Focus-on-Form Instruction and Student Learning in Japanese Junior High Schools

Kazuyoshi Sato
Nagoya University of Foreign Studies
Yukimi Fukumoto
Oguchi Junior High School
Noriko Ishitobi
Ueda Junior High School
Takemi Morioka
Takinomizu Junior High School

Reference Data:

Sato, K., Fukumoto, Y., Ishitobi, N., & Morioka, T. (2012). Focus-on-form instruction and student learning in Japanese Japanese junior high schools. In A. Stewart & N. Sonda (Eds.), *JALT2011 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

Although *focus-on-form instruction* (FFI) has gained prominence in SLA, little research has been done as to how FFI influences student learning (Ellis, 2006). In particular, there are few longitudinal studies. This paper reviews two different approaches to FFI and reports on yearlong action research projects aimed at investigating FFI-based teaching practices by three Japanese junior high school teachers of English. Their studies show that FFI is more effective as a way for students to learn grammar for communication than the traditional explanation-drill method.

Ellis (2006)は文法指導について、フォーカス・オン・フォームを提唱しているが、フォーカス・オン・フォームが実際の授業においてどのような学習効果があるのかについてはほとんど研究されていない、と述べている。特に、長期間に渡る研究はほとんどない。この論文は、3名の日本人英語教員が実施した1年間に及ぶアクション・リサーチの結果に基づき、フォーカス・オン・フォームの指導法及びリサーチの結果を報告する。研究結果から、フォーカス・オン・フォームは、従来の説明とドリル中心の指導法よりも効果があることが明らかになった。

In a review of previous research on grammar teaching, Ellis (2006) claims that "[a]lthough there is now a clear conviction that a traditional approach to teaching grammar based on explicit explanations and drill-like practice is unlikely to result in the acquisition of the implicit knowledge needed for fluent and accurate communication, there continues to be disagreement regarding what should replace this" (p. 102). Ellis's own recommendation is that traditional grammar instruction should be replaced by *focus-on-form instruction* (FFI). According to Ellis (2006), focus on *form* is different from focus on *forms*. While focus on forms refers to traditional grammar teaching, "where the students' primary focus is on form" (p. 100), FFI "entails a focus on meaning with attention to form arising out of the communicative activity" (p. 100). In other words, in focus on form, "the primary concern of the teacher should always be the question of how to integrate attention to form and meaning (Doughty & Williams, 1998, p. 261). Moreover, Lee and VanPatten (1995, 2003) explain that the teaching procedure of FFI should entail both structured input (form-focused input) and structured output (form-focused output) activities. As Lee and VanPatten (1995) observe, "learners need not only input to build a developing system but also opportunities to create output in order to work on fluency and accuracy" (p. 118). In addition, FFI has been further divided into *planned FFI* and *incidental FFI* (Ellis, 2006). Planned FFI "requires a focused task and is intensive," while incidental FFI "is typically extensive (i.e., addresses a wide range of linguistic features)" (Ellis, 2008, p. 827). Incidental FFI can thus be defined as output-based instruction (e.g., a composition about a familiar topic) in which no particular forms are targeted in advance. Ellis (2006) recommends incidental FFI by saying that "[a]n incidental FFI is of special value because it affords an opportunity for extensive treatment of grammatical problems" (p. 102). For example, the teacher can notice learners' common errors in their compositions and learners may notice their errors through the teacher's corrective feedback (see Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001).

Nonetheless, few studies have been conducted on the influences of FFI on student learning (Ellis, 2006), particularly in classroom settings. One exception is a study by Sato, Iwai, Kato, and Kushiro (2009), which was conducted in Japanese senior high schools and which found that FFI is more effective for teaching students to learn grammar for communication than the traditional explanation-drill method. This paper reports on three yearlong action research projects, supported by Nagoya University of Foreign Studies (see Nancy et al., 2009), that aimed to investigate the effects of a variety of teaching methods based on FFI. Whereas Yukimi Fukumoto and Noriko Ishitobi incorporated planned FFI into their teaching, Takemi Morioka tried out both planned and incidental FFI in her classes in junior high schools. In the following sections, the three teachers explain how they came to focus on a particular aspect of FFI to research, what FFI procedure they tried in their classrooms, and how students responded to their approach in terms of performance, based on their action research over the course of the year. The results also include qualitative data consisting of comments by the students on the FFI activities that they experienced.

Innovating Japanese Junior High School English with FFI

Yukimi Fukumoto

Before Action Research

When I first became an English teacher at a public junior high school, I thought that students would benefit from a clear presentation of grammar rules and drill exercises that would help them develop correct habits. However, I soon found that expectation was wrong since quite a few students wrote incorrect answers to basic grammatical questions on term exams, and there were also some students who didn't like English and/or complained about not understanding English grammar. In

addition, their English was not good enough to communicate in English at all. Wondering how to develop both English communication skills and grammatical ability needed for high school entrance exams within the limited class time, I decided to pursue my education in the United States. When I came back to Japan with my Master of Arts degree in Second Languages and Cultures Education from the University of Minnesota, I started teaching again and tried to narrow the gap between theory and practice at a public junior high school. In teaching new grammar patterns from the textbook, I first illustrated to my students how the grammar could be used in real-life situations and had them practice using it in conversation. After the communicative drill, I covered the mechanical drill and dialog/reading text in the textbook. A communicative activity was used at the end of the unit, and a rubric-based speaking test was administered several times a year. Although I was adding a communicative component to my course, I still placed much emphasis on structure for high school entrance exams. It was at this time that I joined the action research group of Nagoya University of Foreign Studies. The following account introduces my action research from April 2009 through March 2010.

My Action Research

To examine my own teaching, I read Lee and VanPatten (2003), which Dr. Sato had recommended. I realized that I should use more communicative activities to help students learn and internalize new grammar. Thus, I decided to spend less time teaching with the textbook; instead, I made it supplementary material to review what students had learned in communicative activities. This change enabled students to speak more English in class. However, I soon noticed that my communicative activity was not as effective as it could be because I presented a model dialog and had students repeat and memorize it at the beginning as in the audiolingual method. This problem explained by Lee and VanPatten (2003): "Although practice with output may help with fluency and accuracy in production, it is not 'responsible' for getting the grammar into the learner's head to begin with" (p. 133). As VanPatten and Cadierno's (1993) framework of the second language acquisition process illustrates, input is essential to develop an implicit language system. I realized that since my communicative activity did not start with an input step, it required conscious learning of grammar, and thereby made it difficult to internalize. Thus, I aimed at creating a smooth flow of steps within each communicative activity so that students could make form-meaning connections while attending to the structure in context.

