

Interacting with other teacher educators within your institution (For pre-service)

Interacting with your colleagues on-site (For in-service)

1. Share experiences of using the J-POSTL with colleagues.
2. (For pre-service) Involve teacher educators of all languages.
(For in-service) Involve teachers of languages other than English if any.
3. Give presentations or workshops on how you use the J-POSTL.
4. Explore benefits of the use of the J-POSTL.
5. (For pre-service) Discuss different options for using the J-POSTL – methodology/didactic course, teaching practice, mobility programs, course assignments, term-papers, etc.

Actions

1. Work out a coherent approach to the J-POSTL with your colleagues; for example, which descriptors might be the focus of which course/subject.
2. Agree with colleagues on a concrete action plan for using the J-POSTL – aims, content, timeframe, etc.
3. (For pre-service) Involve schools/mentors.
(For in-service) Work together with teacher educators during teaching practice.

Between institutions/schools: Networking

1. (For pre-service) Organize seminars, workshops and conferences, etc. for teacher educators, mentors in schools and other interested parties.
(For in-service) Organize interest groups on the J-POSTL among language teachers between neighboring schools.

Top-down support

1. Inform stakeholders (MEXT, Language Teacher Associations, boards of education, Heads of Institutes/Schools, etc.) by means of meetings, conference reports, presentations, articles, etc.
2. Seek support to organize national networks.

Conclusion

If the EPOSTL document was simply translated into Japanese, it could not be acceptable in the Japanese context. In European contexts, translation is encouraged, but no modification is permitted. However, the J-POSTL is recognized as a unique trial in a non-European context by EPOSTL authors (Newby, 2011), and, as such, given greater copyright flexibility. Major concerns of the coordinators of this adaptation are as follows:

- To make the portfolio user-friendly,
- To make the portfolio more accessible and less time-intensive for users.

It does not seem possible to disseminate the J-POSTL if it is only used individually in a specific pedagogical setting. The J-POSTL can be used more effectively and systematically if all educational stakeholders, both practitioners and policy makers, collaborate in raising the visibility of this document.

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Appendix

J-POSTL—Self-assessment Descriptors

All the descriptors are categorized into six stages of didactic competence. The stage of each descriptor is shown as follows:

Unmarked: Student teachers

[N] : Novice teachers

[A] : Apprentice teachers or those with under five years of teaching career

[P] : Practitioner teachers or those with five to ten years of teaching career

[SP] : Senior Practitioner teachers or those with over ten years of teaching career

[Open] : Not identified

I Context

A. Curriculum

1. I can understand the requirements set in the Course of Study.
2. I can design language courses around the requirements of the Course of Study. [A]

B. Aims and Needs

1. I can understand the value of learning a foreign language.
2. I can take into account attainment of target based on the Course of Study and learners' needs.
3. I can take into account learners' motivation to learn a foreign language.
4. I can take into account learners' intellectual interests.
5. I can take into account learners' sense of achievement.
6. I can take into account and assess the expectations and impact of educational stakeholders (employers, parents, funding agencies, etc.). [P]

C. The Role of the Language Teacher

1. I can explain the value and benefits of learning a foreign language to learners and parents.
2. I can take into account learners' knowledge of Japanese and make use of it when teaching a foreign language.
3. I can critically assess my teaching based on the understanding of theoretical principles.
4. I can critically assess my teaching based on learner feedback and learning outcomes and adapt it accordingly.

5. I can accept feedback from my peers and mentors and build it into my teaching.
6. I can observe my peers and offer them constructive feedback.
7. I can identify specific pedagogical issues related to my learners or my teaching in the procedure of plan, act, and reflect.
8. I can locate information related to teaching and learning.
9. I can identify specific pedagogical issues related to my learners or my teaching in the form of action research and make use of it to improve my teaching. [A]
10. I can appreciate and make use of the value added to the classroom environment by learners with diverse cultural backgrounds. [Open]

D. Institutional Resources and Constraints

1. I can assess how to use the resources and educational equipment available in school and adapt them to my teaching as necessary.

II Methodology

A. Speaking/Spoken Interaction

1. I can create a supportive atmosphere and provide a specific situation for language use that invites learners to actively take part in speaking activities.
2. I can evaluate and select meaningful speaking and interactional activities to encourage learners to express their opinions, identity, culture etc.
3. I can evaluate and select meaningful speaking and interactional activities to help learners to develop competencies for presentation, discussion, etc. [N]
4. I can evaluate and select various activities to help learners to use typical features of spoken language (fillers, supportive responses, etc.) and engage in interaction with others. [N]
5. I can evaluate and select a variety of techniques to make learners aware of and help them to use stress, rhythm and intonation. [N]
6. I can evaluate and select a range of oral activities to develop accuracy (vocabulary, grammar, etc.). [N]
7. I can evaluate and select a variety of materials to stimulate speaking activities (visual aids, texts, authentic materials, etc.). [A]
8. I can evaluate and select meaningful speaking and interactional activities to encourage learners of differing abilities to participate. [A]
9. I can evaluate and select activities which help learners to participate in ongoing spoken exchanges (conversations, transactions, etc.) and to initiate or respond to utterances appropriately. [A]
10. I can help learners to use communication strategies (asking for clarification,

comprehension checks etc.) and compensation strategies (paraphrasing, simplification, etc.) when engaging in spoken interaction. [A]

11. I can evaluate and select different activities to help learners to become aware of and use different text types (telephone conversations, transactions, speeches etc.). [P]

B. Writing/Written Interaction

1. I can help learners to gather and share information for their writing tasks.
2. I can evaluate and select meaningful activities to encourage learners to develop their creative potential. [N]
3. I can evaluate and select activities which help learners to participate in written exchanges (emails, etc.) and to initiate or respond to text appropriately. [N]
4. I can help learners to plan and structure written texts (e.g. by using mind maps, outlines etc.). [N]
5. I can help learners to write a coherent paragraph or essay. [N]
6. I can evaluate and select writing activities to consolidate learning (grammar, vocabulary, spelling etc.). [N]
7. I can help learners to monitor, reflect on, edit and improve their own writing. [A]
8. I can evaluate and select texts in a variety of text types to function as good examples for the learners' writing. [A]
9. I can evaluate and select a range of meaningful writing activities to help learners become aware of and use appropriate language for different text types (letters, stories, reports, etc.) [P]
10. I can evaluate and select a variety of materials to stimulate writing (authentic materials, visual aids, etc.). [P]
11. I can use peer-assessment and feedback to assist the writing process. [SP]

C. Listening

1. I can select texts appropriate to the needs, interests and language level of the learners.
2. I can provide a range of pre-listening activities which help learners to orientate themselves to a text.
3. I can encourage learners to use their knowledge of a topic and their expectations about a text when listening.
4. I can design and select different activities in order to practice and develop different listening strategies (listening for gist, specific information etc.) [N]
5. I can design and select different activities which help learners to recognize and interpret typical features of spoken language. [N]
6. I can help learners to apply strategies to cope with difficult or unknown vocabulary of a text. [P]

7. I can evaluate and select a variety of post-listening tasks to provide a bridge between listening and other skills. [SP]
8. I can help learners to apply strategies to cope with typical aspects of spoken language (background noise, redundancy, etc.). [SP]

D. Reading

1. I can select texts appropriate to the needs, interests and language level of learners.
2. I can provide a range of pre-reading activities to help learners to orientate themselves to a text.
3. I can encourage learners to use their knowledge of a topic and their expectations about a text when reading.
4. I can apply appropriate ways of reading a text in class (e.g. aloud, silently, in groups, etc.).
5. I can set different activities in order to practice and develop different reading strategies according to the purpose of reading (skimming, scanning, etc.). [N]
6. I can help learners to develop different strategies to cope with difficult or unknown vocabulary in a text. [N]
7. I can evaluate and select a variety of post-reading tasks to provide a bridge between reading and other skills. [N]
8. I can recommend books appropriate to the needs, interests, language levels of the learners for extensive reading. [A]
9. I can help learners to develop critical reading skills (reflection, interpretation, analysis, etc.). [P]

E. Grammar

1. I can deal with questions learners may ask about grammar and if necessary, help them to use appropriate grammar reference books and dictionaries.
2. I can recognize that grammar affects learners' oral and written performance and help them to learn it through meaningful contexts by providing a variety of language activities.
3. I can introduce, and help students to deal with, new or unknown items of grammar in a variety of ways (teacher presentation, awareness-raising, discovery, etc.). [A]

F. Vocabulary

1. I can evaluate and select a variety of activities which help learners to learn vocabulary in context.
2. I can understand Longman's Basic 2000 Words, and evaluate and select a variety of activities with these words. [N]

3. I can understand and use high and low frequency words, and receptive and productive vocabulary for my learners. [N]
4. I can evaluate and select tasks which help learners to use new vocabulary in oral and written contexts. [A]
5. I can evaluate and select activities which enhance learners' awareness of register differences. [A]

G. Culture

1. I can evaluate and select a variety of activities which awaken learners' interest in and help them to develop their knowledge and understanding of their own and the target language culture.
2. I can evaluate and select activities (role plays, simulated situations, etc.) which help learners to develop their socio-cultural competence. [A]
3. I can evaluate and select activities which enhance the learners' intercultural awareness. [A]
4. I can evaluate and select a variety of texts and activities to make learners aware of the interrelationship between culture and language. [A]
5. I can create opportunities for learners to explore the culture of target language communities of out of class (Internet, email, etc.). [Open]
6. I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source materials and activities which make learners aware of similarities and differences in sociocultural 'norms of behaviour'. [Open]
7. I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source materials and activities which help learners to reflect on the concept of 'otherness' and understand different value systems. [Open]
8. I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source materials and activities to make the learners aware of stereotyped views and challenge these. [Open]

III Resources

1. I can identify and evaluate a range of coursebooks/materials appropriate for the age, interests and the language level of the learners.
2. I can select texts and language activities from coursebooks appropriate for my learners.
3. I can locate and select listening and reading materials appropriate for the needs of my learners from a variety of sources, such as literature, mass media and the Internet.
4. I can make use of ideas, lesson plans and materials included in teachers' handbooks and resource books.

5. I can design learning materials and activities appropriate for my learners.
6. I can guide learners to use the Internet for information retrieval.
7. I can recommend dictionaries and other reference books useful for my learners. [N]
8. I can design ICT materials and activities appropriate for my learners. [P]
9. I can use and critically assess ICT learning programmes and platforms. [P]
10. I can select and use ICT materials and activities in the classroom which are appropriate for my learners. [SP]
11. I can guide learners to produce materials for themselves and for other learners. [Open]

IV Lesson Planning

A. Identification of Learning Objects

1. I can identify the Course of Study requirements and set learning aims and objectives suited to my learners' needs and interests.
2. I can plan specific learning objectives for individual lessons and/or for a period of teaching.
3. I can set objectives which challenge learners to reach their full potential.
4. I can set objectives which take into account the differing levels of ability and special educational needs of the learners.
5. I can set objectives which encourage learners to reflect on their learning.
6. I can set objectives for four main skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing respectively, according to the focus of individual lessons and/or period of teaching. [A]

B. Lesson Content

1. I can plan activities to ensure the interdependence of listening, reading, writing and speaking.
2. I can plan activities to emphasize the interdependence of language and culture.
3. I can plan activities which link grammar and vocabulary with communication.
4. I can accurately estimate the time needed for specific topics and activities and plan work accordingly.
5. I can design activities to make the learners aware of and build on their existing knowledge.
6. I can vary and balance activities to enhance and sustain the learners' motivation and interest.
7. I can vary and balance activities in order to respond to individual learners' learning styles.

8. I can take account of learners' feedback and comments and incorporate this into future lessons.
9. I can structure lesson plans and/or plan for periods of teaching in a coherent and varied sequence of content. [A]
10. I can involve learners in lesson planning. [Open]
11. I can plan to teach elements of other subjects using the target language (cross-curricular teaching, CLIL, etc.). [Open]

C. Lesson Organization

1. I can select from and plan a variety of organizational formats (teacher-centered, individual, pair, group work) as appropriate.
2. I can plan for learner presentations and learner interaction.
3. I can plan when and how to use the target language, including metalanguage I may need in the classroom.
4. I can plan lessons and periods of teaching with other teachers and/or assistant language teachers (team teaching, with other subject teachers, etc.). [N]

V Conducting a Lesson

A. Using Lesson Plans

1. I can start a lesson in an engaging way.
2. I can be flexible when working from a lesson plan and respond to learner interests as the lesson progresses.
3. I can time and change classroom activities to reflect individual learners' attention spans.
4. I can finish off a lesson in a focused way.
5. I can adjust my time schedule when unforeseen situations occur. [N]
6. I can ensure smooth transitions between activities and tasks for individuals, groups and the whole class. [A]

B. Content

1. I can relate what I teach to learners' knowledge, current events in local context, and the culture of those who speak it.
2. I can present language content (new and previously encountered items of language, topics etc.) in ways which are appropriate for individuals and specific groups of learners. [A]

C. Interaction with Learners

1. I can settle a group of learners into a room and gain their attention at the beginning of a lesson.
2. I can be responsive and react supportively to learner initiative and interaction.
3. I can encourage learner participation whenever possible.
4. I can cater to a range of learning styles. [N]
5. I can make explicit and help learners to develop appropriate learning strategies. [N]
6. I can keep and maximize the attention of learners during a lesson. [A]

D. Classroom Management

1. I can create opportunities for and manage individual, partner, group and whole class work.
2. I can manage and use resources (flashcards, charts, pictures, audio-visual aids, etc.) effectively.
3. I can take on different roles according to the needs of the learners and requirements of the activity (resource person, mediator, supervisor etc.). [P]
4. I can manage and use instructional media efficiently (OHP, ICT, video, etc.) [P]
5. I can supervise and assist learners' use of different forms of ICT both in and outside the classroom. [P]

E. Classroom Language

1. I can conduct a lesson in the target language, and if necessary use Japanese effectively.
2. I can encourage learners to use the target language in their activities.
3. I can use various strategies when learners do not understand the target language. [A]
4. I can encourage learners to relate the target language to other languages they speak or have learned where and when this is helpful. [P]
5. I can use the target language as metalanguage. [Open]

VI Independent Learning

A. Learner Autonomy

1. I can assist learners in choosing tasks and activities according to their individual needs and interests. [N]
2. I can help learners to reflect on and evaluate their own learning processes and evaluate the outcomes. [N]
3. I can guide and assist learners in setting their own aims and objectives and in planning their own learning. [A]

4. I can evaluate and select a variety of activities which help learners to reflect on their existing knowledge and competences. [Open]
5. I can evaluate and select a variety of activities which help learners to identify and reflect on individual learning processes and learning styles. [Open]
6. I can evaluate and select tasks which help learners to reflect on and develop specific learning strategies and study skills. [Open]

B. Homework

1. I can evaluate and select tasks most suited to be carried out by learners at home. [N]
2. I can provide necessary support for learners in order for them to do homework independently and assist them with time management. [N]
3. I can assess homework according to valid and transparent criteria. [N]
4. I can set homework in cooperation with learners. [Open]

C. Projects

1. I can encourage learners to reflect on their work (diaries, logs, etc.). [P]
2. I can plan and organize cross-curricular project work myself or in cooperation with other teachers. [SP]
3. I can plan and manage project work according to relevant aims and objectives. [Open]
4. I can assist the learners in their choices during the various stages of project work. [Open]
5. I can help learners to use relevant presentation tools. [Open]
6. I can assess the process and outcome of project work in cooperation with learners. [Open]

D. Portfolios

1. I can set specific aims and objectives of portfolio work. [Open]
2. I can plan and structure portfolio work. [Open]
3. I can supervise and give constructive feedback on portfolio work. [Open]
4. I can assess portfolios in relation to valid and transparent criteria. [Open]
5. I can encourage self-and peer assessment of portfolio work. [Open]

E. Virtual Learning Environments

1. I can use various ICT resources (email, Web sites, computer programs, etc.), and guide learners appropriately to use them. [A]
2. I can initiate and facilitate various learning environments (learning platforms, discussion forums, web pages, etc.). [Open]

F. Extra-curricular Activities

1. I can set aims and objectives for school trips, exchanges and international cooperation programmes which include language activities. [P]
2. I can recognize when and where the need for extra-curricular activities to enhance learning arises (learner magazines, clubs, excursions etc.). [SP]
3. I can help to organize exchanges in cooperation with relevant resource persons and institutions. [SP]
- 4 I can evaluate the learning outcomes of school trips, exchanges and international cooperation programmes. [Open]

VII Assessment

A. Designing Assessment Tools

1. I can evaluate and select valid assessment procedures (written tests, performance tests, etc.) appropriate to learning aims and objectives. [N]
2. I can design and use in-class activities to monitor and assess a learner's participation and performance. [N]
3. I can negotiate with learners how their work and progress should best be assessed. [P]

B. Evaluation

1. I can identify strengths and areas for improvement in a learner's performance. [N]
2. I can present my assessment of a learner's performance and progress in the form of a descriptive evaluation, which is transparent and comprehensible to the learner, parents and others. [N]
3. I can use appropriate assessment procedures to chart and monitor a learner's progress (reports, checklist, grades, etc.). [A]
4. I can use a valid grading system in my assessment of a learner's performance. [A]
5. I can assign grades for tests and examinations using procedures which are reliable and transparent. [A]
6. I can assess a learner's ability to work independently and collaboratively. [P]
7. I can use the process and results of assessment to inform my teaching and plan learning for individuals and groups (i.e. formative assessment). [P]

C. Self- and Peer Assessment

1. I can help learners to set personal targets and assess their own performance. [A]
2. I can help learners to engage in peer assessment. [A]

D. Language Performance

1. I can assess a learner's ability to engage in spoken and written interactions. [N]
2. I can assess a learner's ability to engage in spoken interaction according to criteria such as content, range, accuracy, fluency and conversational strategies. [P]
3. I can assess a learner's ability to engage in written interaction according to criteria such as content, range, accuracy, fluency and appropriacy of response etc. [P]
4. I can assess a learner's ability to understand and interpret a spoken text such as listening for gist, specific or detailed information, implications, etc. [SP]
5. I can assess a learner's ability to understand and interpret a written text such as reading for gist, specific or detailed information, implications, etc. [SP]

E. Culture

1. I can assess learners' ability to make comparisons between their own and the culture of the target language communities.
2. I can assess the learners' knowledge of cultural facts, events etc. of the target language communities. [P]
- 3 I can assess the learner's ability to respond to and act appropriately in encounters with the target language culture. [Open]

F. Error analysis

1. I can analyze learners' errors and provide constructive feedback to them.
2. I can deal with errors that occur in class in a way which supports learning processes and communication. [A]
3. I can deal with errors that occur in spoken and written language in ways which support learning processes and do not undermine confidence and communication. [A]

Overseas Experience and Confidence in Teaching Culture among English Language Teachers in Japan

Ken Hisamura

1. Introduction

“It is not surprising then that teachers with many years of experience often say that they do not feel ‘qualified’ to teach ‘culture’ because they do not know enough about a certain country and have no or very little experience of it. This is particularly the case for English because EFL teachers are to be found throughout the world and the vast majority have never visited an English-speaking country. Leaving aside for a moment what ‘being qualified’ might mean and how ‘culture’ might be defined, it is not surprising that teachers in pre-service training or in the early stages of their career may feel even less confident.” (Byram, 2012, p.83)

In Byram’s statement above, it appears self-evident that overseas experience would enhance language teachers’ confidence in teaching culture. In light of this notion, this paper examines whether this is in fact the case among English language teachers in Japan.

