

# Enhancing output by focusing on L1 knowledge

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本稿では、学習者のアウトプットを向上させるために学習者の第一言語(日本語)の知識に焦点を当て考案された教材を紹介する。この教材は、英語を使用する際には学習者に日本語では通常省略される主語を補い、語順を再構成する必要があることを学習者の日常語である関西弁をパラフレーズすることで認識させることを目的としている。さらに、多くのEFLのクラスで用いられている直訳型日本語と学習者が実際に使用しているインフォーマルな日本語の違いを認識することの意義をインプットとアウトプットのモデルを示した図を紹介しながら論ずる。

**A** great many students in Japan still learn English by using Japanese in the EFL classroom, although communicative language learning has recently become popular. English is generally translated into Japanese, word for word, in the classroom, and the resulting Japanese is distant from the Japanese that students use on a daily basis. For example, the English sentences: “Where do you live?” and “I live in Osaka” are probably translated into “Anatawa dokoni sundeimasuka?” and “Watashiwa Osaka ni sundeimasu” respectively in the EFL classroom. These literal translations sound unnatural to most native

speakers of Japanese, as they are seldom used in a real communication. Japanese L1 speakers simply would ask, “Osumaiwa?” or more informally, “Ie doko?” and answer “Osaka desu” or just “Osaka.”

The disparity between Japanese literally translated in the classroom and “natural” Japanese is great, as Japanese is a SOV language which has unique syntactic structures different from English. According to Kuno (1978), Japanese, unlike English, tolerates flexibility in word order as long as a sentence ends with a main verb. Furthermore, Japanese allows subjectless sentences when subjects are recoverable from linguistic or nonlinguistic context. However, crude Japanese that is translated from English in the EFL classroom has almost lost these syntactic features at the cost of focusing on grammatical points of English where fixed word order is employed and subjects are usually remaining (see Appendix 1: Figure 1). On the other hand, when students communicate in L2, their ideas occur generally based on “natural” Japanese that they use on a daily basis, which has a flexible word order and deletes the subjects. Unless the differences between literally translated Japanese and “natural” Japanese are fully recognized and adjusted for, students may face difficulties in producing L2, even though they comprehend English grammar rules and words (see Appendix 2: Figure 2). For example, when students want to ask a question, “Dokoni osumai?” in English, they have to supply the subject, “anatawa”

and paraphrase the Japanese word “osumai” into “sumu.” The resulted Japanese is “Dokoni anatawa sundeimasuka,” which is a Japanese sentence that many EFL students are familiar with in the classroom.

Students who have learned English through Japanese literally translated from English are required to convert their “natural” Japanese into literal Japanese; that is, crude Japanese, that is translated word for word from English in producing L2 output. Otherwise, they cannot connect English grammar rules and words that they have learned through literal Japanese with their ideas they would have expressed in “natural” Japanese. To successfully complete this transformation, it is necessary for EFL students to notice the syntactic differences between literal Japanese and “natural” Japanese. If the students already have an explicit knowledge of Japanese, it may not be a difficult task. However, if they are not familiar with the explicit syntax structures of Japanese, students may be confused. Thus, the instructor should supply L1 knowledge in addition to L2 teaching wherever necessary.

To this end, the author has given attention to the students’ local dialect, *Kansaiben*, which they use on a daily basis, and which has salient features of flexible word order and subject deletion. Then, the author devised material to help students naturally raise their awareness of the syntactic features of L1 and fill in the gaps between Japanese literally translated from English

and Japanese that the students use on a daily basis (see Appendix: Table 1 and Table 2 for sample materials using *Kansaiben*).

The basic procedure is very simple. First, the instructor briefly explains the features of syntactic structures of Japanese, word order flexibility and subjectless sentences, and teaches that supplying the deleted subjects and organizing the word order necessary to produce English. Next, students are asked to paraphrase the text written in *Kansaiben* into literal Japanese that are usually observed in the EFL classroom. For example, “Ah onaka suite kitawa” in example 1 in Table 1 is transformed into “*Watashiwa* onakaga suiteimasu” by supplying a deleted subject. In the more complex Example 3, students have to consecutively supply deleted subjects judging from the context. The resulting Japanese can be: “*Watashiwa* yoi resutoranwo shitte imasu. *Sorewa* itaria *ryourino* misedesu. *Sonomiseno syokujiwa* oishiidesu.” The deleted subjects in original *Kansaiben* that students need to supply are “*watashiwa*,” “*sorewa*,” and “*syokujiwa*.” Then, students try to produce L2 for the first time based on the modified, literal Japanese. In example 8 in Table 2, students should arrange word order in addition to supplying deleted subjects. The phrase “Gomen. Kinou, shindokattakara. Neteten. Ichinichiju” means “*Watashiwa* kinou ichinichiju neteimasita, *nazenara watashiwa* tsukarete itakaradesu.” Thus, students should supply deleted

subjects of “*watashiwa*” twice and adjust word order by providing “because.”