Communicative activities that I used in this action research were mostly planned focus-on-form; nonetheless, positive results were obtained in terms of students' attitudes and English communicative abilities. Moreover, students' average exam scores surpassed those of the other group of students who received more traditional grammar-oriented instruction. Through this action research, I was convinced of the power of FFI in motivating students to learn English and promoting a cooperative learning culture. I believe that this is the driving force that enables successful development of communicative competence including grammatical competence needed for grammar-based high school entrance exams. I also found that teaching new grammar in communicative activities without relying much on the textbook is a great option for public junior high schools because all students, whether they have already studied the textbook content outside of class or not, can learn something new in communicative activities and review and receive additional meaningful input with the textbook.

Teaching Procedure

The following section describes how I developed FFI lessons for introducing grammar by supplementing the content of the

approved textbook with communicative activities. In Unit 1, I provided a communicative activity to help students learn use of copulas as in "He is ~" and "She is ~" (see Appendix A). I started the FFI lesson with "Guess Who" quizzes as structured input and followed that with a planned focus-on-form activity in which students introduced their classmates in groups of three (structured output). In Unit 6, I offered a communicative activity to teach how to introduce others in more detail by using regular verbs with third-person singular "–s" ending (see Appendix A). I started the FFI lesson with more challenging "Guess Who" quizzes (structured input) and then asked students to write about their own families, using the target grammar. After the structured output in writing, I put students in pairs and had them introduce each other's families (structured output in speaking). Later as an assessment task, I had students introduce their families to an ALT, showing their family pictures or drawings (Speaking Test 2).

Results

This study was conducted with first-year junior high school students. For English classes, five classes were each divided into two small groups. I taught half of the students in each class and conducted surveys three times a year.

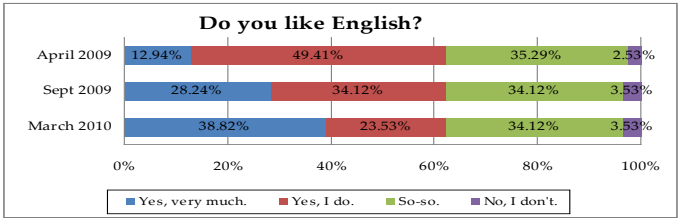


Figure 1. Results of survey question, "Do you like English?" (n=85).

Figure 1 shows students' response to the survey question "Do you like English?" throughout the year. Although it is often said that students lose interest in English in their first year of junior high school, I gained positive answers (Yes, very much + Yes, I do) from 62.35% of the students. Moreover, the number of students who answered "Yes, very much" increased significantly over the year (from 12.94% in April to 28.24% in July and then to 38.82% in March).

Table 1. Sample Students' Comments Obtained at the End of Study (Number of Similar Comments Shown in Brackets)

Sample comments on learning English:
[positive comments]
• Learning English was easy and fun. (16)
• In April, I thought English was difficult. But, as I learned, I understood it better. (3)
• It was easy to learn new words and how to make sentences in English.(3)
• I was able to understand the meaning and spelling of words. (3)
[negative comments]
• English is becoming difficult. (8)
• There are more words that I need to remember now. (1)
• I don't understand long English sentences. (1)
• Learning English requires a lot of hard work. (1)

Sample comments on communicative activities:
• Speaking English helps me understand English and develop my proficiency in it. (12) • I can talk to and get to know my classmates through communicative activities. (10) • I found I can speak English to communicate with my friends. (4) • I can learn English as I enjoy conversation with my classmates. (1)
Sample comments on speaking tests:
• It is fun to talk with an ALT. (15) • I improved my English skill and gained confidence as I talked to a native speaker. (9) • I can check whether I can actually use English for communication. (4) • I learned a lot about how to use/pronounce words and how to make a sentence with them. (4)

Table 1 shows student comments on learning English, which were collected at the end of the study. These indicate that students reacted positively because they found English classes were fun and useful in learning English although there were some difficulties involved in learning English in general. In the same survey, 76.47% of the students answered that communicative activities were useful. Twelve students confirmed that speaking English helped them understand English and develop their proficiency. It was also found that students appreciated communicative activities because they could get to know each other in class.

FFI was also shown to be effective in improving students' performance on two speaking tests, both of which were administered and assessed by an ALT (see Table 2). Group A students who received my FFI performed much better on the speaking tests, compared to the other group of students who received more traditional instruction from the other teachers. At the end of the study, 78.82% of the students answered that speaking tests helped them learn English. Student comments show that students enjoyed talking with the ALT and gained confidence by making themselves understood by the native English speaker.

Table 2. Students' Performance on Speaking Tests

	Speaking Test 1: Self-introduction*		Speaking Test 2: Introducing family	
	Passed: A, B(% of A)	Failed: C, D	Passed: A, B(% of A)	Failed: C, D
Group A (FFI) (n=85)	80.00% (47.06%)	20.00%	77.65% (45.88%)	22.35%
Group B (n=82)	69.51% (10.98%)	30.49%	53.66% (7.32%)	46.34%

*Students introduced each other in groups, while sustaining the conversation.

As stated previously, Group A students who received my FFI spent less time using the textbook. However, they did as well on term tests as Group B students who received more traditional grammar teaching lessons with more time using the textbook. In fact, the average scores of Group A students were slightly higher across the year except in the first exam (see Table 3).

Table 3. Students' Performance on Term Exams

	Exam 1	Exam 2	Exam 3	Exam 4	Exam 5	Exam 6	Exam 7
Group A (FFI)	80.09	**73.71**	**75.36**	**74.72**	**65.28**	**69.11**	**64.42**
Group B	**82.46**	72.96	75.26	74.04	64.79	68.19	61.41

Summary

Through this action research, I realized that FFI is essential because it provides students with opportunities to focus on meaning while attending to the form in context. Lee and VanPatten's (2003) notion of structured input and output helped me to create the flow of activities that facilitate the development of the students' implicit language system. Teaching new grammar in communicative activities without relying exclusively on the textbook was found to be beneficial at a public junior high school. Moreover, students who learned English through FFI developed positive attitudes toward English. Since I tried to help students express what they really wanted to tell their friends in English, they soon started to enjoy communicating in English. In addition, a cooperative learning culture developed as they enjoyed learning English together through communicative activities. In order to prevent students from giving up when they encounter difficult English grammar, I believe that creating a fun, supportive learning environment is critical. I consider that these factors together contributed to the good student performance revealed in this study.