In 2012, JACET SIG on English Language Education conducted a national survey of secondary school English teachers. As question items, the survey included 62 self-assessment descriptors that had been selected and adapted from the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (hereafter, EPOSTL: Newby et al., 2007) (Jimbo, Hisamura, Oda, & Yoffe, 2013). The questionnaire had three sections, one of which consisted of eight descriptors related to intercultural competences. Two other culture-related descriptors were found in another section.

In this paper, the responses to these ten descriptors are analyzed and discussed. The numbers used below for these descriptors differ from those of the original questionnaire items; they are unique to this paper. The ten descriptors, with headings and subheadings in the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors shown in parentheses, are as follows:

- D.1 I can appreciate and make use of the value added to the classroom environment by learners with diverse cultural backgrounds. (Context: The role of the language teacher)
- D.2 I can evaluate and select activities which enhance learners’ intercultural awareness. (Methodology: Culture)

- D.3 I can create opportunities for learners to explore the culture of English-language communities outside of class (Internet, email, etc.). (Methodology: Culture)
- D.4 I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source materials, and activities that make learners more aware of similarities and differences in sociocultural “norms of behavior.” (Methodology: Culture)
- D.5 I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source materials, and activities that help learners to reflect on the concept of “otherness” and understand different value systems. (Methodology: Culture)
- D.6 I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source materials, and activities to make the learners more aware of stereotyped views and help them to challenge these. (Methodology: Culture)
- D.7 I can help organize exchanges in cooperation with relevant resource persons and institutions. (Independent learning: Extracurricular activities)
- D.8 I can evaluate the learning outcomes of school trips, exchanges, and international cooperation programs. (Independent learning: Extracurricular activities)
- D.9 I can assess learners’ knowledge of cultural facts, events, etc. of English-language communities. (Assessment: Culture)
- D.10 I can assess learners’ ability to respond and behave appropriately in encounters with English-language cultures. (Assessment: Culture)

Although the overall analyses and discussions of the survey results are presented in the 2013 report, more detailed data and more sophisticated analyses of the responses to these ten descriptors were necessary to provide statistical evidence regarding the proposition that overseas experience helps enhance Japanese EFL teachers’ confidence in teaching culture. Moreover, this analysis may offer pedagogical implications to improve professional development (PD) in intercultural didactic competences among EFL teachers.

2. Procedure

2.1 Rearranging Data

Three factors were considered relevant to the analyses: the length of teaching career (hereafter, TC), overseas experience (hereafter, OE), and the length and type of OE. Of the original 5,658 responses to the 2012 national survey, 27 with no or almost no answer to the ten descriptors were omitted. After these exclusions, all of the data were entered into a Microsoft Excel 2010 worksheet, which was subsequently transmitted to a data-view sheet in IBM SPSS Statistics version 21j.

After the transmission, variables within two factors had to be converted. Regarding TC, eight stages were originally coded, and these were combined into four (under 5 years,

5-10 years, 11-20 years, over 21 years) due to a gap with a range of 3-13 times in the number of responses. Also, the length and types of OE were readjusted. According to MEXT (2010), Short-OS would span from three months to less than a year, whereas Long-OS would last over a year. Therefore, the original eight options needed to be integrated into five categories, as follows:

- no overseas experience (Non-OE);
- overseas training (one to three months) (OT);
- short-term overseas study (three to six months, more than six months, and one-year graduate school non-degree program) (Short-OS);
- long-term overseas study and stay (graduate school degree program and more than one-year stay) (Long-OS); and
- other.

The category “other” included undergraduate exchange programs, short-term travel, and working holidays. In most cases, this category was not included in the analyses because the length and type of OS was not specified.

2.2 Indicators of Degree of Confidence

Before detailed analyses were carried out, it was considered important to provide an indicator of the degree of confidence in teaching culture. In this survey, respondents were asked to judge 62 can-do descriptors on a 5-point Likert scale. If they were more confident about a particular descriptor, they would most likely choose positive answers, 5 (‘appropriate’ or ‘able’) or 4 (‘somewhat appropriate’ or ‘somewhat able’). In other words, their sense of confidence in didactic competences can be measured by the combined rates of their positive responses. According to the survey results (Jimbo et al., 2013, p.16), the rate of positive responses can be used to classify descriptors into four groups: 70% or more positive (Group 1); 60% to 70% (Group 2); 50% to 60% (Group 3); and less than 50% (Group 4). Thus, the following classification system was adopted as an indicator of the degree of confidence in teaching culture: Group 1= High, Group 2 = Relatively high, Group 3 = Fair, and Group 4 = Low. Regarding the ten descriptors related to intercultural didactic competences, there is one respondent in Group 2, four in Group 3, and five in Group 4. No respondents fell into Group 1.

2.3 Analysis

The analyses were carried out in two phases: the categories of OE and the stages of TC. In the first phase, the rates of positive responses were calculated through a cross-tabulation of the OE categories and the ten descriptors. Then, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multiple comparison (Games-Howell) test were used to identify significant differences between OE categories. In the second phase, a cross-tabulation

was carried out for positive responses between both teachers with OE (hereafter, OE-T) and teachers without OE (hereafter, Non-OE-T). Subsequently, two-factor ANOVAs and Games-Howell tests were utilized to discover any significant differences between OE-T and Non-OE-T respondents, as well as between OE and TC. Finally, Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine data reliability ($\alpha=0.889$).

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Frequency Data

Aggregate data frequencies for all analyses are shown in Tables 1 and 2. As Table 1 shows, slightly over half of the respondents (54%) had some overseas experience. In Table 2, the number of teachers with Short-OS (14.4%) is the smallest among OE-T.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of OE among the respondents (N=5,631)

OE-T	Non-OE-T
3,039 (54%)	2,592 (46%)

Table 2. Frequency distribution of OS length and type among OE-T (N=3,039)

OT	Short-OS	Long-OS	other
989 (32.5%)	439 (14.4%)	779 (25.6%)	832 (27.4%)

After general frequencies were noted, cross-tabulation was used to examine the relationship between TC and OE, the results of which are shown in Tables 3 and 4. The highest rate of each column is shown in bold. In Table 3, the rate of OE-T decreases stage by stage and in the column of over 21 years it goes down to 43.2%. Table 4 shows that the rate of OT in over 21 years of TC is remarkably high (44.7%).

Table 3. Cross-tabulation between TC and OE among all respondents (N=5,619)

	under 5 years	5-10 years	11-20 years	over 21 years
Number of responses	1,364	1,044	1,252	1,959
OE-T	62.4%	62.3%	55.0%	43.2%
Non-OE-T	37.6%	37.7%	45.0%	56.8%

Table 4. Cross-tabulation between TC and OE among OE-T respondents (N=3,034)

	under 5 years	5-10 years	11-20 years	over 21 years
Number of responses	850	650	687	847
OT	226 (26.6%)	167 (25.7%)	215 (31.3%)	379 (44.7%)
Short-OS	106 (12.5%)	97 (14.9%)	99 (14.4%)	137 (16.2%)
Long-OS	227 (26.7%)	200 (30.8%)	176 (25.6%)	175 (20.7%)
other	291 (34.2%)	186 (28.6%)	197 (28.7%)	156(18.4%)

3.2. Confidence in Teaching Culture in Overseas Experience (OE) Categories

3.2.1 Rates of positive responses in each OE category. Cross-tabulations were used to determine the frequency distribution of the rate of positive responses for each category of OE, the results of which are shown in Table 5. The numerical value in parentheses is the mean score.

The highest rate of positive responses for each descriptor (shown in bold), except for with D.1, is found in Short-OS. In terms of indicators of degree of confidence, the rates of Short-OS in D.1-5, D.7-8, and D.10 go up one ranking, and the rate for D.6 is two rankings above those of Non-OE respondents. However, a “high” degree of confidence is found only for D.2, and a “relatively high” degree in D.3, D.5, and D.6. Therefore, confidence in teaching culture is not necessarily strong, even among OE-T respondents.

Table 5. Positive responses in OE categories, percentages (mean)

Descriptor	Non-OE	OT	Short-OS	Long-OS
D.1	41.4% (3.2)	47.1% (3.4)	52.7% (3.5)	57.3% (3.6)
D.2	63.8% (3.7)	67.9% (3.8)	75.5% (3.9)	71.6% (3.9)
D.3	52.5% (3.4)	56.8% (3.5)	64.8% (3.7)	59.3% (3.6)
D.4	43.9% (3.3)	47.2% (3.4)	55.5% (3.5)	47.0% (3.4)
D.5	51.1% (3.4)	57.4% (3.6)	62.0% (3.7)	58.0% (3.6)
D.6	47.2% (3.4)	53.6% (3.5)	60.5% (3.6)	57.1% (3.6)
D.7	40.3% (3.2)	49.3% (3.4)	57.7% (3.6)	55.2% (3.5)
D.8	45.0% (3.3)	51.9% (3.5)	56.8% (3.6)	52.6% (3.5)
D.9	51.4% (3.5)	57.4% (3.6)	59.1% (3.6)	54.2% (3.5)
D.10	43.4% (3.3)	49.4% (3.5)	53.9% (3.5)	49.4% (3.5)

3.2.2 Statistical analyses among the categories of OE. First, a *t*-test was conducted to uncover any statistically significant differences between OE-T and Non-OE-T respondents. The results indicated that such a difference was, in fact, observed for all ten descriptors as a whole. Following these preliminary findings, ANOVAs and Games-Howell tests were employed to reveal any significant differences between the OE categories for each descriptor, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. The results of ANOVA among the OE categories

Descriptor(s)	Significant differences
D.1	Non-OE < the rest ($p < .05$) / OT < Long-OS ($p < .001$)
D.2, 5, 8, 10	Non-OE < the rest ($p < .05$)
D.3, 4, 6	Non-OE < Short-OS and Long-OS ($p < .05$) / OT < Short-OS ($p < .05$)
D.7	Non-OE < the rest ($p < .05$) / OT < Short-OS ($p < .01$)
D.9	Non-OE < Short-OS ($p < .05$)

The results shown in Tables 5 and 6 can be summarized as follows:

- Self-perceived competences in managing a classroom with learners from diverse cultural backgrounds (D.1) depend on the length of OE.
- Short-OS is more effective for enhancing didactic competences related to intercultural knowledge, skills, and awareness (D.2-6) and the ability to help organize exchange programs (D.7). Especially in D.3, 4, 6, and 7, confidence grows with the length of OE.
- Competences in evaluating the learning outcomes of intercultural extra-curricular activities (D.8) and assessing the learner's cultural knowledge and response capability (D.9, 10) do not improve with the length of OE.

3.3 Confidence in Teaching Culture at Different Stages of the Teaching Career (TC)

3.3.1 Positive responses at each stage of TC. Cross-tabulation was employed to ascertain differences in the rates of positive responses between OE-T and Non-OE-T, according to the four stages of TC. The results are shown in Table 7. For each descriptor, the upper row indicates the positive response rate of Non-OE-T respondents, whereas the lower that of OE-T respondents.

Table 7. Positive responses for each stage of TC, percentages

Descriptor	under 5 years	5-10 years	11-20 years	over 21 years
D.1	33.7	40.6	41.1	45.5
	45.6	49.4	55.4	56.3
D.2	56.3	61.9	64.2	67.7
	67.1	70.2	73.7	72.1
D.3	47.8	53.0	52.1	54.9
	54.1	58.6	63.5	62.6
D.4	39.8	42.9	43.1	46.5
	42.0	45.4	51.5	56.1
D.5	48.9	50.3	51.2	52.4
	52.3	57.1	60.3	62.7
D.6	46.6	47.2	44.7	48.8
	49.7	57.4	59.3	60.7
D.7	33.0	36.0	43.0	44.1
	42.3	50.8	57.4	59.4
D.8	34.7	41.6	47.2	50.0
	44.5	52.2	55.7	58.2
D.9	47.0	49.0	52.0	54.4
	48.2	54.0	57.4	62.9
D.10	39.2	42.6	42.4	46.2
	43.7	50.5	52.2	54.0

What is most prominent here is that the percentages in the lower rows are higher than those in the upper ones at every stage, and in most cases they rise stage by stage. However, a “high” degree of confidence is found only in D.2, and a “relatively high” degree in D.3, 5, 6, and 9 among those with over 21 years of teaching. Half of the descriptors remain at a “fair” degree of confidence, even among OE-T respondents.

3.3.2 Statistical analyses among the stages of TC. Since there are two independent variables, OE and TC, the analyses were conducted as follows: a two-factor ANOVA was employed to determine if the interactions were significant. Then, the simple main effect was tested with a Bonferroni multiple comparison procedure. If this was not found to be significant, but the main effect of TC was significant, a Games-Howell test was used as necessary.

First, for D.4, 5, and 6, the interaction was found to be significant, as seen in Table 8. In the column labelled “significant differences,” the upper row describes where a significant difference was found between the two factors, and the lower one shows the relationship between the TC stages among the OE-Ts.

Table 8. Results of two factor ANOVAs between OE and TC

Descriptor	Interaction	Significant differences
D.4	$F(3, 5598)=3.36, p<0.05$	at each stage of over 5 years under 5 < over 11 years / 5-10 < over 21 years
D.5	$F(3, 5600)=2.39, p<0.1$ (marginally significant)	at each stage of over 11 years under 5 < over 11 years
D.6	$F(3, 5595)=3.32, p<0.01$	at each stage of over 5 years under 5 < over 11 years

Following Byram’s model, “Savoir – element of intercultural competence” (Byram, 2012, p. 89), D.4 has been included in “Skills of interpreting and relating,” whereas D.5 and D.6 fell under “Critical cultural awareness.” These results show some of the characteristics of the didactic competences for the elements highlighted in these descriptors, which include the following:

- The length of TC did not significantly boost Non-OE-T respondents’ confidence in teaching culture.
- No significant difference was found between OE and TC among teachers with under 5 years of TC, but a significant difference was found among those with over 5 or 11 years of TC ($p<.05$).
- OE-T respondents gained significantly more confidence after 11 years of TC ($p<.05$).

Table 9 presents the results related to those descriptors in which interaction was not found significant, but for which the main effect of TC was significant. Since the homoscedasticity of the data was not established, Games-Howell tests were used to determine significant differences between the two factors.

Table 9. Results of Games-Howell between OE and TC

Descriptor(s)	Significant differences between OE-T and Non-OE-T respondents	Significant differences among OE-T respondents
D.1, 2	at every stage	under 5<over 11 years
D.3	at every stage except for 5-10 years	under 5<over 5 years
D.7	at every stage	under 5<5-10 <over 21 years
D.8	at every stage	under 5<over 11 years
D.9	only in over 21 years	under 5<11-20<over 21 years
D.10	at every stage over 5 years	under 5<over 5 years

Significant differences between OE-T and Non-OE-T, except for with D.9, are found in most TC stages. This means that OE-T respondents are far more confident in teaching culture. Also, most OE-T respondents with over 11 years of TC are more confident than those with under 5 years. Among Non-OE-T respondents, on the other hand, no significant difference was found at any particular stage, except for with D.1 and D.2 (under 5 < over 21 years), and D.8 and D.9 (under 5 < over 11 years); nonetheless. The respondents' degree of confidence, except for with D.2, is at best "fair."

4. Conclusions and Implications

The results of the two phases of analysis can be summarized as follows:

- OE-T respondents are far more confident in teaching culture than Non-OE-T respondents.
- Most OE-T respondents with over 11 years of TC are significantly more confident than those with under 5 years of TC.
- Non-OE-T respondents show no significant development of intercultural didactic competences, even if their TC is longer.

This study has successfully shown that OE helps enhance Japanese EFL teachers' confidence in teaching culture. These results have important implications. First, OE should be compulsory for all pre-service EFL teachers. Second, OE programs, preferably Short-OS, should be implemented for in-service teachers, particularly for Non-OE-Ts. This PD opportunity should be provided by and financially supported through national or local governments. Third, PD seminar programs on intercultural awareness, such as "skills of interpreting and relating" (D.4) and "critical cultural

awareness” (D.5, 6) should be provided systematically from the earliest stages of TC. Finally, involvement in intercultural exchange programs or events should be encouraged as part of PD activities.

Otani (2007) defines a professional English language teacher as a professional who understands different languages and cultures—that is, a professional who understands others. He also suggests that it is not enough for foreign language teachers to have merely good proficiency in target languages. They must also be fully aware of the values that are pertinent to different languages and cultures, and they must acquire unbiased and flexible attitudes toward people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

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Visit to Austria:
International Conferences at ECML in Graz and School Visits in Vienna

Hisatake Jimbo, Ken Hisamura, Shien Sakai, Masachika Ishida, Yoichi Kiyota,
Akiko Takagi, Hiromi Imamura, Yukie Endo

I International Conferences at ECML in Graz

1. Workshop by JACET SIG: “J-POSTL: Challenges and Opportunities”

In collaboration with the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) and the Austrian Association of Language Didactics (ÖGSD), the JACET SIG on English Language Education (JACET SIG) held a workshop on the use and dissemination of Japanese Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (J-POSTL), an adaptation of European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL), at ECML in Graz on Monday February 17, 2014. The participants were: 15 JACET tour members (Hisatake Jimbo, Ken Hisamura, Shien Sakai, Masachika Ishida, Yoichi Kiyota, Akiko Takagi, Mika Ito, Hiromi Imamura, Yukie Endo, Takami Yamaguchi, Yukiko Ideno, Leonid Yoffe, Chihiro Kato, Osanori Yamamoto, and Masaki Makino), four authors of EPOSTL (David Newby, Barry Jones, Anne-Brit Fenner, and Kristine Soghikyan), a teacher educator at Vienna University (Barbara Mehlmauer-Larcher), a mentor at Austrian secondary school (Sylvia Grangl), an ECML staff from Finland (Eva-Lisa Hasan, the first winner of John Trim Award), and two observers from Japan (Y. Hasegawa and E. Kakimoto at Kyushu Sangyo University). The workshop aimed to strengthen the partnership among the authors and collaborators of EPOSTL and J-POSTL and serve as a forum for exchange of views and experiences related to the design, implementation and potential of the latter document

1.1 Program

9:15 am Opening: ECML : Sara Bresslin / JACET: Hisatake Jimbo

9:45 – 10:45

Session 1: “Language teacher education in Japan and the use of J-POSTL”

J-POSTL: What is it? by Ken Hisamura

Foreign Language education in Japan and J-POSTL by Shien Sakai

J-POSTL for Pre-service teacher education by Akiko Takagi

J-POSTL for In-service teacher education by Yoichi Kiyota

10:45 – 11:15 Coffee Break

11:15 – 12:30 pm

Session 2: “The present state of EPOSTL: pedagogical underpinning and global

spread” by David Newby

12:30 – 2:30 Lunch

2:30 – 4:00

Session 3 Breakout sessions: “Using EPOSTL/J-POSTL”

Group 1 In pre-service teacher education (Chair: Akiko Takagi)

Group 2 In in-service teacher education (Chair: Yoichi Kiyota)

Group 3 On descriptors regarding autonomous learning and intercultural competences (Chair: Takami Yamaguchi)

4:00 – 4:30 Coffee Break

4:30 – 5:30 Follow up of the break-out discussions: Representatives of each group provided a summary of what has been discussed

5:30 – 6:00 Wrap up (David Newby and K. Hisamura)

1.2 Summary of Session 1: “Language teacher education in Japan and the use of J-POSTL”

• **J-POSTL: What is it? (Ken Hisamura):** The four main points of this presentation were: rationale behind the adaptation of EPOSTL in Japan, process of adaptation, intended users and document structure. Regarding the first point, there are mainly four reasons: to induce paradigm shift in language teaching, to enhance didactic as well as language competences of teachers, to encourage collaborative learning & teaching, and to highlight the importance of establishing standards for teacher education. As a departure from EPOSTL, J-POSTL has three variants: J-POSTL (Full-version), J-POSTL (Pre-service) and J-POSTL (In-service). This breakdown helps make the portfolio more user-friendly and less time-intensive. J-POSTL is intended primarily for pre-service and in-service teachers of English as English is a dominant foreign language in Japan. Finally, while respecting the philosophy and rationale behind EPOSTL a number of items had to be deleted, combined, or modified in order to secure successful contextualization. Descriptors uniquely tied to Eurocentric documents such as CEFR, ELP or the Profile were omitted. Some descriptors were combined if their contents overlapped within the parameters of Japanese context, and some were modified because they did not match curricular content or didactic competences adopted in secondary school or they call for English language or didactic competences exceeding those required of Japanese teachers of English, etc.