The point that the instructor should keep in mind in devising materials is that materials should consist of linguistic elements that have been well understood by students. The purpose of the material is to help enhance students’ output by highlighting the differences between literal Japanese in the EFL classroom and their familiar Japanese, *Kansaiben*, but not to review linguistic elements. Furthermore, the contents of the materials should be related to students’ real life, or be interesting enough to attract students’ attention. In using this material, it is also expected that students can differently interpret the text. For example, in example 10 in Table 2, “onabeyatten” can have various interpretations. Some may imagine “*We* enjoyed onabe,” if they live with their family, and others “*I* ate onabe.” The instructor should encourage students to produce such variations, by which students can further pay attention to the context that is not clearly stated in “natural” Japanese. Thus, to actually implement activities using this material, it is desirable that the instructor is familiar with both the “natural” Japanese used in the material and the literal Japanese used in the EFL classroom.

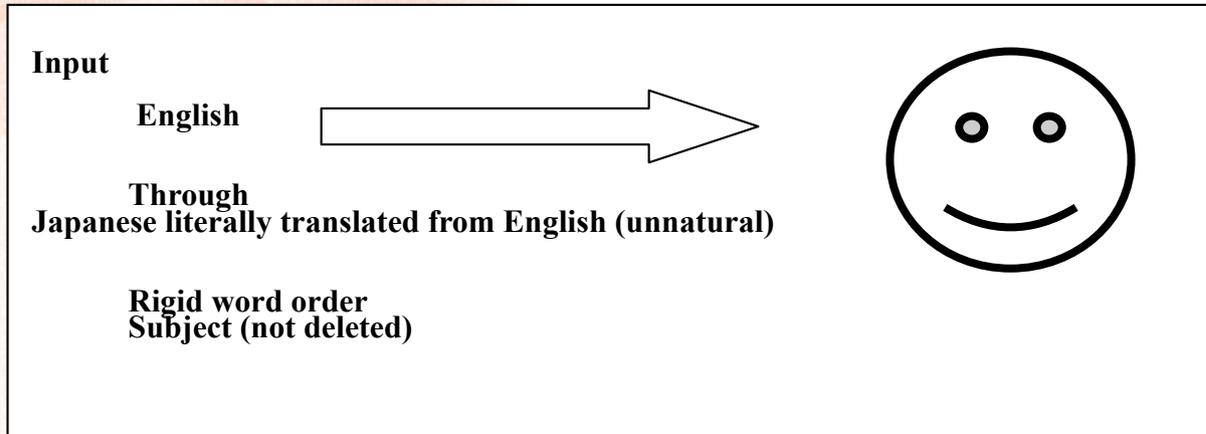
The materials introduced in this paper use *Kansaiben*. However, any dialect can be used in the material as long as the students are familiar with it. Although the sample materials in Tables 1 and 2 have intentionally

a specific grammatical focus, the present and the past tense, as they are designed for beginners, whether or not the instructor includes some specific linguistic elements depends on the goal of the class. Furthermore, the materials are originally devised to enhance students' speaking. However, it is applicable to writing activities if the appropriate contents are selected.

## Reference

Kuno, S. (1978). Japanese: A characteristic OV language. In W. P. Lehmann (Ed.), *Syntactic typology: Studies in the phenomenology of language*. Sussex: The Harvester Press.