Fun Communicative Activities Supported by Timed Conversation

Noriko Ishitobe

Before Action Research

Although I was ambitious about teaching English as a communication tool when I became a teacher 17 years ago, I did not have any knowledge about the principles of language teaching and did not know how to teach communicatively. Therefore, I had no choice but to rely on the textbook and the traditional grammar-translation method that I had experienced in my own school days. Yet throughout those years, I always wondered if I was on the right track. Though I had heard the term form-focused instruction (FFI), I had not come to understand it nor did I know how to implement it as an approach to grammar teaching.

In 2007, I joined a workshop for English teachers organized by Dr. Sato (see Mutoh, Sato, Hakamada, Tsuji, & Shintani, 2009). I was struck by the fact that the enthusiastic practitioners of communicative language teaching who conducted this workshop had been successful in developing students' communicative ability. I gradually learned from their practice and started FFI in my teaching as well. I have seen improved learning outcomes and positive reactions from my students through the 5 years of my action research; it has been a great joy and has become an incentive for my further professional development.

My Action Research

From April to October 2011, I conducted action research with four classes totaling 140 second-year students in a public junior high school. The purpose was to discover what effect FFI instruction would have on students' learning in the context of a communicatively taught English class. It was the first time for

me to use FFI to teach second-year students, who are generally considered to be at a difficult age with regard to attitudes to learning. In response to open-ended questions in an April survey, many students claimed that they did not like English very much. However, many of the same students also wrote that they hoped to understand English more and to try harder.

I decided to create fun activities to introduce grammar points which were becoming gradually more complicated. The fun activities were communicative tasks based on high-interest topics and situations. Completion of the task required integrated use of all four skills and focus on the target grammar structures. At the same time, I had students do timed conversations at the beginning of each lesson to introduce conversation strategies. I believed that the conversation strategies were necessary for students to communicate more successfully and, as a result, complete the communicative tasks more easily. I encouraged students to continue these warm-up conversations on a certain topic for 1 minute at first. Students were shy about talking in pairs, and especially reluctant, in April, to talk with someone of the opposite sex.

Then I announced that they would have a speaking test in June; they could not be shy anymore if they wanted a good score on the speaking test. Students tried to hold gradually longer conversations no matter who they were conversing with. In the speaking test, almost all the students succeeded in having a 1-minute conversation. Students started to appreciate the fact that they actually could talk in English with many people. In the second term, since students had learned that conversation strategies were useful, they began using them in the communicative activities as well. In addition, they became less hesitant to do the activities with classmates of the opposite sex. The survey taken in October showed that FFI, supported by daily timed conversations, had made a difference in students' motivation and confidence in their learning.

Teaching Procedure

"My Ideal Boyfriend" is an example of my use of FFI in communicative activities in 2011. In this lesson, students learned auxiliary verbs (see Appendix B). In preparation for this activity, I interviewed four of my colleagues about their ideal boyfriends / girlfriends, so that the information would be interesting for students. In Step 1, students listened to me talk about the ideal boyfriends / girlfriends of the four teachers at our school. Students guessed whose ideal boyfriend / girlfriend each speech was about. In Step 2, students listened to the same speech again as they filled in blanks to complete the sentences. They checked the correct answers, and also verified with partners the meaning of each sentence. For Step 3, students constructed the auxiliary verbs and checked their meaning and usage.

In Step 4, students wrote about their own ideal boyfriend / girlfriend, referring to the example sentences in Step 2. Step 5 was the speaking stage. In groups of four (all boys or all girls), students took turns reading out the sentences they had written. The other group members took notes as they listened. Here, I encouraged students to use "How about you?," "I see," and other conversation strategies. Students then tried, in Step 6, to discuss in a group and write about one ideal boyfriend / girlfriend. Finally, each group made a presentation about their ideal boyfriend / girlfriend. I wrote the sentences on the blackboard. After the presentation, the whole class looked at the sentences on the board together and talked about the qualities of ideal boyfriends / girlfriends that they found interesting, the difference between "have to" and "must," and also grammatical errors. I drew attention to the common errors and encouraged students to suggest how they could be corrected.

After this activity, I published a newsletter. It contained students' actual sentences, so that they could share their ideas about ideal boyfriends and girlfriends beyond their own class.

The newsletter also drew attention to common errors and how they could be corrected.

Results

To examine the effect of FFI as a method for improving students' English proficiency and to motivate the students, I administered a student survey and analyzed the data. The questionnaire, written in Japanese, was conducted in October to have students compare their English abilities in April and October. Graphs 1 to 6 show how students evaluated the changes in their listening, speaking, reading and writing.

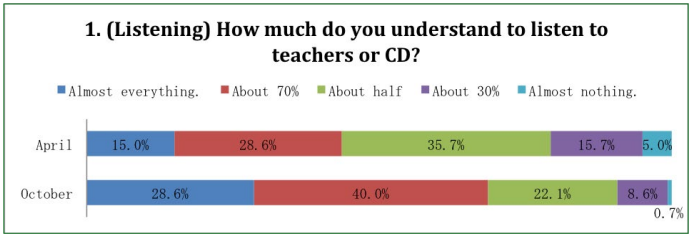


Figure 2. Survey result: How much do you understand listening to teachers or CD? (n=140 in four classes).

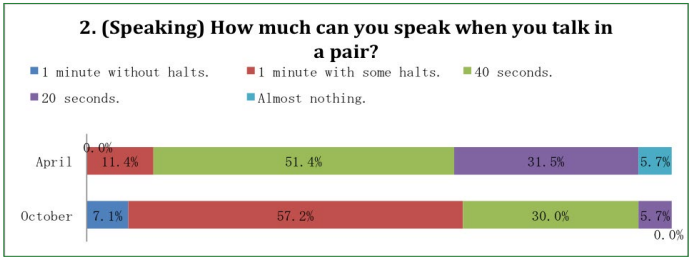


Figure 3. Survey result: How much can speak when you talk in a pair?

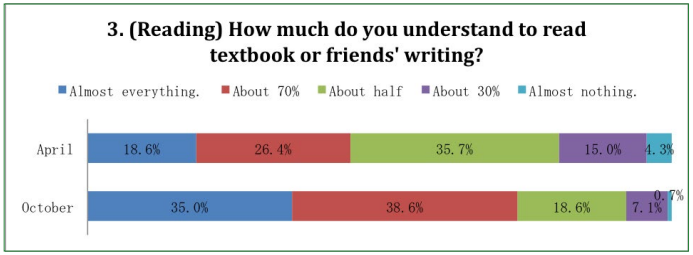


Figure 4. Survey result: How much do you understand when you read textbook or friends' writing?