• **Overview of Methodological Problems in Japanese EFL Context (Shien Sakai):** GTM (Grammar Translation Method) is deeply rooted in Japan. Teachers are well-versed in this method’s instructional goals and process, which help students improve in English grammar and reading. GTM has been a mainstream methodology with little variation across the Japanese educational landscape. Motivating students with

GTM becomes straight-forward. Successful students can pass university entrance exams to the institution of their choice.

Considering this background, it is quite understandable that an almost-unified instructional design has evolved nationwide in Japan. Therefore, CLT has NOT been popular in Japan. Relevant educators did not share the rationale of CLT in the environment of overwhelming importance of entrance exams. Teachers at secondary schools are not convinced that CLT can nurture capable test takers.

MEXT (the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sport and Technology) has been eager to promote CLT; however, MEXT has not provided classroom practitioners with a template for an instructional design. It has simply instructed teachers to use CLT. Unless the system is fundamentally revised, emphasis may continue to be placed on grammar-translation in secondary schools.

However, economic situation in Japan, including higher unemployment, corporate emphasis on employees' English competence and globalized business environment are forcing a change in students' attitude towards English. The results of the socio-economic pressures will likely be positively reflected in the institutional changes with a time lag.

• **J-POSTL for Pre-service Teacher Education (Akiko Takagi):** The aims of pre-service teacher version of J-POSTL are to facilitate the professional growth of student teachers by systematically recording what they have learned and to promote the autonomous growth of student teachers by helping each individual gauge his/her own competence level throughout pre-service training, including teaching practicum.

One of the major differences from the original document (EPOSTL) is that a scale of 1-5 is used for self-assessment section in the Japanese version. In the original version, the self-assessment arrows are not quantified because teachers should develop their competences throughout their career. In addition, promoting student teachers' reflection on each descriptor is the main purpose in this section, and didactic competences are difficult to quantify. We do not have any intention to quantify didactic competences. The scales are only to provide some support for Japanese students teachers who are not used to reflection. We are fully aware that an individual student teacher needs to reflect on his/her own didactic competences regularly to enhance their professional development.

Another difference is that didactic competences are marked by didactic competence stages, pre-service and novice. Out of 96 descriptors, 65 are for pre-service teachers, and 31 are for novice teachers based on the national survey on assessing the

appropriateness of the descriptors. Descriptors for novice teachers are included in the portfolio to show competences necessary soon after the students graduate from university. The usefulness of the portfolio has been proved to some extent from previous research conducted by JACET SIG on English Education (2012, 2013) show evidence. In the future, we will need to make a teaching manual and conduct more classroom-based research to investigate how to use the portfolio more effectively as well as the effects of using the document.

- **J-POSTL for In-service Teacher Education (Yoichi Kiyota):** In Japan, training programs for in-service English teachers have lacked consistent views toward teachers' professional development. In other words, both researchers and practitioners lack standards which can serve as a common ground for discussion about professional improvements. To explore the possibility of providing such standards, JACET SIG on English Education has suggested descriptors of EPOSTL can be adapted as a self-assessment tool not only for Japanese pre-service teachers but for in-service teachers of English language in Japan.

In J-POSTL for in-service teachers, the most significant difference from EPOSTL is that its descriptors are marked by didactic competence stages. This is because some descriptors demand high competences while some demand just basic ones, which means some descriptors are thought to be appropriate for novice educators while others are appropriate for more experienced professionals. Teachers themselves can use the descriptors as reflective benchmarks according to their classroom experience.

Supervisors and lecturers in charge of training in-service teachers can benefit from J-POSTL (In-service). They can use it as a tool which encourages trainees to reflect on their didactic competences.

1.3 Summary of Breakout Sessions “Using EPOSTL/J-POSTL”

- **In pre-service teacher education (Akiko Takagi):** In this session, we discussed how to utilize J-POSTL/EPOSTL in pre-service teacher education (including teaching practicum) in order to help student teachers' professional development and growth. Japanese participants explained the outline of pre-service teacher program and length of teaching practicum in Japan as well as the use of J-POSTL.

Barry Jones, one of the main authors of EPOSTL, explained how he utilized EPOSTL in his course at University of Cambridge. He chose several descriptors and encouraged student teachers to discuss them. This promotes dialogue among student teachers and encourages reflection. Silvya Grangel who uses EPOSTL before, during, and after

teaching practicum emphasized the importance of integrating the portfolio into the curriculum systematically. This helps student teachers deepen the degree of reflection and grow as professionals.

We agreed that J-POSTL/EPOSTL were useful not only for student teachers' professional development but also teacher educators' reflection on their practice. More concretely, the portfolio helps teacher educators to improve their curriculum in a teaching methodology course. We exchanged our opinions on difficulties of using J-POSTL during a short period of teaching practicum in Japan. One suggestion was to utilize the portfolio to plan, reflect on, and discuss micro teaching in class before the teaching practicum. We also discussed the importance of reflecting on both theory and practice and concurred that the integration of theory and practice is essential for successful use of this reflective instrument.

• **In in-service teacher education (Yoichi Kiyota):** At the session, the main topic was how to use EPOSTL/J-POSTL effectively for in-service teacher training for teachers' professional development. Attendees from Japan reported that English language education at school is more commonly conducted on the basis of the grammar-translation method, not communicative language teaching. As a result students rarely acquire practical language skills. EPOSTL/J-POSTL can be used to improve this instructional paradigm.

Considering using EPOSTL/J-POSTL for in-service teacher training, David Newby mentioned that EPOSTL was edited basically as a tool for student teachers and he did not know of cases where it is being used for in-service teacher training. However, considering its basic concept and contents, it also can be used for in-service teacher training. Newby further commented that he personally had hoped EPOSTL should be developed for all teachers, not just for student teachers.

Kristine Sohikyan explained the present situation of English education in Armenia. Universities have a central role in professional development of in-service teachers as well as for student teachers in teacher education courses. In the Armenian case, EPOSTL can offer important contribution to the design of teacher education programs nationwide.

In conclusion, it was confirmed that it is possible for all teachers including native language teachers at any professional stage from elementary to university to use EPOSTL/J-POSTL as a reflective tool. However, it was also confirmed that EPOSTL/J-POSTL is not a solution but an instrument which can only be effective with proper guidance and understanding of its potential and limitations.

2. The Conference: “Crossing Continents: EPOSTL around the World”

2.1 Program

• Tuesday February 18

9:30–11:00

Session 1: “EPOSTL 10 years on: impact and issues – EPOSTL authors” by David Newby (Austria), Anne-Brit Fenner (Norway), and Barry Jones (UK)

11:30–13:00

Session 2: Case study – Austria

“Theory and practice in using the EPOSTL” by Barbara Mehlmauer-Larcher, Sylvia Grangl, Elisabeth Pölzleitner (Members of the Austrian Association for Language Didactics – ÖGSD)

15:00–16:30

Session 3: “Impact of EPOSTL on student teachers” by Loreta Andziuliene (Lithuania), Ivana Cindric (Croatia), Vilma Tafani & Merita Hoxha (Albania)

17:00–18:30

Session 4: “Introducing the Japanese adaptations of the EPOSTL–J-POSTL” by the members of JACET SIG on English Education: Ken Hisamura, Hisatake Jimbo, Shien Sakai, and Takenori Yamamoto

• Wednesday February 19

9:00 – 10:30

Session 5: “EPOSTL in teaching practice” by Haggag Mohammed (Egypt)

“Presentation of the results of the joint ECML-ACTFL project ‘ACTOSTL’” by David Newby, Eva-Lisa Hasan (Finland, ECML)

11:00–12:30

Session 6: “Strategies for implementing EPOSTL” By İsmail Hakkı Mirici, Sinem Demirbaş (Turkey), Kristine Soghikyan (Armenia)

14:30 – 15:30

Session 7: “Beyond the EPOSTL” by Jürgen Friedrich, Bärbel Kühn (Germany), Michael Langner (Luxembourg), Anna Schröder-Sur (Germany)

*At the end of this session, the JACET group left the venue because of the flight schedule.

2.2 Summary of Session 4

• **J-POSTL: rationale and structure (Ken Hisamura):** This presentation was mainly focused on the differences between EPOSTL and J-POSTL and intended for the participants who did not attend the workshop the previous day.

• **English education in Japanese primary schools (Hisatake Jimbo):** Since 2011 a non-credit class entitled Foreign Language Activities has been introduced in the context of cultural studies in grades five and six of elementary schools in Japan. While teachers have flexibility in choosing a foreign language, the dominant majority of classes focus on English. The 45-minute class is given once a week. That means 35 classes a year. The goals of the class are as follows:

Firstly, the pupils are expected to experience communication in an FL through various tasks and activities. Secondly, the objective has been to familiarize children with foreign languages, lifestyles, and cultures. Thirdly, the focus is on listening and speaking simple expressions used for daily conversations. There are no prescribed textbooks, but sample textbooks are provided by the Ministry of Education. They are *Eigo Note* (2011) and *Hi, Friends!* (2012). They are used extensively throughout the country.

The new proposal, “Reform of English Education in Response to Globalization,” was made in December, 2013, to be implemented in 2020. The present class will be given in grades three and four, with a focus on laying the foundation for basic communication skills. English as a formal subject, will be offered three or four times a week for fifth and sixth graders. How realistic is this proposal?

There are several crucial challenges. First, classroom teachers will be mainly responsible for teaching these classes. However, they are not proficient enough to teach even basic English. In order to remedy this situation, team teaching with certified Japanese English teachers or assistant native English teachers is recommended, but the number of those teachers is limited. Second, certified Japanese English teachers for elementary schools are expected to be assigned to each school. However, with 22,000 elementary schools across the country, assuring that each institution receives a qualified instructor will be a protracted task, likely to take much longer than the proposed six-year timeframe

In spite of these serious obstacles, the Ministry of Education seems determined to push forward with this new proposal. The driving forces are the political will and parental pressure. The business world needs competent English users for global business interactions. And parents want their children to be proficient in English. Both business leaders and parents support the premise, “the earlier, the better.” That is, they believe that young children are better learners of English. They support the natural exposure of children to English. Policy makers also subscribe to this view. In other words, they believe in the critical or sensitive period in the second language acquisition.

Personally, I have serious misgivings about the theoretical validity of this project.

Critical period for speech—specifically for the ability to sound like a native speaker (Scovel, 1988) may exist, but native-like pronunciation is not vital in communicative competence. Foreign accent is inevitable and sometimes it is charming. I think “the earlier, the better” or “the children are better learners of second language” is a false premise. I agree with the following statement: “The belief that children will always be the best language learners may lead to large-scale policy implications that are based on a flawed premise (Brown and Larson-Hall, 2012, p.20). I think quality of English education is more important than early education. What would be more effective in my view is to first, create small classes. Second, certified Japanese English teachers should be responsible for each elementary school English class. My proposal is that for the time being, one period a week of language activities that promote language awareness for fifth graders should be continued. Two periods a week of formal English classes should be introduced for sixth graders at all elementary schools.

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• **Survey results on English education in primary schools (Shien Sakai):** Various challenges regarding the implementation of foreign language activities in primary schools in Japan were discussed based on the results of the national survey conducted by the SIG team in 2013. (see “A study of Japanese elementary school teachers' perceptions of foreign language activities” for more details.)

II School Visits in Vienna

Assisted by Barbara Mehlmauer-Larcher, University of Vienna, our team was able to visit three kinds of schools on Friday, February 21. Below is the summary of the highlights of the respective visits.

1. GRG12 Erlgasse (Bundesgymnasium und Bundesrealgymnasium Wien 12) (Yukie Endo)

- Type of school: grammar school (students' age from 10-18; representing 15 nationalities)
- Students' age of the class we visited: first grade (10 years old) (12 girls, 6 boys)
- Address of school: Erlgasse 32-34, 1120 Wien

- Visiting members: Shien Sakai, Masaki Makino, Yukie Endo
- Time of visit: 11:00-11:50
- Class observation

The theme of the lesson: to master the adverbs of frequency

Text: Coursebook

Class procedure:

1) Greetings in English

When the student answered in German, the teacher responded in English, “I don’t know.” The teacher then continued by using English.

2) Collection of homework

If students forgot to bring their homework, they just said, “I forgot to bring files” in English. The teacher explained something in German to the student who forgot to bring homework.

3) Oral presentation of the dialogue of the coursebook by a pair of students

4) The teacher asked questions about a picture on a coursebook in English, and most of the students answered in English. If students did not answer in English, they were allowed to use German.

5) Role-play of a skit in the coursebook in groups of four (presented by two volunteer groups).

The two groups read the script in the coursebook. If a student misread, the teacher corrected.

6) Check the answers of the exercise about the skit in the coursebook in English.

7) Introduction of new words and phrases

When the teacher asked in English, “How often does somebody do something?”, a student answered, for example, “I always play the violin” in English. After these questions and answers, the teacher confirmed the content in German.

8) A blackboard demonstration of the ways of using adverbs of frequency

The teacher wrote about the grammatical use of adverbs on the blackboard, letting the students give some examples of the sentences including adverbs. While the students copied the information, the teacher moved around the class confirming their understanding. Explanation in German followed whenever necessary.

9) Let the students erase what the teacher wrote on the blackboard

10) A blackboard demonstration of the ways of using adverbs of frequency again, with German explanation

11) Announcement of home assignment

• **Endo’s comments:** English is taught as a foreign language, with the class meeting four times a week (each one is 50 minutes long). The English class lasts for six months. The instructor is a homeroom teacher qualified to teach English. The school we visited is a

gymnasium, not an elementary school. The class was conducted in an orderly way, and its atmosphere may be compared to a typical EFL class in Japan. What is different from a Japanese class may be that most of the students in the class we observed were very active. When they did a role-play of the skits, they enjoyed their performance, and we knew that they could fully understand the content of the skit. When students sometimes misread the skits, the teacher immediately corrected them, so they could quickly correct their mistakes. The class was conducted almost exclusively in English. The ratio of English use by students was very high. The teacher provided an inspiring role-model for the students. The students seemed to enjoy their role-play and did the exercise actively.

• **Sakai's comments:** The lower secondary, followed by gymnasium, vary students from the age of 10 to 14, and the aim of English education is A2 or B1 of CEFR. The teacher seemed to be excellent, because she could motivate students' intellectual curiosity to do self-expressive activities using adverbs of frequency, without trying to keep students' interest through activities such as games after the initial six-month instruction. As for the languages themselves, English and German (the mother tongue in Austria) are similar. However, the situation of the English education in Austria is similar to that in Japan, in that students have little chance to speak and use English outside the classroom, compared to that in America, where English is used for ESL to American immigrants. Therefore, English education in Austria may be greatly helpful to Japanese English education.

2. HerthaFirnbergSchulenfürWirtschaf und Tourismus (Masachika Ishida and Yoichi Kiyota)

- School type: vocational school (upper secondary school)
 - ① Form 2 (15-16 year olds) ② Form 5 (18-19 year olds)
- School address: Firnbergplattz 1, 1220 Vienna
- Teacher: Mr. Michael Karnbach
- Visitors: ① Form 2 - Jimbo, Ishida, and Hisamura,
 - ② Form 5- Katoh, Kiyota, and Fujio
- Timeframe: 9:50 - 12:00
- Activities: viewing school facilities (guided by volunteer students), observing classes, and a Q & A session about the classes with teachers.
- School facilities: Visitors were given a campus-tour-with explanations in English by two female students, accompanied by three teachers who occasionally gave supplementary comments. It seemed that this assignment as tour guides was one part of practicum for the students, judging from the fact their behavior as well as their English performance were checked by the accompanying teachers.

- School Profile: Gender ratio: 100 male to 300 female students, of a total enrollment of 400.

- Classes observed

① Form 2 (ages 15 to 16): Tourism and languages

The number of students taking this class is 11 (7 females and 4 males). For all the skill courses of this school, the number of students in one class is limited to 25.

• **Observers' main comments:** The lesson of this class emphasizes “production activities” such as exchanging opinions in groups and making oral presentations based upon their opinions after they have done communicative activities on the theme of cross-cultural issues about neighboring countries using the textbook. The main activities are conducted in the form of collaborative learning by each group consisting of 3 to 4 students. It seems that the English language competence of this class is either C1 or C2 level, while the target goal of this school is set to be B2 level. On the whole, it seems that the students have achieved good results brought about through various communicative oral activities, although some students have still retained a German accent in their English. No strong intervention has been observed on the part of the teacher in correcting students' syntactic errors occurring in their production activities.

• **Other comments:** It is common that the students in general can access the Internet mainly in English at home, in addition to utilizing Smart Phones frequently and enjoying playing various games and listening to English pop songs on their phones. At school the students are provided with a favorable ITC environment where they can have an opportunity to receive practical hands-on training necessary for business work in tourism. An increasing number of those who graduate from this school go on to a university in which they can get professional expertise and competence, even though a large number of students are employed in the tourist business.

② Form 5 (age: 18-19)

- Presentation by an individual student (10 min.)
- Topic: social aspects and immigration policies and European countries.
- Group discussion--Topic: European Political Groups
- Presentation by a representative of each group--Topic: Speech for an election of European Political Groups, which was scheduled to be conducted within a few weeks.
- Watching a video and discussion: watching a video introducing of an election of European Political Groups on a website and discussing the information among classmates.
- Confirming the content of the video after watching the campaign of European Political Groups.

- Preparation for the next class; Students who are absent from the class can access the information through Moodle.

• **Kato's comments:** It was real “practical” English education. Back in Japan, Yokohama City University set up a course titled “Practical English”, which intends to conduct communicative language teaching reflecting on its impractical method so far. This course focuses on using English in the classroom. However, using English ends up being just speaking and writing English along with the practices of the textbook, which does not lead to using English at a practical level. On the contrary, I found a real “practical” English education is conducted at the school I visited. They offer an effective working situation which enables the students to consider their English learning fitted to their needs at their future working sites. Observing the class, I realized that we can adopt their educational suggestions for improvement in Japanese English education from the following steps: Impractical English education → Practical English education → Real Practical English education

• **Kiyota's comments:** I'm impressed by the discussion on European Political Group, which was conducted in the class I visited because it aimed to realize the school's rationale to make students understand the meaning of being an EU citizen and enhance their attitudes to become international. According to the teacher in charge of the class, some students show their doubts about using political topics in a class on tourism. However, they can understand it is necessary for them to work on this kind of project work using topics in order to conduct their future business which needs international points of view. Their English education is basically project work, which is conducted along with the real theme. It would be helpful for Japanese English educators in improving present text-based education into more practical language training.