## Appendix 1:

Figure 1: *The model of input in the EFL classroom*

## Appendix 2:

Figure 2. The model of output in the EFL classroom

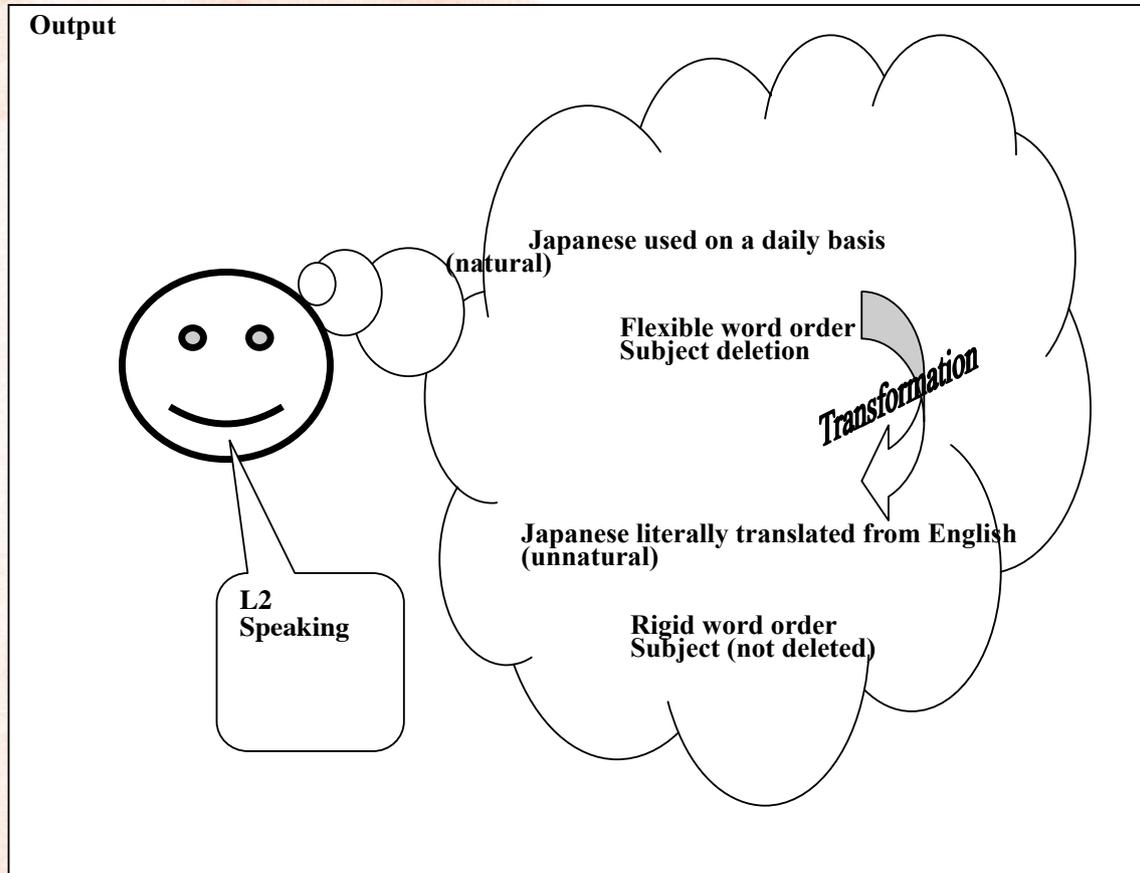


Table 1: *Sample Material:  
The Focus of the Present Tense*

1. あー、おなかすいてきたわ。  
Ah onaka suite kitawa.  
Ah, hungry become
2. わたしも。  
Watashimo.  
Me, too.
3. ええ店してるで。イタリア料理やけど。  
おいしいで。  
Eemise shitterude. Itariya ryouri yakedo. Oishiide.  
Good store know. Italian food. Delicious.
4. ええな。行こか。  
Eena. Ikoka.  
Good. Go.
5. どこにあんの？  
Dokoni anno?  
Where exist?
6. 大阪駅のすぐそばや。  
Osakaekino sugu sobaya.  
Osaka Station near.

Table 2: *Sample Material:  
The Focus of the Past Tense*

7. 昨日、家にいてた？電話したわ。  
Kinou ieni iteta? Denwasitawa.  
Yesterday, home, at? Called.
8. ごめん。きのう、しんどかったから。寝て  
てん。一日中。  
Gomen. Kinou, shindokattakara. Neteten.  
Ichinichiju.  
Sorry, yesterday, tired, sleeping, all day long
9. 昨日は寒かったしな。風も強かったわ。  
Kinouwa samukattashina. Kazemo tsuyokattawa.  
Yesterday cold. Wind strong.
10. タベは、おなべやってん。  
Yubewa onabeyatten.  
Last evening onabe.
11. ええなあ、おいしかった？  
Eena, oishikatta?  
Good, Tasty?