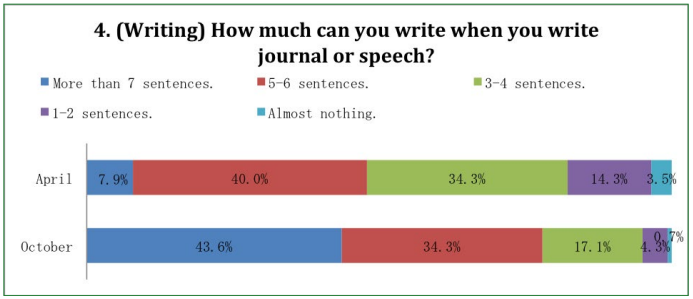


Figure 5. Survey result: How much can your write when you write journal or speech?

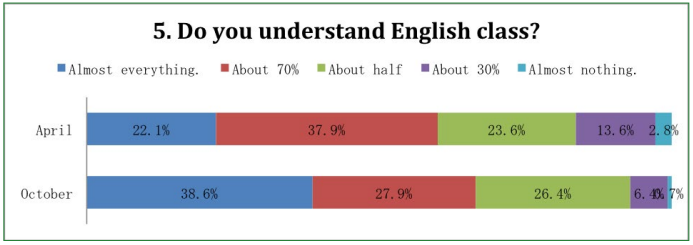


Figure 6. Survey result: Do you understand English class?

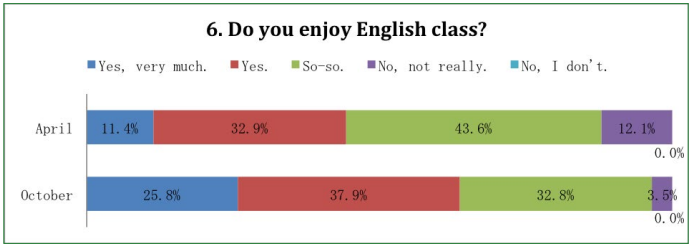


Figure 7. Survey result: Do you enjoy English class?

Overall, students reported considerable improvement in all four skills. In April, 43.6% of the students felt they could understand the teacher's talk and CDs either very well or about 70%. By October, this percentage had risen to 68.6%, a gain of 25%. Students responding that they could converse 1 minute (with or without some halting) rose by 52.9%, from 11.4% in April to 64.3% in October. Students who reported reading comprehension of 70% or more increased by 26% and those who could write more than six sentences increased by 30%. There was a corresponding decrease in students replying that they experienced little or no improvement. Although ability in all four skills improved significantly, the greatest gains were in the productive skills of speaking and writing. In addition to greater success in becoming able to use English, many students reported a change in their attitude toward the English class and English itself. More replied in October that they enjoyed English class than in April.

Open-ended questions were also asked in the survey: the numerical and open-ended responses to the survey corroborate each other (see Table 3).

Table 4. Students' Comments

Q. What kind of changes do you see in yourself? What can you do now? (number of similar comments shown in brackets)
• speak longer by using conversation strategies (47)
• write more sentences (34)
• listen and understand English (15)
• improved pronunciation (12)
• improved all skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (8)
• make follow up questions to partners (7)
• understand grammar rules better / decreased errors (7)
• became more positive toward English class (5)

First, I was glad to find the comments saying that they had begun to have a more positive attitude toward English class itself and had become more active learners. In addition, it seemed that FFI produced its intended effect: a number of students commented that they could understand grammar rules better, and as a result, they decreased errors. Most importantly, most of the students reported that they had improved their English ability significantly in all four skills.

Summary

Through FFI, students were able to internalize new grammar structures in communicative activities. Thus, students understood the usage of a new form by using it to exchange real information and ideas with each other. They were able to notice the usage of new grammar from structured input (form-focused input) and utilized that knowledge in structured output (form-focused output). Of course they made mistakes; however, they were able to monitor and correct their own mistakes in the

presentation stage of the task. Moreover, by using communicative activities, students actually enjoyed using English and learning about each other. The results of the survey convinced me that FFI is an effective way to teach grammar and, for that reason, is a powerful motivator because students are motivated by success. In their comments, some students wrote that it was much better to work in a pair or a group doing such activities rather than studying individually because they could help each other. One of the students wrote that this way of learning is only possible in the classroom. I am pleased to know that FFI worked with students in the awkward age as well.

Using Both Planned and Incidental Focus on Form

Takemi Morioka

Before Action Research

I started to do postgraduate studies in the MA TESOL program at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies in 2010. Before that, I had sometimes planned activities which had students use English, but I was not aware of the effects of input and output activities and did not know how to plan effective lessons for students to acquire English. I learned in Dr. Sato's class that "comprehensible input is a critical factor for language acquisition" (Lee & VanPatten 1995, p. 29) and also about the guidelines for the development of structured-input and output activities. I decided to investigate focus-on-form instruction (FFI) in my action research project.

In April, 2010, I transferred to another junior high school. My students had been taught for the previous 2 years through the grammar-translation method. In the survey conducted in April, one-third of the students answered that they liked English, but another third answered that they did not like it. Most of the students appeared to regard English only as a subject that they needed to learn in order to pass entrance examinations for high school, not as a means of communication.

My Action Research

In my action research project, I set the goals of motivating students and improving their communication ability. I developed new communicative activities based on FFI and used them in class. In April, students were not familiar with pair and group activities. They had had little experience communicating with classmates in English and seemed puzzled by the new idea, but they gradually became accustomed to the activities and enjoyed communicating in English.

In the first term, I explained target grammar in the textbook explicitly in Japanese and then used communicative activities in order to get students to use the grammar, because I thought that they would need to have grammatical knowledge before they worked on activities. However, I learned that I should first give enough input for students to construct new linguistic structures and connections in their brains, so I started with input activities in the second term.

I began to give an information-exchange task (incidental FFI) after every one or two units of the textbook, following structured input and output activities, because "[i]n the classroom, information-exchange tasks work best at giving learners a purpose for using their developing language abilities" (Lee & VanPatten 1995, p. 167). For example, many students made wonderful posters and wrote in their reflections that they were happy to write about their favorite person and that they were interested in listening to other students' speeches.

In January, after students had read about the house rules of an American family in the textbook, I had them write their imaginary future family rules. While they were working on the writ-

ing task, I noticed a marked change in the students' attitudes. They had begun to cooperate with each other even when I had not asked them to work together!