• **Additional comments:** This school takes into consideration not only their teaching content in the class but also students' uniform. For example, they have a dress code. Students have to wear uniforms fitted for each learning course. This surely helps students enhance their motivation in learning through experiencing the atmosphere close to their future working sites. Students are willing to express their opinions although real political topics seem to require rather higher English ability. Observing their performance, their English level appears to be from B2 to C1. The tourism course has an eight-month internship training system at hotels, which are recommended by teachers or by students themselves who find a chance somewhere. Their salary depends on the country where they work. For example, in Italy, it may be around 400 euro a month whereas in Switzerland it may be around 1,000 euros.

3. GRG 13 Wenzgasse (Hiromi Imamura)

School Type: Grammar school (10-18 year olds)

- Class 3E (12-13 year olds)
- Class 6B (16-17 year olds)

School address: Larohegasse 4, 1130 Vienna

Teacher: Ms. Mag. Pamela Zankl

Visitors: Hiromi Imamura and Takakazu Imamura

Time: 11:50 - 14:30

• **Class 3E**

Year of English: 3rd

Duration of lesson: 50 minutes (12:05 - 12:55)

Number of pupils: 17 (9 males, 8 females)

Level of English: A2 (CEFR)

Textbook: MORE 3, Helbling (ISBN: 978-3-85272-096-8) + Workbook

Background information:

Current topic: Young people today

The class had been working on this topic for 1 lesson. They started off with two texts about the everyday life of teenagers from South Africa and Canada.

Furthermore, the structure “to be (not) allowed to do...” was introduced and practiced.

The lesson: began with the checking of the homework assignment, a reading task about a Mennonite teenager, along with a writing task using “to be (not) allowed to do....” Afterwards, students’ use of the structure “to be (not) allowed to do...” was revised orally in class. In order to ensure that the students grasped this oral revision, they were further asked to do a speaking activity using this structure in their student books. Switching to the topic of the reading task that was done as homework, students read an informative article about the Mennonite movement. The students read the text individually, and the teacher checked for understanding afterwards by asking some general questions. Then, a listening comprehension exercise was presented in which two teenagers talked about their lives, and the pupils had to complete a true/false task. Next, topic-specific vocabulary was introduced with a matching exercise pairing pictures and phrases. Finally, pupils completed a gap-fill exercise with the new phrases.

• **Class 6B**

Year of English: 6th

Duration of lesson: 50 minutes (13:00 - 13:50)

Number of pupils: 17 (2 males, 15 females)

Level of English: B1+ (CEFR)

Textbook: Intro English 2, Helbling

Background information:

Current topic: Keeping time - lifestyles

The class had been working on the topic of “time” for three lessons. They started off with a brainstorming session in class about “time” phrases and noted down new phrases in an in-class exercise. Next, they did a listening comprehension activity about “Doctor Who” with a multiple-choice task. In the second lesson on this topic, they revised their use of and did some exercises with reported speech. Next, reporting verbs requiring different grammatical structures were introduced, and the students had to match them with corresponding sentence structures. This activity was followed by a gap-fill task. In lesson three, the use of reporting verbs and reported speech were revised in combination. The next task was a reading comprehension exercise entitled, “Exams??? Get Prepared with G.R.M.,” which introduced time management. This was followed by a discussion. Finally, students were asked to discuss some personal issues regarding time management, favorite pastimes, quality time, leisure society, etc., in small groups.

The lesson: Two articles (“How Time Works” and “Time Management Mistakes”) were presented in an information-gap activity. The articles were divided into smaller parts that were each read by one or two students depending on the length of the part. After reading their respective parts of the articles, each student needed to present the most important facts to a classmate, who in turn had to note down key words on an answer sheet so that they would be able to answer specific questions afterwards. Having finished with their text, the students mingled with other classmates who read the other article in order to complete their notes. Answers were checked to make sure students understood and completed the assignment correctly. Students finally got a small handout with eight sayings about “time” (e.g. “Time is a great healer”), which they needed to discuss and explain in small groups.

• **Comments:** The teacher and all of her students actively communicated in English throughout both of her 50-minute classes. In Class 3E, when some students had difficulty expressing themselves in English, the teacher supported them by paraphrasing their English using simpler words. In Class 6B, with students who major in foreign languages, the level of English was quite high. Although difficult words were often used, students did not rely on dictionaries; rather, the teacher explained the meanings with easy-to-understand equivalents.

The school we visited is located in a wealthy community, and students’ families are enthusiastic about education. We heard that most of the students go on to attend prestigious universities. All students in both classes observed were eager to participate in class and communicate with both the teacher and their classmates in English.

When these students begin secondary upper school, that is, when they become 5th graders, they choose one of three majors: foreign languages, natural sciences, or business economics. There were four 6th grade classes; two foreign language major classes (6A, 6B), 1 natural science major class (6C), and 1 business economics major class (6D). The reason why class 6B had a ratio of 15 female students to only 2 male students is because female students tend more often to major in foreign languages.

After observing two classes, we heard several stories from Ms. Mag. Pamela Zankl. She teaches five classes, including 3E and 6B now. Her other three classes are 4th, 5th, and 7th grade classes. She teaches English 18 hours a week. She speaks very fluent English, and her English was easy to understand. To become an English teacher, she studied for three years as an undergraduate and two years in graduate school. She studied English in England for 6 months during her time at university, too. Even now she continues to make efforts whenever possible to better her English by traveling abroad.

A Study on Japanese Elementary School Teachers' Perceptions of Foreign Language Activities

Rie Adachi, Shien Sakai, and Kazumi Aizawa

1. The Aim of the Study and Descriptive Statistics

1.1 The Aim and Procedure

Since 2011, Japanese elementary school teachers have implemented “foreign language activities,” which is not a formal school subject. Therefore, the status of the subject has not been consistent in elementary school curriculum. There are different ways to practice the activity, and it depends on each school. Some schools implement this subject as “a compulsory subject of English education,” other schools conduct it as “a specialized subject field of education” or “English education in special areas.” We conducted two surveys of the teachers who have been in charge of this activity. The first survey is to investigate their attitudes toward “English education”, and the second one is to know their perception about the lexical items to teach. The aims of the two surveys are; 1. To find out what kinds of attitudes teachers have toward “English education” and what kinds of factors could cause the differences in their attitudes, and 2. To find out what lexical items would be appropriate for instruction in EFL classrooms at Japanese elementary schools.

We randomly collected data from 2800 elementary schools in “2013 Zenkoku Gakko Sōran (National statistics on schools in Japan)”, which accounts for about 10 percent of all elementary schools in Japan. The questionnaire was sent to the principal of each school and the teacher who was in charge of the subject was asked to answer it.

First, we conducted a preliminary survey at 800 elementary schools, and next, based on the result, the revised questionnaire was distributed to 2000 elementary schools. In the main survey, the investigation of teachers’ attitudes toward “foreign language activities” was included, and the word “can” was omitted from one of the word lists because of double registration and instead of “can”, “it’s” was added to the word list. Since the rest of the items in the revised questionnaire were the same as the items in the preliminary survey and two surveys showed almost the same results, this paper will present the analysis and the discussion on both surveys.

1.2 Descriptive Statistics

1.2.1 Basic information about the two surveys. The preliminary survey was conducted in September, 2013. The 213 sets of data were collected (collection rate 27%) by the end of September. After that time, four replies of preliminary survey were

received. The main survey was carried out in November and December, 2013. 673 sets of data were collected by the end of December. As a result a total of 890 sets of data was considered for the analysis (collection rate 32%).

- Schools of the respondents
Public: 873 (98.1%), National: 5 (0.6%), Private: 9 (1.0%), and No response: 3
- The respondents' teaching experience for "foreign language activities"
Less than 1 year: 151 (17.0%), 1-2 years: 107 (12.0%), 2-3 years: 106 (11.9%),
More than 3 years: 511 (57.4%), and No response: 15
- The job status of the respondents
Homeroom teacher: 750 (84.3%), English teacher: 49 (5.5%), Japanese assistant
English teacher: 21 (2.3%), Assistant language teacher: 12 (1.3%), Others: 52
(5.8%), No response: 6
- The status of the subject "foreign language activities" at respondents' schools
Compulsory subject of English education (CS): 290 (32.6%), Specialized subject
field of education (SS): 421 (47.3%), Period for Integrated Studies (PfIS): 62
(7.0%), Compulsory subject of English education in special area (CS in SA): 40
(4.5%), Others: 36 (4.0%), No response: 41 (4.6%)
- Location of each school (prefecture) See Appendix 1.

2. Teachers' Attitudes toward "English Education"

2.1 Items Added to the Main Survey

The contents of the preliminary and the main survey are almost the same. Just before conducting the main survey, it was announced that the Ministry of Education would start English activities at the 3rd grade of elementary school and the subject of English education formally at the 5th grade (Asahi, 2013). In addition, some teachers stated in the comment field of our preliminary survey that they are against "English education" as a formal subject. Therefore, we decided to add three questions about their attitudes toward "English education". We provided two choices for all three questions; "Yes" or "No". The questions are the following;

1. Do you agree with "English education" as a formal subject at elementary schools?
2. Do you agree with "foreign language activities" from 3rd grade?
3. Do you agree with three "English education" classes a week from 6th grade after students acquire their foundation of communication abilities through "foreign language activities" from 3rd grade?

Questions No.1 and No.2 follow the official policy, but No.3 was devised for this study as a more practical question.

2.2 Results of Teachers' Perceptions and Attitudes

First, we asked teachers about the contents of “foreign language activities” which they practice in the classrooms. We asked three questions and provided two choices for all these questions, “Yes” or “No”.

1. Do you practice activities which make students aware of different languages and cultures?
Yes: 826 (92.8%) No: 62 (7.0%) No response: 2 (0.2%)
2. Do you practice activities which develop students' interests and foster their positive attitudes toward communication?
Yes: 880 (98.9%) No: 7 (0.8%) No response: 3 (0.3%)
3. Do you practice activities which familiarize pupils with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign languages?
Yes: 873 (98.1%) No: 14 (1.6%) No response: 3 (0.3%)

Next, we asked teachers about their attitudes toward “English education” in the second survey.

4. Do you agree with “English education” as a formal subject at elementary schools?
Yes: 305 (45.3%) No: 344 (51.1%) No response: 24 (3.6%) Total: 673 (100.0%)
5. Do you agree with “foreign language activities” from 3rd grade?
Yes: 311 (46.2%) No: 336 (49.9%) No response: 26 (3.9%) Total: 673 (100.0%)
6. Do you agree with three “English education” classes a week from 6th grade after students acquire their foundation of communication abilities through “foreign language activities” from 3rd grade?
Yes: 161 (23.9%) No: 486 (72.7%) No response: 23 (3.4%) Total: 673 (100.0%)

Results show that some teachers agree with “English education” as a formal subject and they also agree with “foreign language activities” from 3rd grade. On the other hand, most of the teachers are against three classes of “English education” a week from 6th grade. It shows that if the curriculum reform would fall within a certain limit, teachers could deal with it. However, they would have reservations about a drastic change, such as the rapid increase of the number of English classes as a formal subject.

2.3 Detailed Analysis Results about the Teachers' Attitudes

When we examined the content of “foreign language activities” which depend on the status of the subject at each school, the activities in the second and the third question

were implemented in almost all schools and there was no difference in the status of the subject. However, the activities referred to in the first question were practiced differently. Here is the number of schools which practice the activities referred to in the question No.1.

Compulsory subject (English education): 270 (93.1%)

Specialized subject field of education: 387 (92.1%)

The Period for Integrated Studies: 57 (91.9%)

Compulsory subject in special area: 39 (97.5%)

Others: 33 (91.7%)

As you can see, only the schools which implement the subject “foreign language activities” as “Compulsory subject in special area” showed more than 95%.

Next, we analyzed teachers’ attitudes toward “English education” depending on the subject status of each school. As shown in Table 1, the schools, which implement this subject as “Compulsory subject (English education)” or “Compulsory subject in special area”, showed a higher rate of approval for “English education” and the other schools showed opposition to “English education”.

Table 1. Teachers’ attitudes toward “English education” depending on the subject status

	CS	SS	PfIS	CSinSA	Others	No response
Agree	122(58.4)	121(37.3)	21(42.0)	20(69.0)	10(37.0)	11(32.4)
Disagree	78(37.3)	192(59.3)	29(58.0)	9(31.0)	16(59.3)	20(58.8)
No response	9(4.3)	11(3.4)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.7)	3(8.8)
	209(100.0)	324(100.0)	50(100)	29(100.0)	27(100.0)	34(100.0)

Then, we analyzed teachers’ attitude toward “English education” depending on the teachers’ experience of “foreign language activities”. As shown in Table 2, the opinions of teachers, who have taught this subject more than two years, were almost evenly divided between pro and con. On the other hand, the teachers, who have taught this subject for less than one year, tended to have a negative attitude toward “English education” and the difference between the numbers of yes and no responses was almost 20%. As a result, while the teachers who do not have much experience of “foreign language activities” showed disapproval to “English education”, the teachers who are accustomed to implementing this subject were generally more positive, though the teachers who have more than four years experience of this subject had displayed negative attitudes to “English education”.

Table 2. Teachers' attitude toward "English education" depending on their experience

	Less than 1 year	2 years	3 years	More than 3 years	Total
Agree	45(40.9%)	34(48.6%)	42(52.5%)	181(48.0%)	302(47.4%)
Disagree	65(59.1%)	36(51.4%)	38(47.5%)	196(52.0%)	335(52.6%)
Total	110(100.0%)	70(100.0%)	80(100.0%)	377(100.0%)	637(100.0%)

2.4. Free Comments from Teachers about "English Education"

2.4.1 Positive attitudes to "English education."

*Pupils in Korea start learning English from 1st grade. Japan should do so.

*Pupils have good listening abilities. We should continue the activities which allow pupils to listen to some words (mainly nouns) and say some words. We would like to instill a notion that English is one of languages and it is not difficult.

*Both teachers and pupils are really inspired by the activities conducted by ALTs. I hope that the team-teaching style can develop and improve further.

*I agree with "English education" as a formal subject. And we could start English lessons from the 1st grade judging from the current situation. However, I cannot understand the reason why we need to teach three classes of "English education" from 5th grade. Neither do I understand the meaning of "developing the foundation of communication", since the aim of "English education" remains very vague. If the aim was clearly stated, such as "when you are asked in English, you can try to understand and answer the question, even you can't understand completely", or "you can understand English letters and pronunciation, and try to read the written English even you can't understand the text well", then we could judge how many classes would be necessary. In order to make pupils understand English to some degree, we should start English earlier than 5th grade and we should discuss how many classes would be necessary for pupils to develop their abilities further. The abrupt policy increasing the number of classes to three without any preparation or consideration would confuse pupils. We, teachers, are not worried about ourselves, rather, worried about pupils. Also, we strongly hope that the content of English instruction does not duplicate what is taught at junior high schools, neither traditional English education, which mainly focuses on "analysis of English sentence structure". I think grammar is really important. If we think just speaking is enough for us without having a clear understanding of grammar, we could not develop our English communication skills. However, as English is just a tool, no matter how hard you study about English, you cannot develop your English proficiency. English is a practical subject like music or PE. You need to practice English to use it. You should use more your mouth, ear, and eyes and move your body to use English. You should incorporate such practice in school curriculum. You cannot improve your communicative skills only by sitting in

the classroom. If you've never practiced baseball, it would end in vain to tell you how to throw a fork ball. If you've never touched the piano, it would be of no avail to tell you how beautiful the major chord sounds. Similarly, if you have never practiced English, you could not use English even though you have a lot of knowledge about it. It depends on how you use the tool. Therefore, it would be important to create an environment where pupils can use English as much as possible and to aware pupils that English is just a tool and to teach them how to use the tool. Through the experience of using English, students can also learn English at junior and high schools systematically. I hope that students will notice the meaning of learning English at elementary school later. Even though they are just elementary school students, some children know fairly complex grammar rules and have obtained a certificate of English (EIKEN). However, they would be able to do these things when they become high school students. Rather, it would be more important for pupils to learn what they want to communicate, what they want to write. It would be important not to speak English itself, but to communicate something in English, not to read English itself but read something in English, and not to write English itself but write something in English. There is a big difference between learning English and learning something in English and I think we should aim for the latter. I hope that every pupil can use English and that students could have their own ideas and live anywhere in the world with their communicative skills. I think these things are the aim of English education in the globalized world. Fostering a sense of humanism would be essential for children. This awareness would let children greet each other well, arrange things neatly, make sure not to forget anything to school, listen to what people say, and so on. To live in the globalized world, you should make sure whether you have "universal good manners as human" which have been overlooked and whether you can behave yourself. If they cannot act in the proper way, no matter how well you can speak English, you are not recognized as a global citizen. You should develop vocabulary and have an experience to use English as a tool. I think pupils can take some time to acquire these fundamental human skills in the elementary schools before they learn the English language. We, teachers, should stand before pupils with definite aims and purposes in order not to use vague expressions like "international understanding" or "fostering globalized people" and not to make students end up in vain. I hope this study would be continued and give some useful suggestions to a new teaching leadership system for both teachers and pupils.

2.4.2 Neutral attitudes to "English education."

*If the government decides to introduce the "English education" as a formal subject, I think that teachers who have special teaching skills should conduct classes. It is good to introduce English in elementary schools, but homeroom teachers are really tired in this system. I think the current system should be changed.

*I cannot decide whether “English education” is good or not, depending on the aim of this subject. I am against the proposed introduction of a new instruction system in which English will be taught as a subject. I agree that maybe if the government can coordinate the number of classes of all subjects and if the new instruction system will be firmly established in collaboration with the education at junior high school.

2.4.3 Negative attitudes towards “English education.”

*There are a number of reasons why I’m against “English education.” I think that the aim of the current “foreign language activities” is appropriate for elementary school students and it is very important. The teacher training has been implemented at each local government and teachers have not got enough training. If the Ministry of Education wants to start “English education,” they should allocate teachers specialized in English to each elementary school. According to the news report, “English education” would be added to the current system. However, imposing further burden on elementary school teachers would be impossible. The situation would not be changed even if “English education” is implemented on Saturdays. What is necessary is to invest more money in education and to determine what is important for children. The members of the Education Rebuilding Council cannot figure out what is really important.

*I’m sorry, but I cannot answer. I cannot understand the intent of this policy. It would be too difficult for the pupils to learn English because they have not even studied Japanese language well. If we implement “English education” as a subject, the number of pupils who dislike English would increase and the individual differences would broaden. Teachers are too busy at Japanese schools. This kind of study is really annoying. Though our principal allowed me not to have to answer this survey, I answered it for you reluctantly. You should consider our situation more.

*It might be good to make “English education” a formal subject in the future. However, elementary school teachers are not ready to implement “English education” at present.

*I have some questions. “Who will teach English?” “How would the systematic connection be with junior high school?” “What will be sacrificed to accommodate extra EFL classes?”

*I doubt that increasing the number of English classes will have a positive effect while the number of Japanese classes will drop. If “English education” becomes a formal subject, the authorities should establish a better system like placing qualified English teachers in each school and should not place additional burden on the shoulders of homeroom teachers.