Teaching Procedure

In this section I describe an activity I designed based on incidental FFI. Students wrote their own opinions about cell phones (see Appendix C). They started by brainstorming and wrote reasons to support their opinions. They talked in pairs about what they had written and then wrote the final draft. In a different lesson, students wrote a speech to introduce their favorite famous person. They also made a poster with pictures to help other students understand their speech. They then gave a speech in groups of four. Each speaker was asked three questions by the other three students in turns, and the group members had to continue talking in English until the teacher allowed them to stop. After all the students in a group had finished their presentations, new groups were made and students gave their speeches again for their new group members.

Results

Surveys were conducted in April, July, September and February. The percentage of students who could understand the English spoken by the teacher gradually increased (see Figure 8).

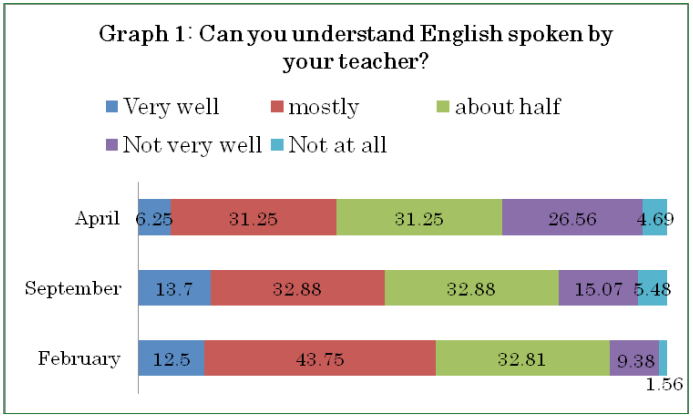


Figure 8. Questionnaire results: Can you understand English spoken by your teacher?

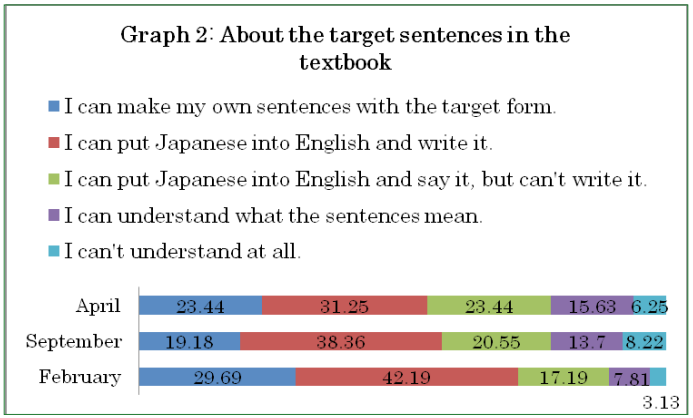


Figure 9. Questionnaire results: About the target sentences in the textbook.

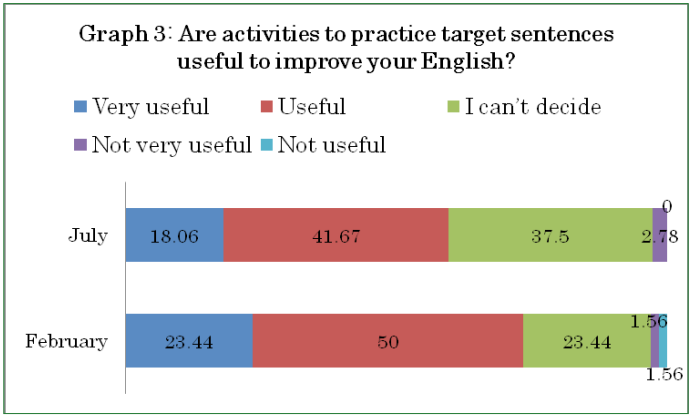


Figure 10. Questionnaire results: Are activities to practice target sentences useful to improve your English?

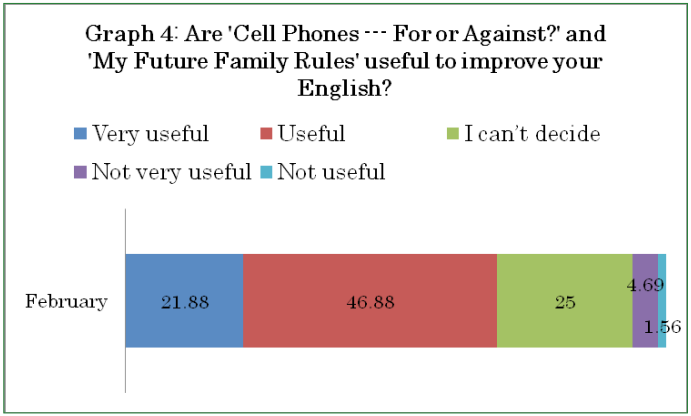


Figure 11. Questionnaire results: Are "Cell Phones: For or Against" and "My Future Family Rules" useful to improve your English?

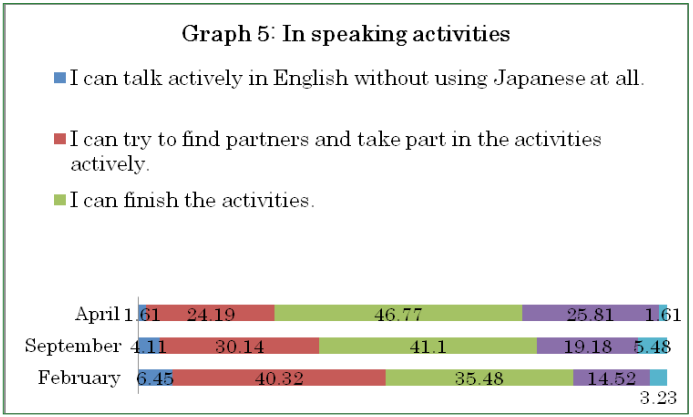


Figure 12. Questionnaire results: Speaking activities

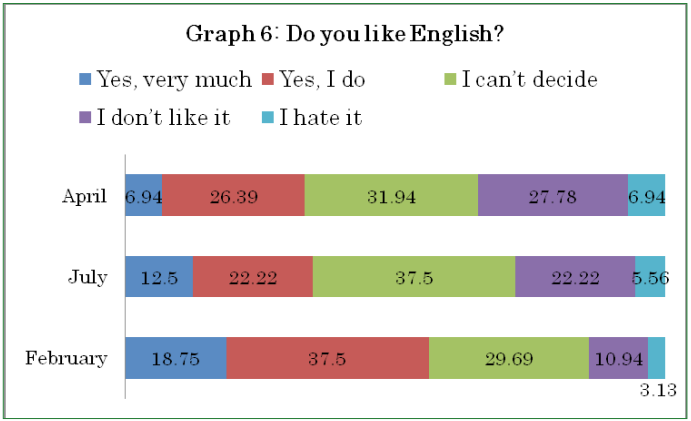


Figure 13. Questionnaire results: Do you like English?

I gained positive answers from 56.25% of the students ("very well" + "mostly") in February. At the same time, more students reported that they understood the target sentences in the textbook better and had become able to use the grammar. While 59.73% of the students answered that the activities to practice target sentences were "useful" or "very useful" in July, 73.44% of the students gave that answer in February and very few students answered that they were "not very useful" or "not useful." Moreover, 68.75% of the students thought that the two writing tasks were "useful" or "very useful," whereas only 6.25% of them found the writing tasks "not very useful" or "not useful." Students came to participate in speaking activities more actively. The percentage of students who felt that they liked English or that they liked English very much increased from 33.33% to 56.25%, whereas the percentage of students who felt that they didn't like or hated English decreased from 34.72% to 14.06%.

I also asked students an open-ended question, "How did you change in learning English?" in February (see Table 4).

Table 5. Students' Comments in Response to Open-Ended Question: "How Did You Change in Learning English?" (February, 2011)

- I got good at listening quizzes in entrance exams for high schools.
- I could understand grammar and felt the activities were fun.
- I could write more in English composition than last year.
- It was a lot of fun for me to talk with my classmates in English.
- I became able to say what I wanted to say in English.
- I got able to understand English gradually and studied more at home.
- I want to be a good English speaker and go abroad.

They answered that they could understand grammar better and that they felt the activities were fun and enjoyable. They were aware of the improvement in their English skills and they were motivated to learn English more outside the classroom. Finally, they hoped to communicate in English in the future.

Summary

In April, one student said to me, "I can't understand English at all. I can't do anything in English class." Several months later, he began to greet me in English when he saw me. He could not finish all the activities which I gave in class, but he asked me for help in order to work on them. In the poster session in December, I saw him giving a speech with his handmade poster. I was very glad to see such a significant change. Before graduation he gave me a letter saying, "I enjoyed your English lessons very much. Thanks to you, I could understand English." I was very happy to read it. I had never seen such a dramatic change in only 1 year!

The students' survey results and comments clearly show that activities which had students use English while attending to meaning help to improve their English skills. They enjoyed the activities and participated in them more actively. Moreover, they became motivated to learn English not only in class but also outside the classroom. Before I started this action research project, I had never observed such positive attitudes in my students. My experiences this year convinced me that FFI was very effective.

I will continue FFI instruction, and in future action research studies, I will work on peer editing and develop content-based speaking activities to improve writing and oral communication skills.

Conclusion

Although FFI has been widely accepted by SLA researchers, Ellis (2006) stresses the need "for longitudinal studies that investigate the effects of instruction over time" (p. 103) in actual classrooms. Based on yearlong action research projects conducted by three Japanese junior high school teachers of English, this study clearly indicates that students learned grammar better through FFI than traditional grammar teaching. The three projects describe a variety of teaching procedures, which were designed to implement planned FFI (Fukumoto and Ishitobe) as well as both planned and incidental FFI (Morioka) in Japanese junior high school English classes. The study corroborates the findings of Sato, Iwai, Kato, & Kushiro (2009), which found that FFI was effective in senior high schools. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Technology has revised its guidelines for junior high school English teachers in 2012 and will do the same for senior high school teachers in 2013, putting more emphasis on the development of students' communicative ability. In particular, the guidelines stipulate that grammar should be at the service of communication. We hope that the present study, the latest in a succession of action research projects supported by Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, will provide a role model for teachers who aspire to better foreign language teaching.

Bio Data

Kazuyoshi Sato teaches at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies. He holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Queensland, Australia. He has written several papers on communicative language teaching and teacher development. His research interests include teacher development, curriculum development, and second language acquisition.

Yukimi Fukumoto teaches English at a junior high school in Aichi. She obtained an MA in Second Languages/Cultures Education, Curriculum & Instruction from the University of Minnesota in 2005. She taught and created materials for students learning Japanese in the United States. Her research interests include curriculum development and teacher cognition.

Noriko Ishitobi is an English teacher at a municipal junior high school in Nagoya. She holds a MA in TESOL from Nagoya University of Foreign Studies. Her research interests include communicative grammar teaching and materials development.

Takemi Morioka teaches English at a junior high school in Nagoya. She is taking an MA TESOL course at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies. Her research interests include communicative grammar teaching and assessment.

References

Doughty, C., & Williams, J. (Eds.). (1998). *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ellis, R., Basturkmen, H., & Loewen, S. (2001). Grammar pedagogy in second and foreign language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly, 25*, 439-480.

Ellis, R. (2006). Current issues in the teaching of grammar: An SLA perspective.*TESOL Quarterly, 40*, 83-107.

Ellis, R. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

VanPatten, B., & Cadierno, T. (1993). Input processing and second language acquisition. *Modern Language Journal, 77*, 45-57.

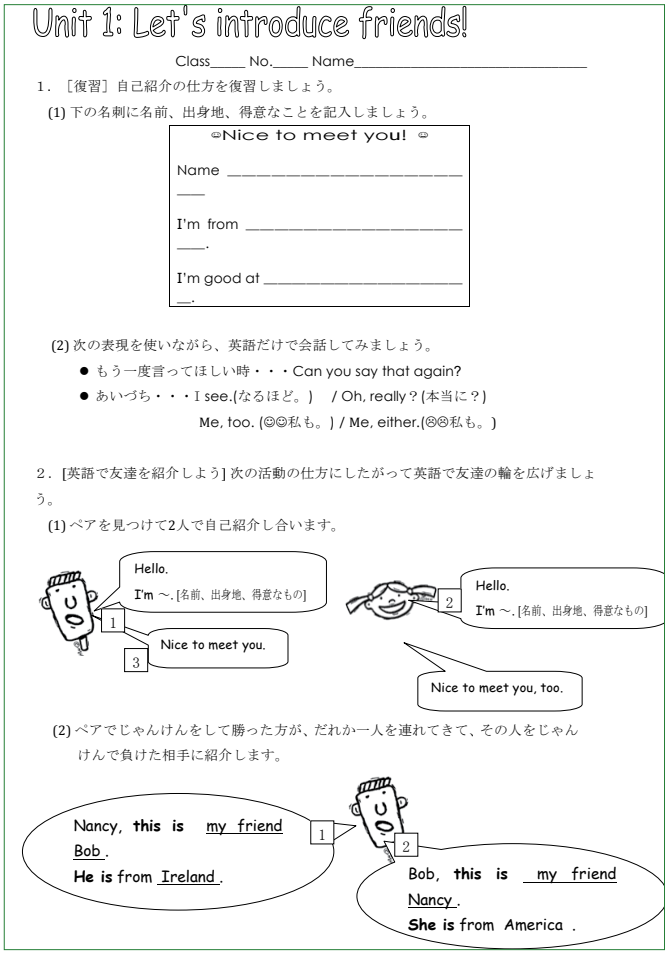
Lee, J. F., & VanPatten, B. (1995). *Making communicative language teaching happen*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Lee, J. F., & VanPatten, B. (2003). *Making communicative language teaching happen* (2nd ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Sato, K., Iwai, R., Kato, M., & Kushiro, M. (2009). Focus-on-form instruction (FFI) and its effect on student learning. In A.M. Stoke (Ed.), *JALT2008 Conference Proceedings* (pp. 521-534). Tokyo: JALT.