*It is good for pupils to enjoy English games to familiarize them with English, but does it really have a good effect? Maybe they are just having fun. I think we need some evaluation to know pupils’ ability. As the aim of “foreign language activities” is not clear, we have difficulties to write their evaluation in their report cards. Is it really

necessary to make “English education” a formal subject? If “English education” becomes a formal subject, we need specialized English teachers. Even now we conduct lessons with great difficulty. If we implement “English education” as a subject and need to connect it with the curriculum of junior high school, it would be impossible for us without enough experiences and skills. It would be impossible for our school without getting specialized English teachers and for teachers who want to be in charge of the lessons without acquiring enough training. If the government places more burden on elementary school teachers, they will not be able to function as professionals. I doubt the effect of “foreign language activities” in elementary schools. I’ve taught for five years since I became an elementary school teacher and this year is the sixth year and I’m a homeroom teacher of 6th graders. I have certifications both of English teacher and elementary school teacher. As stated in curriculum guidelines, pupils seem to enjoy games led by ALT with ambiguous aims and to be familiar with English. However, 5th and 6th graders have more subjects to learn than 1st to 4th graders and they also participate in a lot of events. Homeroom teachers need to focus on the other subjects like Japanese and math. I think it would be good that they should start to learn English in junior high schools. As pupils cannot learn much from the foreign language activities, it seems to increase the gap between pupils. As we do not teach grammar, writing letters, and phonics, children just communicate in English based on what they hear. I’ve heard that they cannot understand the meaning of most English sentences.

*Since the homeroom teachers who are in charge of 5th and 6th graders must fill in some comments in the pupils’ report cards, which would burden the teachers. The three points of the comments seem not be useful, because anybody does not read them.

*Making “English education” a formal subject will not develop Japanese students’ English proficiency, rather it would have harmful effects. We should practice foreign language activities, not English activities. We focus on developing students’ communicative abilities more than instructing English language. Implementing English class as a subject would entail the incorporation of an evaluative element into the instruction itself and it is not consistent with the current situation.

*I believe the Ministry of Education is not acting in good faith by providing elementary school teachers with a short training and making them conduct English classes. We invested a lot of time and have made great efforts to ensure that “foreign language activities” can be practiced effectively. Teachers are not all-round players!

*I’m embarrassed and feel sorry that I teach pupils English, though I do not have certification to teach English. As I like English, I can enjoy practicing “foreign language activities”. However, I feel embarrassed to be teaching English with my bad pronunciation.

*I heard that some students lose their confidence in their English in elementary school. I think it would remain a big issue if the homeroom teachers will keep practicing

“foreign language activities”.

2.4.4 Other remarks

*After I graduated from my university, I worked as a teacher at a public junior high school for 13 years. Then, I was transferred to this elementary school and go into my 6th year. When I moved to this school, it was designated as a special school for English education by the Ministry of Education. I’m in charge of meetings about English education at elementary schools in Odawara city. Most teachers tend to depend on ALTs for “foreign language activities” in public elementary schools, and they do not care about them. In fact, the sheer number of other subjects makes it difficult to devote adequate attention to English. However, as I’d like to develop myself professionally and to cooperate as much as possible, I’d like to make a personal commitment to improving “foreign language activities” in the classroom.

*Though it is hard for homeroom teachers to teach English, we appreciate that an ALT comes to our school.

*We practice “foreign language activities” in order not to get pupils dislike English.

2.5 Discussion about Teachers’ Attitude toward “English Education” and Further Implications

2.5.1 About the contents of “foreign language activities.” According to a guidebook for “foreign language activities” by the Ministry of Education, the instructors are required 1) to make students understand foreign languages and cultures through various experiences and 2) to raise their interest in and develop their attitudes toward communicating with others and 3) to make them familiar with a foreign language. However, considering the titles of presentations at some conferences on English education, it seems that the three elements of “foreign language activities” are not equally represented in the classroom. The teachers deal with the content of No.3 in most of their classes and do not often focus on No.2 and they rarely implement No.1. The reason behind this discrepancy is that there are not enough teaching methods and teaching materials available about No.1 and No.2. This study shows that the activities which make students aware of different languages and cultures are implemented less than other activities and considered difficult for homeroom teachers. It shows that researchers and practitioners need to devise practical activities to enhance students’ interest in a foreign language and culture.

2.5.2 Teachers’ attitude toward “English education.” The result of teachers’ attitude toward “English education” shows that more teachers have positive attitudes than we had expected. Considering their comments, the reason why many teachers have positive attitudes is that they are getting accustomed to practice “foreign language activities” and that it is easier for them to teach young pupils phonetics or pronunciation than elder

pupils and that they want to enhance pupils' opportunities to use English. On the other hand, judging from their comments, there are more negative comments than positive ones and some of them appeal their plight seriously. Even in the positive comments, as they seem to ideally agree with "English education" as a subject, they may change their attitudes depending on what kind of education will be conducted, because most of them claim that the contents should not be changed. In addition, some teachers with positive opinions require that qualified teachers should implement English education or that there should be a seamless connection with junior high school English education. Therefore, teachers may change their attitudes depending on whether a qualified teacher will be available or not, whether they will be able to get enough training or not when English education is implemented as a subject. Besides, as the collection rate was only 30%, it implicates that the teachers at the rest of the schools were too busy to answer the questionnaire and that they could not have enough time to think about English education.

2.5.3 Discussion of results about the teachers' attitudes towards English education as a formal subject. The teachers' attitudes vary depending on their experiences. The teachers with less than one year experience tend to have a negative attitude toward English education. Therefore, English teacher training should be provided sufficiently, especially to less-experienced teachers. The teachers' attitudes also vary depending on their schools. The teachers at the schools where English is taught as "Compulsory subject" or "Specialized subject field of education" tend to have a positive attitude toward English education, while the teachers at the other schools tend to have a negative attitude. To uncover the causes of this discrepancy, it would be important to conduct a follow-up analysis in a further study. It would also be necessary to examine why some teachers are opposed to the proposed policy. We need to investigate whether their opposition is related to physical constraints or theoretical misgivings. In the case of the former, we also need to examine what measures should be necessary for teachers and practitioners.

3. Appropriate Lexical Items to Teach in English Education

In this study, four dictionaries (*First English-Japanese Dictionary*, *Kids Crown Dictionary*, *Rainbow English-Japanese Dictionary*, and *Rainbow Japanese-English Dictionary*) which are published for elementary school students were investigated in order to find common lexical items and 829 words were selected. The words were divided into eight groups of 103-104 words respectively. We asked the principal to get a teacher or an instructor who is in charge of "foreign language activities" to answer the questionnaire. To reduce the burden, we asked each respondent to answer about one of the eight word groups. Appendix 2 shows the results of the frequency of usage of all

829 words. The questions of this study were almost the same as the ones in the preliminary study, but there was only one difference; the word “can”. In the preliminary study, we tried to investigate the word “can” in two meanings; one is “ability” and another is “possibility”. However, we could not get any acceptable response. Therefore, we decided to include “it’s” instead of another “can”, as we thought that “it’s” may be considered differently from “it.” The following results show the sum total of the preliminary and the main surveys.

3.1 The Results of the Survey about Lexical Items

We asked teachers, 1) whether they teach pupils reading English or not.

Yes: 306 (34.4%) No: 575 (64.6%) No response: 10 (1.0%)

Teachers who answered “Yes” were asked the following questions below.

2) Do you teach pupils how to read letters?

Yes: 206 (23.1%)

3) Do you teach pupils how to read some easy words?

Yes: 264 (29.7%)

4) Do you teach pupils to write the capital and lower case letters?

Yes: 246 (27.6%)

5) Do you teach pupils how to write easy words?

Yes: 33 (3.7%)

Next, we analyzed these results relative to the status of the subject at each school.

Table 3. The difference of the status of the subject in teaching English literacy

	CS	SS	PfIS	CSinSA	Others	Total
1)	38.2%	34.7%	30.6%	35.0%	27.8%	34.4%
2)	27.4%	22.2%	16.1%	32.5%	13.9%	23.1%
3)	35.4%	28.7%	22.6%	30.0%	22.2%	29.7%
4)	31.6%	27.5%	21.0%	32.5%	19.4%	27.6%
5)	6.3%	1.9%	1.6%	10.0%	0.0%	3.7%

3.2 The Results of Grouping the Lexical Items according to Their Frequency

We analyzed all 829 words and arranged them in order of frequency of use. Then we divided them into four groups according to the percentage of the frequency as follows. (See APPENDIX 2 for the frequency of each word).

High frequency group : Contains words used by 75 to 100% of respondents
 Middle-high frequency group : Contains words used by 50 to 75% of respondents
 Middle-low frequency group : Contains words used by 25 to 50% of respondents
 Low frequency group : Contains words used by 0 to 25% of respondents

Next, we classified words, according to the word class and calculated their share in each group (See Table4).

Table 4. Frequency of vocabulary of each word class F=Frequency

Word Class	High frequency		Upper-middle frequency		Lower-middle frequency		Low frequency	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Noun	114	72.2	173	63.4	135	49.1	38	31.2
Adjective	16	10.1	34	12.5	47	17.1	26	21.3
Verb	11	7.0	40	14.7	47	17.1	23	18.9
Adverb	2	1.3	8	2.9	15	5.5	10	8.2
Numeral	10	6.3	4	1.5	1	0.4	0	0.0
Pronoun	2	1.3	6	2.2	10	3.6	7	5.7
Preposition	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	4.4	12	9.8
Article	0	0.0	1	0.4	2	0.7	0	0.0
Auxiliary verb	1	0.6	0	0.0	1	0.4	5	4.1
Conjunction	1	0.6	0	0.0	3	1.1	0	0.0
Interjection	1	0.6	1	0.4	1	0.4	0	0.0
Interrogative	0	0.0	6	2.2	1	0.4	1	0.8
	158		273		275		122	

In addition, the pronouns and interrogatives which would be important elements in instruction are shown by the frequency of each word in Table 5.

Table 5. Frequency of each word

Pronoun	%	Pronoun	%	Pronoun	%	Pronoun	%
I	95.7	you	82.9	he	45.4	she	54.5
my	72.0	your	56.3	his	28.6	her	26.1
me	60.8			him	15.0		
mine	31.3	yours	34.0				
Pronoun	%	Pronoun	%	Pronoun	%	Pronoun	%
we	67.4	they	26.2	it	42.0	what	63.4
our	32.1	their	16.5	this	64.8	when	58.0
us	23.7	them	19.3	that	33.5	where	53.8
				these	16.2	who	63.4
				those	14.0	how	54.6
		whose	15.3	which	27.2	why	61.0

3.3 Free Comments about “Appropriateness of Instruction”

3.3.1 Comments about vocabulary.

- *I'll stop to answer this questionnaire because it's very hard. In short, I think the words which are often used as loanwords in Japan or used in our daily lives. I cannot choose them from the list.
- *What does “instruction” mean in this question? How to write these words or how to pronounce them? I judged them by pronunciation.
- *As there is no clear standard of “Appropriateness of instruction,” I think the appropriateness of each word depends on its context. Though I checked based on my experience of instruction, I think it is not necessary to teach pupils vocabulary and there are many words which are not important at this stage. This does not make much sense.
- *As children have good hearing abilities, we'd like to raise their awareness to English language with the activities from listening to speaking mainly focusing on nouns. It is not difficult.
- *When I took a child care leave, I watched “Let's Play with English” on NHK. Judging from the vocabulary in the TV program, I checked words on the list. I also checked the words which are used in questions.
- *I think it is good to instruct the words above in order to familiarize pupils with English pronunciation, not to teach them spelling.
- *I checked the words which are used in classes, not the words which should be memorized.
- *I checked understandable words for pupils.
- *Since we started English lessons from the 1st grade students, we have already taught all 104 words on the list. As they are important as teaching materials rather than the appropriateness of the words, I checked all of them.
- *I think teachers need to teach just important words, such as colors, shapes, days, size, country names, and animal names.
- *Concerning the appropriate lexical items to study, I think the words to learn must be different depending on the context. We should decide the items adjusting to the contents to teach. I think “foreign language activities” is really important because it makes pupils acquire the fundamental communicative skills. The ability with which pupils try to interact with others voluntarily and with which pupils try to engage in some activities is really important. However, I think language acquisition will require the use of language as a means of communication. I always think it would be very important for us to create a classroom situation where pupils do something out of necessity using English.
- *I cannot understand that there is only a word “December” in the list, but no other names of months. I think names of all twelve months should be included. I also think more concrete words would be necessary. For example, if a teacher shows pupils the

word “dentist” with a picture card, they will easily understand. Since the word is shown in a lesson about jobs in the textbook “*Hi Friends 2*”, it would be appropriate to teach. However, the word “did” is difficult to teach with a picture card. I think it would be unreasonable to teach pupils the word “did”, because we need to explain it with some past events or as a past form of “do”. Moreover, if we need to teach English in English, this kind of explanation would be more difficult. Therefore, concerning “English education,” if the number of lessons increases to three times in 6th grade, we need more ALTs or homeroom teachers. In our school an ALT is in charge of most of “foreign language activates”. The ALT hired by our city government goes to two elementary schools and one junior high school. Therefore, three lessons per week will fill make it impossible for the ALT to teach at another school. Though I agree with the policy of “English education,” I think the process of implementation should be examined much more thoroughly. .

3.3.2 Comments about methods of teaching vocabulary.

- *I introduce some expressions with gestures and some communicative activities in my class. I teach pupils not to use English, but to make them use foreign languages and use gestures and make them try to communicate with others. We seek to develop pupils’ interests in foreign languages and their ability to try to communicate using gestures. We do not teach them vocabulary or spelling.
- *We mainly focus on reading.
- *In our school, ALTs, Japanese language teachers and homeroom teachers teach English collaboratively. As we have specialists, pupils can enhance their understanding of other cultures and seem to enjoy the lessons.
- *To teach the alphabet, we try to show pupils some words because some of them want to read and write English. When we consider the connection between elementary and junior high school EFL curricula, it may be desirable to teach English alphabet.
- *Our city implements English education because we are designated as “Compulsory subject in special area” and we made our own curriculum. The checked lexical items are the target words for speaking and listening which are designated in our curriculum.
- *Hatsuka city has set a period of time for “foreign languages” from 1st grade to 6th grade students. The number of classes is different depending on the grade and both ALT and homeroom teachers conduct lessons.

3.4 Discussion

3.4.1 Appropriate lexical items. The result showed that the number of teachers who teach pupils how to read letters was 206 and the number of teachers who teach pupils how to read some easy words was 264. The reason why more teachers teach pupils words than alphabet is that teachers do not teach each letter, but that they show some words to pupils and tell them how to read them. It seems that it is easier for teachers to

teach how to pronounce easy words than to teach how to read letters, because students are familiar with some loan words. Besides, concerning the status of the subject at each school, the number of “Yes” was higher in the two types of schools; Compulsory subject (English education) and Compulsory subject in special area. Therefore, it seems that these two types of schools have already created a positive atmosphere in the whole school and tries to teach some lexical items with enthusiasm.

3.4.2 Discussion of the lexical items grouped by frequency. Since the frequency of usage of the words in each group would be progressively lower as we move from High to Low frequency groups, we could consider that teaching words in the Low group would become more difficult. This suggests that different share ratios among word classes in each group would show the difficulty of teaching. Therefore, we defined the situation in which teachers are handling High group words as “The first step of instruction,” and the situation of handling Upper-middle words, Lower-middle words and Low words, as “The second step of instruction,” “The third step of instruction,” and “The fourth step of instruction,” respectively. This definition is confirmed by seeing that the preposition, which is usually difficult to teach, is not included in either High or Upper-middle groups, but it is included in both Lower-middle and Low groups.

3.4.2.1 The four steps of instruction based on the frequency of the lexical items. Nouns and adjectives are easier for teachers to teach by showing picture cards than verbs and adverbs. Therefore, the use frequencies of nouns and adjectives are expected to rise at the initial stage. According to Table 4, both nouns and adjectives account for 82% in the High frequency group, while they account for 76% in the Upper-middle group; they decrease 66% in the Lower-middle group, and 53% in the Low group. On the other hand the frequency of usage of verbs gradually increases, and prepositions appear in the Lower-middle group for the first time and the frequency increases in the Low group.

According to Table 5, the frequency of usage of the pronoun “I” is 96%, “you” is 83%, while verb “am” is 54%, “is” is 52%, and “are” is 44%.

The use frequencies of nouns and adjectives which are easy to teach through picture cards are high in “The first step of instruction” and it goes down gradually in higher steps of instruction. It implies that teachers instruct activities mainly using nouns and adjectives in “The first step of instruction.” Therefore, it was presumed that teachers would instruct pupils at this stage not by using affirmative or interrogative sentences, but by using only words with an intonation, with which would induce yes-no answers (which are also included in “The first step of instruction”) from pupils. The frequency of use of articles does not appear in “The first step of instruction,” and only article “a”

appears in “The second step,” and “an” and “the” appear in “The third step.” It shows that sentences are rarely used in teachers’ instruction in “The first step.” Therefore, we can assume that teachers instruct English using grammar in the next step (The second step). In addition, as the frequency of use of interrogatives “what,” “when,” “who” and “how” is over 50%, we speculated they instruct English using affirmative, interrogative and negative sentences in “The second step” (The frequency of use of “not” is 65.2%). It is noteworthy that the frequency of use of “why” is 61%, while that of “because” is 36%. We assumed that teachers start to use the dialogue phrase “why-because” in “The third step” at the latest.

3.4.2.2 Implications and further study. Both surveys about the lexical items appropriate for instruction showed similar results. Moreover, the answers came from all prefectures in Japan. As a result, we can conclude that the trends demonstrated in this study and implications could be applicable to some extent to elementary school environments throughout Japan. Though further detailed study will be required, this study could provide comprehensive information on Japanese elementary school teachers and useful tips on how to conduct English class more appropriately for pupils in Japanese public schools.

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Appendix 1 Locations of schools of respondents

	N	Tokyo	44	Osaka	29	Fukuoka	12
Hokkaido	11	Kanagawa	20	Hyogo	27	Saga	11
Aomori	10	Nigata	30	Nara	8	Nagasaki	14
Iwate	25	Ishikawa	18	Wakayama	10	Kumamoto	16
Miyagi	22	Fukui	12	Tottori	3	Oita	11
Akita	16	Yamanashi	10	Shimane	10	Miyazaki	17
Yamagata	15	Nagano	19	Okayama	34	Kagoshima	27
Fukushima	22	Gifu	11	Hiroshima	15	Okinawa	20
Ibaragi	18	Shizuoka	17	Yamaguchi	9	No response	73
Tochigi	20	Aichi	38	Tokushima	12	Total	890
Gunma	27	Mie	21	Kagawa	8		
Saitama	27	Shiga	9	Ehime	4		
Chiba	33	Kyoto	4	Kochi	7		

Appendix 2 The frequency of use of 829 lexical items

I:95.7%, English:93.7%, cat:91.5%, Japan:91.2%, three:91.1%, hello:91.1%, big:91.1%, class:91.0%, dog:90.7%, baseball:90.4%, ten:90.2%, two:90.2%, happy:90.1%, animal:90.1%, school:90.1%, Japanese:89.8%, America:89.5%, cold:89.4%, December:89.2%, Friday:89.0%, Monday:89.0%, girl:88.7%, yellow:88.6%, swim:88.4%, basketball:88.4%, mother:88.4%, pencil:88.3%, yes:88.0%, fine:87.9%, apple:87.9%, banana:87.9%, egg:87.0%, pink:87.0%, Sunday:87.0%, eight:86.6%, color:86.6%, October:86.6%, father:86.5%, orange:86.5%, Saturday:86.5%, five:86.0%, four:85.8%, box:85.8%, rain:85.8%, April:85.7%, door:85.7%, eye:85.7%, morning:85.7%, good:85.7%, bus:85.2%, family:85.2%, name:85.1%, play:84.8%, six:84.8%, day:84.8%, pen:84.8%, can:84.8%, hungry:84.4%, green:84.3%, car:84.2%, friend:84.0%, seven:83.9%, November:83.9%, tree:83.9%, and:83.9%, open:83.9%, Thursday:83.7%, tomorrow:83.5%, ball:83.3%, birthday:83.3%, food:83.3%, police:83.3%, black:83.3%, hot:83.3%, February:83.0%, winter:83.0%, sleepy:83.0%, go:83.0%, boy:83.0%, July:83.0%, you:82.9%, summer:82.4%, stop:82.4%, September:82.4%, soccer:82.4%, white:82.4%, drink:82.3%, study:82.1%, game:82.0%, notebook:82.0%, eat:81.6%, eleven:81.3%, Christmas:81.3%, cook:81.3%, desk:81.3%, song:81.3%, today:81.3%, March:81.3%, Tuesday:81.3%, bird:81.1%, hand:81.0%, music:80.4%, bed:80.2%, fish:80.2%, January:80.2%, TV:80.2%, Wednesday:80.2%, sister:80.2%, first:80.1%, hair:80.1%, lunch:80.0%, pizza:79.6%, piano:79.5%, monkey:79.1%, China:79.0%, shop:79.0%, time:79.0%, no:79.0%, start:78.9%, doctor:78.9%, tennis:78.9%, candy:78.7%, cup:78.7%, restaurant:78.7%, station:78.6%, zoo:78.1%, dance:78.0%, run:78.0%, peach:77.8%, August:77.7%, all:77.7%, enjoy:77.5%, sport:77.3%, flower:77.2%, June:77.0%, red:76.9%, smile:76.8%,

cake:76.8%, elephant:76.8%, head:76.8%, teacher:76.0%, chair:75.9%, England:75.9%,
 strawberry:75.9%, number:75.8%, cap:75.8%, house:75.7%, room:75.7%, twelve:75.4%,
 face:75.4%, rice:75.4%, sing:75.2%, child:75.2%, card:75.0%, classroom:75.0%,
 fruit:75.0%, sun:75.0%, yesterday:75.0%, small:74.7%, man:74.6%, snow:74.6%,
 welcome:74.6%, new:74.5%, back:74.5%, nine:74.1%, long:74.1%, milk:74.1%,
 bag:74.0%, walk:74.0%, finish:73.9%, map:73.8%, cool:73.7%, brother:73.7%,
 month:73.7%, brown:73.6%, money:73.6%, picture:73.6%, star:73.6%,
 watermelon:73.2%, sorry:73.1%, park:73.0%, lemon:73.0%, water:73.0%,
 afternoon:72.8%, camera:72.8%, cherry:72.5%, hospital:72.5%, koala:72.5%, ski:72.5%,
 right:72.3%, everyone:72.3%, world:72.3%, sit:72.3%, nice:72.3%, bear:72.3%,
 sandwich:72.3%, sea:72.3%, chocolate:72.2%, sleep:72.2%, angry:72.1%, please:72.1%,
 home:72.1%, paper:72.1%, rabbit:72.1%, my:72.0%, clock:71.9%, question:71.9%,
 shoulder:71.9%, year:71.9%, let's:71.9%, country:71.6%, short:71.4%, carrot:71.4%,
 listen:71.4%, circle:71.3%, grape:71.1%, city:70.5%, spring:70.5%, twenty:70.4%,
 party:70.3%, coffee:70.3%, mouth:70.3%, tiger:70.2%, grandmother:70.0%,
 lesson:70.0%, night:70.0%, evening:69.6%, foot:69.6%, telephone:69.4%, dream:69.4%,
 story:69.2%, dinner:69.0%, ear:69.0%, weather:69.0%, next:68.8%, mouse:68.8%,
 sick:68.8%, wonderful:68.8%, help:68.8%, baby:68.5%, hat:68.4%, pumpkin:68.1%,
 hamburger:67.9%, neck:67.9%, week:67.9%, answer:67.9%, have:67.6%, old:67.5%,
 juice:67.5%, we:67.4%, calendar:67.0%, up:67.0%, lion:67.0%, Halloween:67.0%,
 zebra:67.0%, butterfly:66.7%, nose:66.7%, table:66.7%, train:66.7%, vegetable:66.7%,
 watch:66.7%, window:66.7%, look:66.7%, leg:66.1%, hundred:66.1%, bathroom:66.0%,
 bike:65.9%, team:65.9%, second:65.9%, horse:65.8%, guitar:65.8%, not:65.2%,
 grandfather:65.2%, tea:65.2%, computer:65.0%, now:65.0%, Germany:64.9%,
 town:64.9%, beautiful:64.9%, season:64.9%, bread:64.8%, snake:64.8%, this:64.8%,
 moon:64.8%, student:64.8%, woman:64.5%, news:64.3%, want:64.0%, store:64.0%,
 bad:63.4%, great:63.4%, straight:63.4%, what:63.4%, who:63.4%, body:63.4%,
 river:63.4%, jump:63.4%, chicken:63.2%, key:63.2%, pig:63.2%, math:63.0%,
 kangaroo:63.0%, thank:63.0%, ship:62.6%, make:62.6%, children:62.5%, France:62.5%,
 job:62.5%, sky:62.5%, o'clock:62.0%, best:61.7%, young:61.7%, classmate:61.7%,
 library:61.7%, love:61.7%, panda:61.6%, easy:61.5%, doll:61.5%, a:61.3%,
 kitchen:61.3%, mountain:61.3%, letter:61.1%, why:61.0%, radio:61.0%, sad:60.7%,
 holiday:60.7%, cry:60.7%, see:60.7%, page:60.5%, street:60.5%, cow:60.4%,
 me:60.4%, earth:60.4%, homework:60.3%, many:60.2%, building:59.8%, teeth:59.6%,
 here:59.6%, newspaper:59.5%, grapefruit:59.3%, people:59.3%, spider:59.3%,
 slow:59.0%, ice:58.9%, knee:58.9%, hotel:58.8%, cut:58.8%, very:58.6%, speak:58.6%,
 do:58.2%, finger:58.0%, when:58.0%, bicycle:58.0%, stand:58.0%, turn:58.0%,
 fox:57.4%, know:57.4%, pool:57.1%, vacation:57.1%, come:57.1%, get:57.1%,
 out:57.0%, change:56.8%, pet:56.7%, try:56.7%, airplane:56.5%, bank:56.5%,
 close:56.5%, fishing:56.3%, your:56.3%, pocket:56.1%, spoon:56.1%, dress:56.0%,

movie:56.0%, every:56.0%, fire:56.0%, sugar:56.0%, gorilla:55.9%, say:55.6%,
 tired:55.4%, present:55.3%, little:55.3%, how:54.6%, light:54.6%, she:54.5%,
 drive:54.5%, hard:54.4%, arm:54.4%, hobby:54.4%, shirt:54.4%, push:54.4%,
 high:54.0%, video:53.9%, meet:53.9%, after:53.8%, where:53.8%, frog:53.8%,
 am:53.8%, onion:53.7%, hour:53.6%, touch:53.6%, talk:53.2%, lucky:52.8%,
 flag:52.7%, noon:52.7%, salt:52.7%, travel:52.7%, catch:52.7%, gray:52.6%,
 wind:52.6%, umbrella:52.3%, is:52.3%, fun:51.9%, soft:51.8%, cloud:51.8%,
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 nurse:49.1%, glove:49.1%, in:49.1%, wash:49.1%, win:49.1%, sweet:49.1%,
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 read:48.2%, live:48.1%, clean:48.0%, large:48.0%, department:48.0%, salad:48.0%,
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 airport:46.5%, toe:46.5%, magazine:46.4%, stone:46.4%, think:46.4%, queen:46.2%,
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 everything:41.1%, line:41.1%, ticket:41.1%, sweater:40.7%, remember:40.7%,
 cucumber:40.5%, mirror:40.5%, coat:40.2%, dish:40.2%, place:40.2%, before:40.0%,
 really:40.0%, sheep:40.0%, teach:40.0%, dark:39.8%, heavy:39.7%, fast:39.6%,
 candle:39.6%, gate:39.6%, tower:39.6%, dessert:39.5%, laugh:39.5%, the:39.0%,
 feel:39.0%, pie:38.6%, uniform:38.6%, pretty:38.4%, quiet:38.4%, parent:38.4%,
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 knife:34.0%, skate:34.0%, son:34.0%, yours:34.0%, better:33.9%, duck:33.9%,
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 grass:33.3%, meal:33.3%, famous:33.0%, land:33.0%, living:33.0%, wrong:33.0%,

wine:33.0%, hit:33.0%, grade:32.6%, soon:32.5%, near:32.4%, dear:32.1%,
 early:32.1%, bee:32.1%, button:32.1%, farm:32.1%, our:32.1%, keep:32.1%,
 miss:31.9%, full:31.6%, draw:31.5%, join:31.5%, ride:31.5%, quick:31.5%,
 diary:31.5%, stamp:31.5%, wolf:31.5%, thousand:31.5%, some:31.3%, beach:31.3%,
 tulip:31.3%, mine:31.3%, pardon:31.2%, address:31.0%, roof:30.8%, lose:30.8%,
 fork:30.6%, with:30.6%, rich:30.6%, smell:30.5%, uncle:30.5%, over:30.5%,
 return:30.4%, ant:30.0%, corn:30.0%, island:29.8%, nothing:29.8%, about:29.8%,
 true:29.7%, just:29.7%, worry:29.5%, interesting:29.0%, pull:29.0%, sometimes:28.6%,
 will:28.6%, ring:28.6%, his:28.6%, find:28.6%, subway:28.4%, lot:28.1%,
 round:28.1%, anything:28.0%, pear:28.0%, stay:27.9%, taste:27.7%, so:27.2%,
 which:27.2%, swan:27.2%, sign:27.0%, princess:27.0%, hold:26.9%, anyone:26.8%,
 race:26.8%, forget:26.8%, of:26.4%, myself:26.4%, rest:26.3%, they:26.2%, her:26.1%,
 tie:26.1%, office:25.9%, different:25.5%, secret:25.5%, something:25.5%, become:25.5%,
 supper:25.4%, sure:25.3%, upstairs:25.3%, care:25.3%, crab:25.3%, factory:25.3%,
 tent:25.2%, throw:25.2%, well:25.0%, space:25.0%, towel:25.0%, wet:24.8%,
 visit:24.8%, send:24.6%, popular:24.3%, important:24.2%, any:24.1%, truck:24.1%,
 prince:24.1%, village:24.1%, eagle:24.1%, learn:24.1%, would:24.0%, cabbage:24.0%,
 brush:23.7%, insect:23.7%, once:23.7%, us:23.7%, shake:23.4%, for:23.4%,
 need:23.4%, deep:23.4%, thing:23.2%, careful:23.1%, inside:23.1%, field:23.1%,
 sock:23.1%, let:23.1%, turtle:23.0%, drop:23.0%, sharp:22.7%, weak:22.7%, by:22.7%,
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 must:20.2%, was:20.2%, whale:20.0%, carry:19.8%, yard:19.8%, capital:19.6%,
 around:19.6%, never:19.4%, them:19.3%, astronaut:19.1%, aunt:19.0%, plate:19.0%,
 bring:19.0%, downstairs:18.8%, it's:18.8%, other:18.4%, poor:18.4%, hall:18.4%,
 already:17.9%, hill:17.9%, between:17.6%, mean:17.6%, behind:17.5%, arrive:17.1%,
 often:17.0%, course:17.0%, apron:16.7%, without:16.7%, build:16.7%, their:16.5%,
 climb:16.5%, another:16.2%, these:16.2%, happen:16.0%, crow:15.7%, whose:15.3%,
 someone:15.3%, absent:15.2%, both:15.2%, curtain:15.2%, cousin:15.0%, snail:15.0%,
 him:15.0%, church:14.9%, grow:14.4%, were:14.3%, dirty:14.2%, collect:14.2%,
 those:14.0%, cereal:13.9%, alone:13.5%, did:13.5%, garage:13.5%, lie:13.4%,
 away:13.2%, should:13.2%, few:13.2%, ladybug:13.2%, strange:12.6%, across:12.5%,
 useful:12.5%, lily:12.5%, until:12.5%, leave:12.1%, usually:12.0%, does:12.0%,
 spend:12.0%, yet:11.6%, could:11.6%, lend:11.6%, else:11.4%, during:11.4%,
 most:11.1%, then:10.2%, into:9.8%, enough:9.2%, garbage:8.9%, below:8.9%,
 still:8.5%, either:8.0%, above:7.0%

Can-do Descriptors Which Improve English Ability to Cope with College Entrance Examinations

Shien Sakai

A learner has to be autonomous in order to acquire English ability to cope with university entrance examinations. Autonomous learners are those who can successfully manage their own learning. As for the term of autonomy, a well-known definition by Holec (1981) is “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning (p.3).” What a teacher can do for learners to become autonomous is to motivate them and to create suitable learning environments for them. The ability to reflect on one’s own learning behavior is an indispensable quality for learners who aspire to be autonomous. A list of *Can-do* descriptors provides learners with a roadmap to their learning goals and serves as a reflective tool. To enhance learners’ reflective ability, a list of Can-do descriptors should not be used for teachers’ evaluation. To create a list of Can-do descriptors to cope with university entrance examinations, teachers should grasp learners’ learning goals, and make a roadmap along with students’ goals. Many appropriate benchmarks should be located in the roadmaps so that students can reflect on what they have accomplished. Teachers should consider carefully beforehand materials, instructional procedures and ways to motivate students. Through this process, teachers can develop their didactic ability.

1. Learners Who Succeed in Language Learning

Teachers like learners who are willing to complete assignments given by the teachers. Therefore, teachers are tempted to call those students autonomous learners. However, they are still dependent learners because they need teachers’ instructions.

In an area where a target language is not spoken outside classrooms, students usually cannot master it only with instructions and assistance from their teachers and people around them. In order to enhance their proficiency, students should study the language autonomously. Students’ ability in the target language is thus related with their autonomy in the language learning process. Ohki (2013) writes that ‘autonomy’ is not a way or a manner of learning but ‘students’ ability to take care of their own learning. Then what can a person do to take care of his or her own learning? A number of actions and measures can be considered but central among them should be an ability to select learning materials, to control his or her learning, to evaluate his or her learning results. Based on the above, we can conclude that except returnees who mastered a language in

an ESL context, the higher the student's foreign language ability, the higher is his or her ability to control own learning process. .

Concerning the relationship between English proficiency and autonomy, Society of Testing English Proficiency (henceforth: STEP) (2006) reports noteworthy survey result and discussion. Language learners are often grouped into several levels: beginner, basic, intermediate, advanced, etc. The division is based on learners' English proficiencies. When you think of the relation between learner autonomy and English proficiency, the survey conducted by STEP is instructive. STEP tests are administered in seven bands from Grade 5(beginner) to Grade 1(advanced). In 2005, STEP sent its 12,000 successful examinees a questionnaire, which asked how they studied, how much they studied, how much they used English and so on. Based on the results STEP classified its successful examinees as described in the table below.

Table 1. Successful examiners and their characteristics

Grades	Characteristics
Grade 5 to Grade 3	dependent learners
Grade pre-2 to Grade 2	Independent learners
Grade pre-1 to Grade1	Independent users

Grade 3 is equivalent A1 on CEFR. Grade pre-2, A2, Grade 2, B1, Grade pre-1 B2, Grade 1, C1

Examinees who belong to Grade 5 to Grade 3 are teacher-dependent and those who belong to Grade pre2 to Grade 2 can study by themselves. Those who belong to Grade pre-1 to Grade 1 can use English in daily lives. So, learners who have enough English ability to pass Grade pre-1 test or are close to the ability can be said to be autonomous learners (2006).

2. Creating an Environment for Learning

Then, what can teachers do for students to enhance their autonomy? Two factors are critical: creating appropriate environment for their learning and motivating them. The author entered a university in 1971, when the Joint First-Stage Achievement Test had not started in Japan. In those days, English learning environment for high school students was based on grammar translation teaching style, which was widely perceived as an effective preparatory method to equip students with skills to pass notoriously demanding college entrance tests. It was relatively easy for high school students in those days to create their own learning environment because materials and a range of mechanisms were available such as dictionaries, vocabulary books, study reference books, collections of previous questions for university entrance examinations. However, a phrase "learner autonomy" was never employed. Forty years have passed. Nowadays

students can avail themselves of a much broader array of learning devices and institutional structures to facilitate the creation of learning environment not just for tackling exams but to gain communicative competence.

Then, is it only the external learning environment that helps foster students' ability to take care of their learning? Probably some abilities can help students do so and some do not. A student can learn by him or herself a skill which does not require continuous effort such as obtaining relevant information on the Internet. How to use a presentation software is another example which does not require continuous effort. Some students make impressive presentations. Yet, if only technology is available, a less autonomous student is seldom willing to make the necessary effort, however small. An example below illustrates the above statement. Compared to the time when only extremely expensive tape-recorders were available, nowadays, various affordable, convenient, electronic, educational devices and interesting educational online materials are commercially available. However, some researchers (Saida, 2003, Ono, 2005) report that English proficiency of Japanese students has dropped and there is virtually no evidence to dispute this assertion. Learning English requires students to make a long-term effort in addition to creating an extra educational environment. Without that effort, mastering English in an EFL environment is extremely difficult. In short, autonomy in language learning supports a long-term caretaking of it. Why has Japanese students' English ability dropped? One hypothesis is that the habit of autonomous learning cultivated in Japanese educational institutions via Grammar Translation Method (henceforth, GTM) has essentially disappeared.

3. GTM and Learner Autonomy

Let's consider the relationship between GTM and learner autonomy. The objectives of GTM'S instructional design are two-fold: mastery of school English grammar and the development of reading ability. Since school English grammar has been systematically organized, the understanding of each grammatical item serves as a benchmark that can measure students' English abilities. The reason for this philosophy is that because the set of benchmarks are organized by stages of difficulty, the process of language acquisition becomes transparent. Consequently, it becomes much easier for students to understand the items and their order of study and for teachers to understand the items and their order of instruction.

The other objective is developing students' English reading ability. At the basic stage, understanding the main texts of textbooks and ensuring progress in a student's level of understanding are the goals. In the applied stage, the materials are taken from past entrance examination questions and drill books used for practicing similar questions.

The evaluation was measured by whether a student can give correct answers to those questions or not. Naturally, the level of difficulty of the textbooks they study and the ranks of the universities they apply to serve as benchmarks.

Motivating students with this teaching method becomes very straight-forward: successful students can pass university entrance exams to the intuitions of their choice. Considering this background, it is quite understandable that an almost-unified instructional design has evolved nationwide in Japan. A strong point of this method is that it features benchmarks with high transparency, which serve as kind of a roadmap for successful test-takers.

Although many years have passed since grammar classes departed from the formal high school curriculum, GTM is still enjoying popularity, judging from the considerable number of supplementary English grammar textbooks published each year. This also indicates that some teachers have a strong belief that English grammar should be taught in English classes.

This time, let's consider more closely the relationship between GTM and learner autonomy.