Mutoh, N., Sato, K., Hakamada, A., Tsuji, H., & Shintani, S. (2009). Collaborative action research: Teacher and curriculum development. In A. M. Stoke (Ed.), *JALT2008 Conference Proceedings* (pp. 53-66). Tokyo: JALT.

Appendix A: Innovating Japanese Junior High School English with FFI



Unit 1: Let's introduce friends!

Class____ No.____ Name_____

1．［復習］自己紹介の仕方を復習しましょう。

(1) 下の名刺に名前、出身地、得意なことを記入しましょう。

☺Nice to meet you! ☺

Name _____

I'm from _____.

I'm good at _____.

(2) 次の表現を使いながら、英語だけで会話してみましょう。

- もう一度言ってほしい時・・・Can you say that again?
- あいづち・・・I see.(なるほど。) / Oh, really？(本当に？)
  Me, too. (☺☺私も。) / Me, either.(☹☹私も。)

2．[英語で友達を紹介しよう] 次の活動の仕方にしたがって英語で友達の輪を広げましょう。

(1) ペアを見つけて2人で自己紹介し合います。

1 Hello. I'm ～. [名前、出身地、得意なもの]

2 Hello. I'm ～. [名前、出身地、得意なもの]

3 Nice to meet you.

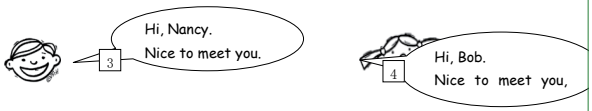
Nice to meet you, too.

(2) ペアでじゃんけんをして勝った方が、だれか一人を連れてきて、その人をじゃんけんで負けた相手に紹介します。

1 Nancy, **this is** my friend Bob. **He is** from Ireland.

2 Bob, **this is** my friend Nancy. **She is** from America .

2



(3) 会話が終わったら、下に会話をした人全員の名前を記録します。
(新しい相手を見つけて繰り返します。ただし一度は先生のところへ友達を紹介しに行ってサインをもらいましょう。)

Boys	Girls

先生のサイン

3．[自己評価] 今日の活動を振り返って、自己評価しましょう。

(1) 当てはまるものに○をつけましょう。

	☺ ← ☺ → ☹
(a) 日本語を使わず、英語だけで活動することができた。(あいづち)	5 4 3 2 1
(b) 他の人に聞こえるように、大きな声で話すことができた。	5 4 3 2 1
(c) アイコンタクトをしながら話したり聞いたりできた。	5 4 3 2 1
(d) This is～, He is～, She is～を正しく使って、友達を紹介することができた。	5 4 3 2 1

(2) 今日の活動をふりかえって、書きましょう。

(a) わかったこと、よくできたこと

(b) これからがんばりたいこと

(c) 今日の活動について

Unit 6: Let's introduce family!

Class____ No.____ Name_____

1. be 動詞と一般動詞の使い方を復習しよう。

(1) be 動詞を使って、自分との間柄、年齢、人柄などを表す

○○は	be 動詞		△△
He She	is	関係	my father (父)/ my mother (母)/ my sister (妹・姉)/ my brother (弟・兄)/ my grandfather (祖父)/ my grandmother (祖母)/ my wife (妻) / my husband (夫) ＊年上の older ～/ 年下の younger ～
		年齢など	thirteen years old (13 歳)/ an elementary school student (小学生)/ a junior high school student (中学生)/ a high school student (高校生)/ a college student (大学生)/ an office worker (会社員)/ a housewife (主婦)
		人柄	funny (おもしろい)/ cool (かっこいい) / smart (賢い)/ friendly (親しみやすい) / kind (優しい)/ active (活動的) ＊とてもおもしろい very funny

(2) 一般動詞を使って、よくすることを表す

○○は	どれくらい頻繁に？	一般動詞	(△△を)	(いつ?、どこで?)	.
He She	always (いつも) often (よく) sometimes (時々)	plays (スポーツ・楽器等を)する studies ～を勉強する likes ～を好む wants ～を欲する has ～を持っている listens to ～を聞く reads ～を読む		after dinner 夕食後 every day 毎日 on Saturdays 土曜日に	

※ これまでに習ったその他の一般動詞

speaks (～を話す) / goes to (～に行く) / walks (歩く) / writes (～を書く)

lives in (～に住んでいる) / uses (～を使う) / drives (運転する) / teaches (～を教える)

※ その他（一般動詞と一緒に使う便利な表現）

very much (とても) / well (上手に)

(3) 一般動詞を使って、外見の特徴を表す

○ ○は	一般動詞	（△△を・□□に）	.
He She	has	short hair (短い髪) long hair (長い髪) shoulder length hair (肩までの長さの髪)	
	wears	glasses	

2. 自分の家族を紹介する文を書いてみよう。

☆ ユニークな紹介になるように、いろいろな単語を使う（一般動詞は少なくとも 5 種類以上）

☆ 一人につき、少なくとも 4 文以上書く。（1 つは一般動詞の文にする）

☆ なるべく習った単語で書きましょう。それ以外でどうしても知りたい単語があれば、辞書で調べたり先生に聞いたりしましょう。

［家族紹介に入れる内容の例］ 1.自分との関係 2.年齢など 3.人柄 4.好きなもの 5.よくすることや得意なこと

① This is

②

③

④

Appendix B: Fun Communicative Activities Supported by Timed Conversation

助動詞 My Ideal Girlfriend!