Motivation requires that people see a relationship between their behavior and desired outcome, and instrumentalities and linkages that allow people to see these behavior – outcome relationships. Instrumentalities can be created at the level of economic systems, at the level of an organization, and at the level of interactions between two individuals such as parent and child. If people do not believe that their behavior will lead to something desire --- whether the lack of instrumentality is the fault of the system, the organization, or an individual in a one-up position --- they will not be motivated. The desired outcomes can be intrinsic satisfactions, or they can be extrinsic rewards, but people have to believe that some outcomes will accrue from their behavior or they will not be motivated to behave. (Deci & Flaste, 1995, 59)

In GTM styled teaching, learners can choose learning materials, understand the roadmap to success, and evaluate their learning process by in-house and outside tests. Through their learning process, the learners understand the relationship between their effort and the result. Therefore, those who have self-efficacy in GTM styled learning become autonomous learners in studying for tests.

Concerning the notion of autonomy, historically, autonomous learning has been considered as more appropriate in Western educational contexts rather than in Asian

contexts (Lamb, 2004). For example, Ho and Cookall (1995) mention that Chinese students are reluctant to challenge the authority of teachers and at the same time Chinese teachers are unwilling to surrender their control to students. However, Sakai & Takagi (2009) state that within each nation's educational system, learner autonomy has developed in its own way. Their assertion means that GTM styled learning also produces autonomous learners. In short, their learning environment and will to pass entrance examinations help students nurture autonomy. Therefore, teachers who employ GTM styled teaching have not thought of helping students to develop autonomy. Then, why has the need of learner autonomy come to be voiced loudly? It is assumed that English learners' autonomy has been weaker because communicative language teaching (henceforth, CLT) has been introduced into secondary schools and in spite of the decrease of the number of 18-year-old people, most universities have not reduced their enrollment quota. As a result, entering a university has become much easier than before. Students don't have to study as autonomously as they used to. The introduction of CLT came as a result of several significant weaknesses of GTM.

First of all, considering many English textbooks below A1 level on CEFR are being used in English classes in universities in Japan, the percentage of those who have self-efficacy in GTM styled learning and become autonomous learners in studying for tests is assumed around 20% of people in the same age group. Since this method requires students to do too much preparation for class, many students find it difficult to follow instruction (Sakai, 1990). Once a learner is left behind, his or her mindset has been changed from "making effort will lead to success" to "as I do not have ability, it's no use making effort". Kanatani (2004) criticizes GTM by saying that teachers spend too much time in translation, so it can hardly help students acquire the language. In addition, if learner's focus is on solving entrance examination questions, they are often obsessed with accuracy in English production. As a result, most of them cannot be good users of English. Focus on accuracy in examinations and consequently during instruction makes students reluctant to communicate out of fear of making mistakes and being penalized. Despite years of intense formal English study a majority of Japanese are very uncomfortable interacting in English. *NEWSWEEK* (2011) criticizes this phenomenon saying that there are many Japanese who shrink from obsession that they have to make correct English because they have been learning for tests and there are many who are reluctant to speak English. In addition, English education in Japan has failed to cultivate students' desire to learn a foreign language to communicate with peoples from other cultural backgrounds. As a result, many university students stop learning foreign languages after they complete mandatory courses. This situation will obviously not be conducive to nurturing a generation of competent English users at the time when the global economic environment demands it.

In order to develop competence to communicate, Communicative Language Teaching (henceforth, CLT) is a suitable method of teaching a foreign language. This methodology was introduced into Japan over 20 years ago. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (henceforth, MEXT) shifted the emphasis toward teaching communicative English every time it revised *the Course of Study*, a document which essentially dictates what and how should be taught in an EFL classroom in Japan. Despite the passage of time and apparent official blessing, CLT did not take root in Japanese educational settings. What can explain this paradox? Is it because CLT so far has not provided enough benchmarks to set clear aims of study? Or is it because it failed to measure students' progress? We have *the Course of Study*, and in addition, we have the Action Plan by MEXT which states that junior high graduates should aim at Grade 3 in STEP and high school graduates either pre-Grade 2 or Grade 2.

Firstly, due to official textbook screening process by MEXT, an individual teacher in secondary school in Japan need not set aims of study in a very detailed way because they are listed in *the Course of Study*, and textbooks accepted by MEXT are accompanied by thick teachers' manuals which include annual teaching plan with lists of pedagogical objectives for all the lessons in the textbook.

When teachers try to teach grammatical items and the meaning of the text, they can just follow the order how they appear in the textbook and use lists of purposes and attached teaching plans. However, in the age of Communicative Language Teaching, teachers' job is not just to explain grammatical items and textual meaning but to coordinate interaction between the teacher and students or among students. In other words, in the former the teacher evaluates the students by checking how much they know about the grammar and vocabulary control, but in the latter the evaluation should be done by checking how well they can communicate in English.

Then, CLT teachers are also required to make a year-long, a term-long, and a school-hour- long aims of study for the class he or she is in charge of. However, there have been hardly any development or promotion of setting such aims or assessment methods. In short, no roadmaps exist at the institution settings and the authorities are not providing the teachers with the necessary professional support and guidance of how to develop them.

Concerning teaching materials, textbooks incorporating situational conversations have been published. Though their usefulness cannot be denied, their use in class alone does not lead to the spread of action-oriented English education. Students in an ESL environment can have many opportunities to practice and experience situational dialogues English conversation textbooks often contain; people cannot survive unless

they can use these activities in an ESL environment. Accordingly, experiencing a mock lesson of a situational conversation even once will help them understand a negotiation process and vocabulary often used in a real situation, so students can have high motivation in practicing such a lesson in class. However, students in an EFL environment cannot have real opportunities. Then, it is doubtful that one-off simulation activities will lead to acquisition. Therefore, except those who plan to travel or study in a foreign country, it is difficult for teachers to motivate students with CLT ways.

4. Time Has Changed

The Nikkei reported (January, 2012) “Tokyo University shifted toward September admission”, which means the institution would discontinue the traditional April admission process and seeks to be aligned with many other countries by which have adopted similar admission schedule. The objective of the change is to “activate international exchanges and to attract competent learners from foreign countries. Kariya who has experiences of teaching at universities in the UK, USA and Japan explains, “there is increasing recognition about competition of human resource development in knowledge-based society which is progressing along with globalization. These days, quality of education becomes an issue among universities because it is considered that quality of education is a key factor in quality of human resources. Therefore the idea is commonly shared that competitiveness depends on the quality of human resources in knowledge-based society. In addition, education at tertiary level itself is in the maelstrom of international competition. Universities should make effort to collect smart students from various foreign areas and educate them. Along with this effort, completion of attracting good teachers and collecting money should be developed globally”. The announcement of Tokyo University caused a controversy and opponents against the concept of September Admission stroke back. Then University of Tokyo was forced into compromise of a four-term system. However, it became a good chance for universities in Japan to think of globalization. According to Kariya, “Universities in Japan as well as the new college graduates’ market are protected by the word barrier of the Japanese language and recruit convention of Japanese companies” (p.158). It is mainly that in addition to simplification of human mobility, technology and values will be developed not by domestic resources as has been the case largely until now but by international teams. This trend will bring many changes into Japanese society. For example, “MEXT adopted a policy to facilitate integration of high quality research teams into Japanese institutional frameworks. This process has been called “Unit Induction.” At first, two universities, Kyoto Institute of Technology and Hokkaido University will be the starters. It is the first case of the project to empower national universities. In order to accelerate globalization of universities, MEXT plans to increase the number of universities mainly national ones which will implement the project.” (The

Mainichi, 2014)

MEXT also focused on increasing the number of classes taught in English. (The Asahi, March, 2013). Thus, universities are being required by the authorities to become more globally oriented which in turn forces them to reconsider the role of English education, and use of English more broadly. Classes in high schools, of course, will need to change as well.

5. Anticipated Changes in the College Entrance Exams

At first, let's consider the uproar in 2013 about the use of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) as a college entrance examination suggested by a member of the House of Representatives and a chief of Education Rebuilding Council of the Government party. The main point of his suggestion is that English entrance examinations should be changed into ones to measure four skills to help students to have communicative competence. (Asahi, May, 2013). This suggestion was fiercely attacked by many English teachers. Especially, one of the attackers was Prof. Erikawa, whose main point is that English education alone can help students make good English speakers (Asahi, May, 2013). It can be understandable that those who support using TOEFL as entrance examination only assert that if entrance exams are important and they should be changed into one to measure four skills and Japan does not have that kind of test, then using TOEFL is one way to change English lessons in junior or senior high schools. The viewpoint is supported by a bureaucrat of MEXT saying that the current entrance examinations should be revised and to score above a certain number of points in TOEFL which can measure practical English proficiency before being allowed to enter university and graduate from it should make it a prerequisite (Kamishiro, 2013, p.31).

The Sankei (2013) reports "Hard looking at holding Tokyo Olympics in 2020, MEXT seems to decide to reform English examinations first from the viewpoint of fostering international human resources. Since the current standardized preliminary examination for university applicants measures only examinees' English reading and listening abilities, if qualifying examinations which can measure examinees' English writing and speaking abilities are well used, there will be a merit which examinees' English four skills are examined.

Concerning reforms of entrance examinations for high schools, another bureaucrat says that naturally entrance examinations for high schools, which ought to reflect the purpose of *the Course of Study*, should be ones to question basic level of students' communicative competence which is obtained through lessons (Hiraki, 2013, p.28). In

short, unless entrance examinations are changed, lessons in schools will remain the same. Therefore, movement to reform entrance examinations is gaining momentum.

6. Counterplans against Entrance Examinations to Measure English Four Skills

Research on developing tests to measure English four skills will be continuing. It is important for teachers not to teach examinees techniques to cope with the tests but guide students to improve their four skills and to become good English users. The solution is, as written above, to enhance their autonomy. Under present high school curriculum, and with limited contact hours, it is hard to improve English writing and/or speaking skills of students. I mentioned above that some learners could be autonomous learners in GTM-styled environment for they studied autonomously outside of class. Therefore, in order to improve English four skills it is key for learners to do the same. Teachers' task is to create an environment for learners to learn English outside of class. Some techniques can be mentioned here: to learn via language programs on radio and or TV, keep a diary in English, seek information on English websites, writing email messages in English, read aloud from the English textbook, watch English movies with English subtitles, converse with friends in English, engage in a project in English with classmates, read English newspapers, magazines, and or books and so on. In an EFL context, it is important for teachers to instruct students, to show them good, proper road maps, give them good advice, and or encourage them. There are many learning ways that the author recommend. For example, if one method is to be selected, taking advantage of animation movie such as Disney is highly recommended. I have an experience of teaching ninth grade students using *Beauty and the Beast*. First, have them understand English subtitles using the images and dictionaries. Then, have them read English subtitles while listening to the movie several times. Third, when they are accustomed to reading it while watching the video, turn off the subtitle. Finally have them read along with the sound without the subtitle. This method is very easy and enjoyable at the same time, and can be practical.

Classroom instruction should shift to an environment enabling students to learn English by using it. Then learners understand the importance of acquiring English through its use. When using GTM methodology, some improvement is necessary. For example, you can make preparation for class easier by giving students translation of new words' list beforehand, requiring them to read the textbook using the list, and having them highlight unfamiliar vocabulary. In class, the teacher can then focus on the areas not well understood. Then time required for translation will be reduced. In addition, it is advisable to resist the temptation to use an overly challenging textbook. Accessible content would allow teachers to focus on training the four skills. This would permit students to cope with entrance examinations which measure English four skills.

7. Developing Students' Autonomy

In order to help students brush up their foreign language skills, the best solution is surely to guide students to enhance their learning autonomy. What competence can a student acquire if the student builds his or her autonomy? One commonly reported benefit is that a person acquires abilities to reflect on his or her progress because “reflection is a critical function of successful teaching and learning, whatever an individual’s experience or level of education” (Boreen et al., 2009, p.57). Then he or she will consider what is necessary, and what he or she should practice in order to achieve higher goals. This ability is called meta-cognitive competence. In order to help students develop their meta-cognitive competence, the following sections will summarize three relevant theories. :

7.1 Ichikawa’s Dual-factor Learning Motivation Model

Ichikawa, a Japanese psychologist, made a nationwide survey of over 150,000 high school students and designed a chart showing why students study. Figure 1 shows six structured learning motives. The vertical axis shows how important learners consider their learning content and the horizontal axis show how important learners consider learning results (Ichikawa, 2001:48). Ichikawa names the three motives in the top row “content-related motives” and the three motives in the bottom row “content-unrelated motives.” Ichikawa states that every student has all of the motives in Figure 1.

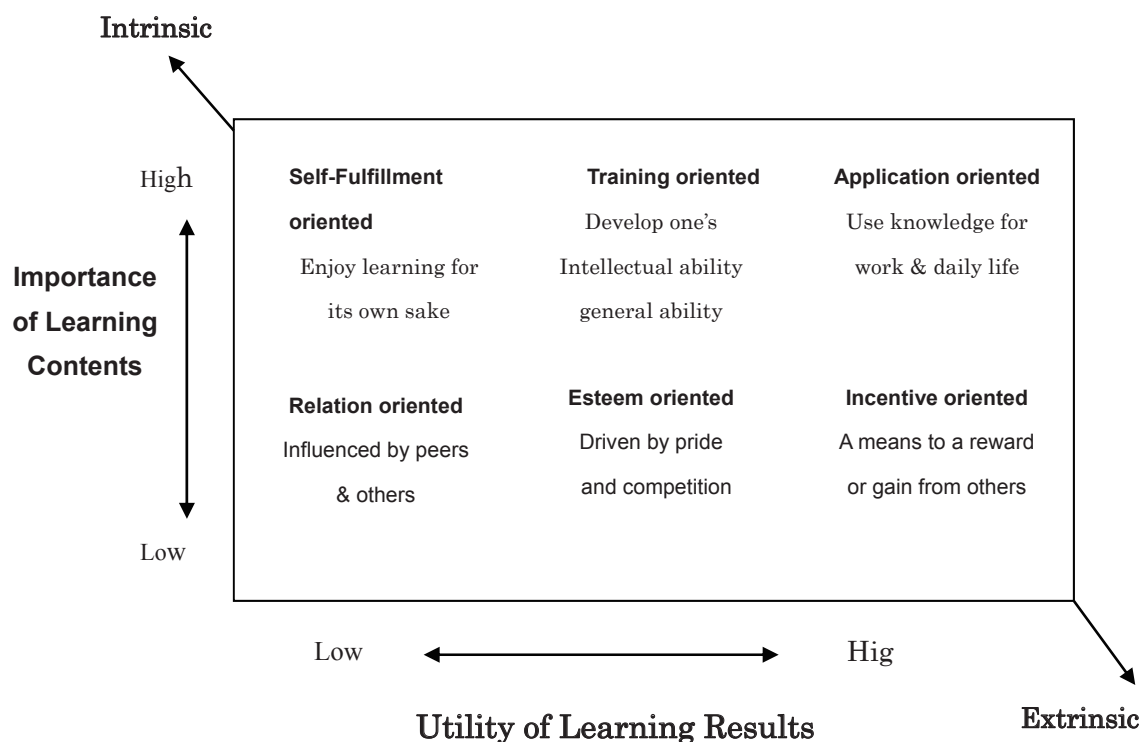


Figure 1 Dual-factor Learning Motivation Model (Translated from source : Ichikawa 2001:48)

Difference between good learners and poor learners is what his or her motivational priorities are. Stronger self-fulfillment-oriented students study English because they like English and enjoy studying it. On the contrary many students study English because they want to use English for work and/or life. Therefore, they are application-oriented students. Look at the bottom row, relation-oriented students are reluctant to study. Sometimes they study because their friends do. As stated before, to get higher scores, it is necessary to study autonomously. It is natural that if students are not training oriented in learning English, they do not achieve good English proficiency. Ichikawa states that the relative coefficients of the three orientations in the top row but that no relationship exists between the orientations in the top and bottom rows. The orientations in the top row are related to learning content but the ones in the bottom row are not. (p.57). Therefore, orientations which are related to English learning are ones in the top row. Among the three top orientations, it can be concluded that less autonomous learners tend to be weak in training-orientation. Hisamura (2004) states that based on the results of investigating poorly performing students, their training orientation was significantly lower than that of the other two, those are Self-Fulfillment oriented and Application oriented.

7.2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Then, how should students' training orientation be enhanced? To be motivated implies that a student desires to be in the classroom and to study with a teacher and classmates. In short, when a student's intention to learn is set, learning starts. Unless his or her mind to learn is set, learning cannot progress. Then, how is this mindset established? In order to explain this phenomenon, Maslow's hierarchy of needs is instructive. The theory of Maslow (1943) successfully establishes a hierarchy of human needs, showing that one human need usually follows the prior satisfaction of lower located need.



Figure 2: Maslow's hierarchy of the needs

Let's attempt to examine learner's psychological state by using this structure. First, unless one's physiological requirements are satisfied, the learner's mind is not ready. For example, if you are very hungry, you can hardly have a will to study. The same thing will happen, if you are sleepy. When these needs are fulfilled,

safety need will appear. If a learner's sense of safety is threatened through bullying, his or her readiness to study is clearly undermined. Once these fundamental needs are

satisfied, the learner will seek the needs of love and belonging. From this level, the process of learning can begin, as it is human nature to seek company of those who like us. Therefore, if a teacher likes a student, the student will have a will to study with the teacher. A person who has not reached this stage may have trouble opening up to a teacher or succumb to influence of less academically-minded friends. A language learner is strongly affected by the attitude of the teacher towards him or her. Facial expressions of reassurance, encouragement and support can have a very real positive effect on the willingness of the student to take risks in the classroom. Obviously, some students prefer strict teachers. Those students' needs of Love and Belonging are satisfied and they are prepared to move up to the next level, the level of Esteem. Once a person is accepted in a certain group he or she has a desire to be recognized, make the great achievement and be respected by the others. This means that they reach the level of Esteem. Once a person is at the level, he or she prefers strict training to excel in their target subject or sport. Then a person steps up on to the next level: Self-actualization. When a person reaches this level, he or she may favor a stricter instructor to raise his or her value.

If a student belongs to the level of Love and Belonging, according to Ichikawa's model, as the student studies because of teachers and /or friends, it is considered that he or she belongs to Relation-oriented level. Therefore, the students who belong to the level of Love and Belonging cannot be called truly autonomous. If you have some experience in a sports club, you will know that if you find a place in the club, and are encouraged, you will practice hard to excel. That is the level of Esteem. The same thing applies to language learning. A person becomes autonomous because he or she wants to improve in a particular school subject. In addition, if the person has a goal to fulfil, he or she reaches the level of Self-actualization, the learner becomes more autonomous. In Japan, students who study for college entrance examinations often reach this level. Accordingly, it is effective to encourage students at this level to study harder by emphasizing the benefits of passing exams. However, it is not effective to offer this type of encouragement to students who are at lower levels. In addition, sometimes studying for entrance exams becomes pressure or obsession. Then it may turn a student off studying completely. According to Ichikawa's model, motivating students by telling them benefits of passing entrance exams means enhancing students' applied orientation. If a student's Self-Fulfilment orientation is also encouraged by making him or her enjoy the subject, the student's training orientation is also enhanced. Then the student becomes an autonomous learner.

7.3 The Role of Can-do Descriptors

Using Can-do descriptors in educational settings is a controversial issue in Japan. One of the most effective educational ways to use Can-do descriptors is to list up items to be

mastered, which makes their learning process transparent for students. In short, a list of Can-do descriptors provides students with a roadmap to their goal. Then, they can reflect and evaluate their learning with the list. With regard to the effectiveness of descriptors' transparency, after having over 100 students in teacher-training courses from several universities use Can-do descriptors for pre-service students for one year, without proper instructions, more than 60% of them reported that they could understand professional abilities required for teachers and more than 80% of them reported that they could reflect on what they did during their teaching-training (JACET, 2012).

Regarding self-reflection and assessment, in an ESL context, it is relatively easy to reflect on and or assess one's English ability and communicative competence in daily personal interaction. However, in an EFL environment, it is more problematic for a person to engage in this evaluative process due to absence of personal interactions. Can-do descriptors, when used properly, can become tools for reflection and assessment. A teacher, for instance, could provide an itemized list of functions a student should be able to perform in a target language after the completion of the class. The list of descriptors serves as a roadmap to students' goals. It is probable that some textbook companies will make their Can-do list which shows what a student can do if the textbook is used.

As for reflection, in an area where students have to study in order to improve their proficiency of a target language, a good performing student is one who can reflect on what he or she does, study what he or she cannot do well and think what he or she should do to improve. This reflection is important to enhance meta-cognitive abilities. Therefore, simply instructing students to reflect on their learning is not effective without providing specific explanation and a reflective tool. A list of Can-do descriptors can be such a tool. Along with the use, a student can be an autonomous learner. In conclusion, a list of Can-do descriptors can serve as both a roadmap and a reflective tool. Concerning choices of self-assessment categories it may be useful to create these three reflective statements: 1. I can do this by myself. 2. I can do this with the help of a teacher and/or a friend. 3. This is challenging for me. Using a list of Can-do descriptors offers an additional benefit of improving the learner's English proficiency through a process of reflection and review.

Questions have been raised about effective classroom strategies for underperforming students who over-evaluate themselves without any reflection and high performing students who upon reflection tend to under-evaluate themselves. One way of addressing this issue is to use Can-do descriptors to build learners' accurate and, more importantly, consistent self-perceptions. Comparing oneself to others is not always particularly useful. If learners over or under-evaluate themselves, it is an indication that they are not

ready to handle this tool independently.

Then, from what level is a list of Can-do descriptors effective? If a learner who stays at the level of Love and Belonging, where he or she wants to learn with a teacher and or friends, is not interested in learning *per se*, using a list of Can-do descriptors is not effective. When a learner climbs up to the Esteem level, where he or she wants to make visible progress, descriptors can begin to play a constructive role.

At the Esteem level a learner tries to consider what should be done to develop his or her ability. Then he or she can understand more clearly the meaning of each descriptor and engage in self-reflection. Assessment by one's peers can be constructively utilized to reflect on the possible discrepancy between self and peer evaluation of one's accomplishment, and this will in turn lead to more realistic self-reflection. As stated above, though a list of Can-do descriptors is an effective tool, teachers use it judiciously. Since this list is effective primarily as a roadmap and a reflective tool, a teacher should not use students' self-reflection for his or her evaluation. If, a learner realizes it, the probability of inaccurate self-reflection grows significantly. As a result the fundamental purpose of this instrument will be lost and the list becomes more of a formulaic checklist than a genuine mechanism for self-improvement. In addition, if a learner reflects on a descriptor later on, he or she may assess the same item lower than before. This happens because he or she may have considered the item superficially initially, but with more experience, the learner may recognize the inherent difficulty and re-evaluate his or her own competence. This phenomenon means the learner's meta-cognition grows. If the learner knows that the teacher uses his or her self-reflection for evaluation, this process will be distorted.

What if a teacher wants to use Can-do descriptors as a tool for his or her evaluation? One way is that the teacher use a descriptor as an evaluation item and should watch and evaluate a student's performance. Then, evaluation by rubric is convenient. Evaluation by rubric is literally a way to use matrix. For instance in English education a criterion referenced evaluation system has four viewpoints: (1) "interest, desire and attitude toward communication", (2) "ability to express", (3) "ability to understand", (4) "knowledge and understanding about languages and cultures." Every teacher should set a goal for each viewpoint and evaluate a student by how much he or she can achieve and give him her a score ranging from A "Very good", B "Good", C "More effort necessary."

Table 2. Rubric

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
A				
B				
C				

Table 2 shows a grid for rubric evaluation. Consider making a rubric evaluation sheet to measure target functions in four lessons of the textbook. . The functions are as follows: (1) “I can explain where I was born and raised in a detailed way”, (2) “I can suggest a trip itinerary”, (3) “I can describe my future job in a concrete way”, and (4) “I can describe my dreams and wishes and provide reasons.” These are placed into the top row of the matrix. Then students’ essays and / or speeches are evaluated on a scale from A to C and each grade is placed in an appropriate cell. This is a rubric evaluation which can measure students’ performance. If the following descriptors are used “I can do this by myself, I can do this with help from a teacher and or a friend, and This is challenging for me” in place of A: Very good, B:Good, and C: More effort necessary, the matrix can be used as self-assessment.

8. Conclusion

The present paper provided an overview of the benefits and weaknesses of GTM methodology particularly in the context of Japan’s education structure. We looked at the current need to nurture English speakers who possess communicative competence in the target language, and discussed possible ways of enhancing learner autonomy on the basis of Maslow’s hierarchy.

Sometimes teachers lament the lack of dedication during group work activities. This probably point to the fact that the task is not suitable in level or complexity to foster autonomous learning and further steps are necessary. At first, it is important to create a supportive learning environment. A clear and realistic roadmap to a learning goal should be presented. Learning materials for out of class study should be diverse and the learner should be involved in their selection. The materials should be practical and enjoyable. A list of Can-do descriptors take a role of both a roadmap and a reflective tool. Under the circumstances, students select a material, reflect and assess what he or she did, and think of what he or she needs to do in order to achieve a higher level of proficiency.

I have had teaching experiences, as an English teacher, at a middle-ranking high school oriented toward preparation for university entrance examinations. I conducted a survey to investigate high school students’ perceptions toward English learning. The results showed that the learning objective of the first-year and the second-year students was improvement of communicative competence and that of the third-year students was improvement of ability to pass entrance examinations. I also heard this comment at a symposium: “Communicative style is possible for 1st and 2nd year students but when it comes to 3rd year, most teachers make a conscious switch to GTM.” It is understandable

that within the confines of current university entrance examinations which mainly focus on written forms, GTM styled teaching is more effective. However, MEXT is forcing teachers to use CLT even to the third year students who want to study for exams. Many teachers are in dilemma. This criticism against MEXT should not be written. Therefore, I use the term “more effective.” However, considering the obvious inability of the education system to produce competent speakers of English, it is necessary for teachers to guide the first-year and the second-year students to develop their English communicative awareness. If the awareness is properly raised, students will develop lifelong interest to pursue foreign language study for communication. For this purpose, a list of Can-do descriptors will be a practical tool.

Let me conclude with a suggestion of how the list can be approached to make it a relevant pedagogical instrument. At first, based on students’ ability and teachers’ didactic competences, teachers should make a learning roadmap from entrance to graduation. Although students’ learning goals vary, in reality maybe three roadmaps are enough. Take a high school for instance: one for prestigious schools, one for middle-ranked schools, and one for schools easy to enter. A roadmap ought to have benchmarks to measure students’ performance. Teachers should prepare materials for students to study in and out of class to achieve these benchmarks. In addition, teachers should also reflect on how they teach and motivate students. The roadmaps should be given to students before they start learning in the school and they are encouraged to have a look at them. Concerning a list of Can-do descriptors for the first- and the second-year students, the descriptors can be created based on their textbooks. For the descriptors to cope with entrance examinations, grammatical items and past entrance examination questions can be used. Students should not be simply forced to study – this approach does not foster autonomy and becomes counter-productive. Rather, it is more effective to make students aware of their goals and provide them with the necessary guidance to achieve them. This way is important not only for students to improve autonomy but also for teachers to develop didactic competence because teachers can reflect and revise their teaching along with students’ growth. Teacher’s professional growth as a result of self-reflection and analysis of own-class delivery is different from the professional development based on lectures and seminars. Knowledge gained at these events is often ephemeral, not transforming into a significant change in instructional practice. In the former way, teachers can develop themselves by pursuing regular sustainable efforts. Raising student as well as teacher autonomy is exceedingly important to reform English education in Japan and to ensure that the investment in English education produces tangible and practical results for society.

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[Attachment]

Filming Record of a Foreign Language Activity at an Elementary School

Junji Yoshiura

Place: Kasuga Elementary School, Moriguchi City, Osaka

Teacher: KITANO Yuki

Class: 5th Grade

Filming Date: Friday, October 11, 2013.

Filming & Editing: YOSHIURA Junji

1. Filming

On October 7th 2013, I paid a visit to Kasuga Elementary School to take a look at the classroom prior to filming. I decided that one of the two video cameras should be fixed at back of the room, the other hand-carried. However, the principal requested that students' faces not to be identifiable. Since it is impossible to record class procedure without capturing students' reactions, I concluded that I would use a computer-generated mosaic to cover students' faces when editing footages.

2. Editing

2.1 The subtitle "Procedure" appears at every important point of the class, where the teacher gives a new instruction to the students.

2.2 Worksheets and other materials that are not clearly visible to viewers are presented on the corner of the screen in a small picture.

2.3 The contents of group presentations are displayed as inserted pictures taken after the class.

2.4 The front cover and the page of the textbook on which the class is based also appear on the screen.

2.5 All the students' faces are obscured with computer-generated mosaics.

3. Procedures of Class

Topic: "Let's make a glossary of loanwords from English."

Before the class starts, the teacher turns on the electric blackboard. The students chant sentences they learned in the previous class. They also sing the "Alphabet Song."

Teacher: (in English) Stand up, please.
The class starts with greetings in English.
Teacher: How are you?
Students: I'm fine, thank you. And you?
Teacher: I'm hot. Thank you. Sit down, please.

Procedure 1. Today's aims.

Teacher: (in Japanese) Let's read aloud "Today's Aims."

The students read aloud the aims from the worksheet called a Furikaeri Shi-ito (a reviewing sheet). This sheet is to be used again at the end of the class.

Teacher (hereinafter T): Today's aim 1.
Students (hereinafter S): Could you ask and answer what you wanted?
T: Aim 2.
S: Could you share questions and answers in your group?
T: Aim 3.
S: Could you find how Japanese differs from English in pronunciation?
T: Aim 4.
S: Could you exchange opinions and discuss them in your group?
T: Okay, those are Today's aims.

Procedure 2. Pronunciation practice with letters of the alphabet.

T: Let's begin.

The class read aloud from A to Z following the teacher as she points at the alphabet cards on the blackboard one by one.

The teacher cautions students to "be careful of your breath and the shape of your mouth when you pronounce each letter," and then plays the 'Alphabet Song' on CD. The students sing to the CD. The song consists of two parts; one is pronunciation practice of each letter of the alphabet, the other a song. As the CD plays, the teacher shows the shape of the mouth as each alphabet is pronounced.

Procedure 3. "Let's make a glossary of loanwords from English."

T: What languages did you study for loanwords?

Several glossaries the students made are displayed on the low wooden locker at the back; French, English, Russian, Spanish, Chinese, Finnish, Portuguese, German, Italian, Dutch and also Japanese words that look like loanwords. Students say these languages.

T: Okay, each group of loanwords seems to have something characteristic. Do you remember what characteristics loanwords from German have?

S: Words that doctors use.

T: Then, what about French? (Many students answer.) Yes, units like hectare. Okay, what about Italian?

S: Musical instruments.

T: Right. But what language is the largest in the number of loanwords?

S: (many) English.

T: Yes, it is. Overwhelmingly. So, we will study about loanwords from English.

Procedure 4. Six words.

T: We will study about these words. Say them in Japanese. (showing a picture card of a shirt) What is this?

S: SHA-TSU.

T: Yes. SHA-TSU.

The teacher puts the card on the blackboard. She takes out cards one after another; milk, cake, fork, rice and lemon, and puts the cards on the blackboard.

Procedure 5. Differences in pronunciation between loanwords and their original English words. (A loanword means a word taken into one language from another.)

T: Repeat after me.

The teacher pronounces the six words (shirt, milk, cake, fork, rice, lemon) one by one, first in Japanese and then in English, two times each word. The students repeat after her.

T: We will study about these six words.

Procedure 6. Allotting words to the groups.

T: Well, you are going to collect the letters that match a loanword. There are six words. So each group takes one drawing paper sheet. Leaders, come to the front.

The teacher gives drawing paper sheets to the group leaders. Each paper sheet has a

picture on it from the six words. The students' activity is to collect letters that match their assigned pictures and put them on the paper sheets.

Procedure 7. Reviewing the activity, Let's Chant 2 "What do you want?"

Watching the digital textbook Hi, Friends! on the screen, the students chorus to the movie.

"What do you want?"

"The T card, please."

"What do you want?"

"The V card, please."

"Wow, TV."

"Let's watch."

The teacher takes out a card with a picture of a car. The students practiced this dialogue in the last lesson.

T: "C-A-R" OK?

T: What do you want?

S: C card, please.

T: Here you are.

S: Thank you.

T: What do you want?

S: A card, please.

T: Here you are.

S: Thank you.

T: What do you want?

S: R card, please.

T: Here you are.

S: Thank you.

T: This time, BED. Please ask me. (in English) Here you go.

S: What do you want?

T: B card, please.

S: Here you are.

T: Thank you.

The dialogue continues to D.

T: Good! What do you say if you don't have a card that your classmate wants?

S: (all) "Sorry."

T: Right! Then, what do you say if your classmate says "Sorry"? You say, "That's OK," or just "OK." Well, please rehearse in groups for one minute.

Procedure 8. Rehearsing the dialogue in each group for one minute.

T: Make sure that you can say each letter of your group's word. OK. (taking out a timer, in English) One minute!

The students start to practice in their own group.

T: (in English) Time's up. Go back to your seats. (in Japanese) Well, then, you will collect all the alphabet cards you need to spell your word. Ask your classmates for them. When you get all the letters, please glue them on your drawing paper sheets. You also need to write the loanword in Japanese in the blank.

Procedure 9. How to share questions and answers.

T: What do you have to be careful of when you ask questions and give answers? OK, A-san, please.

S: I have to be polite.

T: Yes! We have to be polite. Anything else? B-san, please.

S: I have to speak clearly.

T: Yes. That's important, too. Say your questions and answers clearly. Well, when you finish collecting all the letters, go back to your seats. Do you have any questions? (in English) Are you ready?

S: (all, in English) Yes!

T: (in English) Stand up, please. ... Start!

Procedure 10. Collecting alphabet cards.

The students start collecting necessary alphabet cards. They walk around the room with several alphabet cards, asking one student after another for missing letters.

Procedure 11. Gluing the alphabet cards on the worksheet.

When the students get all the necessary alphabet cards, they take their seats and start

pasting them on the worksheet. It took seven minutes and thirty seconds to finish collecting every letter they needed and pasting them.

T: Well, have you finished?

Procedure 12. Finding how Japanese differs from English in pronunciation.

T: Now, please write down your findings. Before you do, I will say the six words again. Please listen carefully and find differences. (in English) Listen carefully.

The teacher says the six loanwords from “shirt” to “lemon”, first in Japanese and then in English. After repeating twice, she makes the students pronounce every word both in Japanese and in English.

T: (in English) Here we go.

The students start to write down their findings on their own sheets. The teacher visits every group and shows how each word is pronounced in English if necessary.

When they finish writing their own findings, the students start discussion.

Procedure 13. Group discussion and presentation.

T: Next, please talk about your findings in your own group and form your group opinions. Then please write down those opinions on a new worksheet.

The teacher shows an example of a completed worksheet on the E-board. The sheet has a picture of a car with students’ findings about its pronunciation below.

T: I will show you how to make a presentation. (She displays “How to make your presentation clearly understood” on the screen.) Please say it like this, “There are [number] differences. The first is... The second is... The third is... ... That’s all. Thank you.” Every person has to speak at least once.

Well, please discuss and complete your sheets. And practice your presentations. I give you five minutes. (in English) Five minutes. Any questions? ... Ready, go!

Procedure 14. Presentation.

T: When you make your presentation, don’t look at your paper. Show your faces to your classmates. Then, let’s start! Group 1, please.

The following is students' findings about English pronunciation.

Group 1. "Rice"

- 1) [u] is heard at the beginning.
- 2) [s] is not said clearly.
- 3) English is spoken faster.
- 4) The tongue is held up before the word is said.

Group 2. "Lemon"

- 1) The end sounds like [nu].
- 2) Difference of breath control.
- 3) [l] is pronounced a little longer.
- 4) [l] and [m] are strong.

Group 3. "Milk"

- 1) [k] sounds strong.
- 2) English is spoken faster.
- 3) A lot of breath is used.
- 4) [mil] is long.
- 5) [l] is weak.

Group 4. "Fork"

- 1) [k] is strong.
- 2) The tongue is curled.
- 3) 'Fork' sounds like 'foRk.' (R is strong.)
- 4) There is R sound in English.
- 5) A lot of breath is blown when "Fo" is said.
- 6) The bottom lip is bitten when 'f' is said.

Group 5. "Shirt"

- 1) Quantity of breath is larger in English.
- 2) SHA- (in Japanese) sounds like SHU.
- 3) The tongue is held up.
- 4) There is [r] sound in English.

Group 6. "Cake"

- 1) '-KI' of 'KE-E-KI' in Japanese sounds [k] in English.
- 2) Large quantity of breath is used in English.
- 3) There is [i] sound. ([keik]

Procedure 15. Class discussion.

The six groups' sheets are put on the blackboard so the class can see all the findings.

T: Can you find anything in common? C-san, please.

S: A lot of breath.

The teacher writes students' opinions on the blackboard one after another.

- 1) There are silent letters in English.
- 2) A lot of breath is blown in English.
- 3) Shapes of tongue are different.
- 4) Speaking speed.
- 5) Pronunciation.
- 6) Letters.
- 7) The last 'e' is not said.

The students start working on a Furikaeri Shi-ito (a reviewing sheet). Then they glue them on their own "Foreign Language Activities File (Gaikokugo Katsudo Fairu).

The teacher gathers the students' alphabet card worksheets.

Procedure 16. Closing.

T: You have been all wonderful today. I didn't expect you would find so many things. You are really great! As you find how English differs from Japanese, foreign people may feel the same way when they learn Japanese. Don't you want to hear their opinions? I hope we will do it some day. Okay, then, (in English) stand up, please. Thank you very much.

S: (in English) Thank you very much.

T: The class is dismissed.

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成長のための省察ツール 言語教師のポートフォリオ

JACET教育問題研究会 <<http://www.waseda.jp/assoc-jacetenedu/>>
監修：神保尚武／編集：久村 研，酒井志延、高木亜希子、清田洋一

- 「言語教師のポートフォリオ」には，【英語教師教育全編】【英語教職課程編】【現職英語教師編】の3編があります。それぞれの用途によって使い分けることができます。本ポートフォリオの主な特徴は次の通りです。
 - ・ 英語教師に求められる授業力を明示する。
 - ・ 授業力とそれを支える基礎知識・技術の振り返りを促す。
 - ・ 同僚や指導者との話し合いと協働を促進する。
 - ・ 自らの授業の自己評価力を高める。
 - ・ 成長を記録する手段を提供する。
- 本ポートフォリオの中核には，Can-Do形式の180の自己評価記述文があります。これらの記述文は，授業力に関する系統的な考え方を提供しており，単なるチェック・リストではありません。教職課程の履修生，現職教師，実習や教員研修の指導者・メンターなどが利用したり，お互いに意見を交換したりする際に，省察を深めるツールとして機能すること，教職の専門意識を高める役割を果たすことが期待されます。