Step 1 石飛先生（がもし中学生だった場合）の理想の彼氏について聞きましょう。

He [ ] be nice. He [ ] be handsome. I [ ]go to Nagashima with him!

Step 2 助動詞の使い方と意味をまとめましょう。 助動詞 ＋ [ ]

have to ( ) それより意味が強い must ( )
not have to ( ) とは意味が全然違う mustn't ( )
can ( ) cannot ( )
will ( ) won't =will not

Step 3 これは誰の理想の彼女・彼氏でしょう？Let's guess!

①（ ）先生 ②（ ）先生 ③（ ）先生
④（ ）先生 ⑤（ ）先生 ⑥（ ）先生

Step 4 それぞれの理想の彼女・彼氏についてまとめよう！

1. Ms. Yoshikawa's perfect boyfriend…
   He can [ ]
   He doesn't have to [ ]
   I will [ ]

2. Mr. Kuwayama's perfect girlfriend…
   She has to [ ]
   She can [ ]

3. Mr. Otani's perfect girlfriend…
   She mustn't [ ]
   I will [ ]

4. Ms. Saimei's perfect boyfriend…
   He has to [ ]
   He must [ ]
   He mustn't [ ]

ア write wrong *kanji* in the love letters.
※ wrong 間違った
イ talk to other boys.
※ other 他の
ウ teach me swimming.
エ be a Tigers fan.
オ text back to me soon.
※ text 携帯メールを送る
カ talk about baseball with me.
キ go hiking with her.
ク visit temples and shrines with him.
※ temple 寺 shrine 神社
ケ be taller than me.
※ taller than ~ ～より背が高い
コ send a love letter to me every morning.

Step 5 Let's write about your ideal girlfriend / boyfriend!

I will write about my ideal girlfriend / boyfriend.

○ She / He
○

Step 6 Let's talk about our ideal girlfriend / boyfriend. 班で、順番に Step 5 を読み上げよう。他の人の書いた ideal girlfriend / boyfriend についてメモしよう。

Memo:

Step 7 Let's discuss our ideal girlfriend / boyfriend. 理想の相手について相談して作文しよう。

We talked about our ideal girlfriend / boyfriend.

Step 8 Let's make a presentation! Step 7 の内容をクラスに発表しよう。

授業についてのコメント

この活動について: Fun Easy Useful ◎○△×を書く

Newsletter

Ms. Noriko Ishitobi
October, 2011

Active English

Ueda Junior High School 2nd year , English

「毎月発行する」と言ってたのに…。I'm sorry ^^;

My Dream

スピーチをそのままここに載せました。

①I want to be a teacher. I want to teach science. Do you know Mr. Denjiro? He teachers science to many people. I like him. I want to be like him. I like science, too. But it's not easy. So I study hard to teach it to many people.

②I want to be a midwife because I like babies. Many people have babies. I want to help them.

My sister was born ten years ago. She was cute. A midwife helped my mother. She had many skills. She cooked dishes and watched mothers and babies. My mother said, "Thank you very much." My family smiled. I want to be a midwife. I want to study about babies.

③I want to be an announcer and tell people a lot of news. I like TV program. An announcer is a very important job because people need some information. I want to be like Ms. Yuki Sugiura in NHK. I like her very much. I want to read a script exactly.

④I want to be a vet. Being a vet is a very important job. I want to care for sick animals. Many animals get sick so many animals need help. I want to help these animals.

Last year my dog was very sick so I wanted to help her. I want to be a vet so I can help animals like her.

⑤I want to be a singer because I like song. I often listen to KARA's songs lately. I listen to KARA's songs when I'm tired. Then I became fine. I listen to KARA's songs when I'm happy. Then I become very happy.

We can't live without food and water. I think we don't die without songs. But songs give us courage and happiness. So I want to be a singer and I want to give many people courage and happiness.

⑥I want to be a hospital clown. I want to care for sick people.

Last year I watched TV about hospital clown. His name is Kosuke Omune. His name is Kei-chan. He smiles at sick children. His smile is very gentle. I want to meet Kei-chan because he lives in Nagoya. And I want to be a hospital clown.

Word List

midwife 助産師
baby 赤ちゃん
skill 技術, 技
dishes 料理
announcer アナウンサ
script 原稿
exactly 正確に
vet 獣医
lately 最近
courage 勇気
clown ピエロ, 道化師
gentle 優しい
※ hospital clown ホスピタルクラウン

笑いが身体の免疫力を高めるということで、笑いを病院にも届ける活動をします。専門の教育を受けたクラウン(道化師)は病室を訪問し患者さんを和ませます。

Word List

fisherman 漁師
kind 種類
novelist 小説家
without ～なしで
take a break 休憩する
chef シェフ
carpenter 大工
build 建てる
comfortable 快適な
wedding planner ウェディングプランナー
cousin いとこ

My Dream

⑦I want to be a fisherman. I want to catch fish because I like to eat food and am interested in fish. Then there are many kinds of fish. I want to know about them and want to find new fish.

Last month I watched a fisherman on TV. He is very cool and wonderful. I want to be like him

⑧I want to be a teacher. I want to be a P.E. teacher like Mr. Ogura. I want to teach many students. And I want to make a baseball club because I like baseball. I want to teach about wonderful baseball

⑨I want to be a novelist. I like reading books very much. I found an interesting book this summer. I kept reading the book without taking a break. I don't know this novelist is a man or a woman. But I love this novelist. I want to be a novelist like her or him. And I want to write a popular book all over the world.

⑩I want to be a chef. I like cooking. About five years ago, I made a cake for the first time. After that, I often make a cake or cookies. My family always eats my cooking. Then they look happy. I enjoy cooking. I want to be a good chef.

⑪I want to be a carpenter. I like looking houses. I like making something. Many people like to live [in] comfortable house[s]. I want to build comfortable houses. And I want to build my house, too. I am going to study hard for my dream.

⑫I want to be a wedding planner. I want to see happy faces of people.

Three years ago my cousin had a wedding ceremony. She was very beautiful. And they looked very happy. Their wedding planner had a lot of nice idea[s]. I want to be like her.

女子は理想が高い^^; スポーツができて、勉強教えてくれて、でも優等生でなくてもよくて！？そんな男子いるのか？^^;

男子は若いのにすでに亭主関白！？
She must cook!?
Must!?

No way！！！

よくある文法の間違い どこが間違っているのかな

My Ideal Boyfriend vs. My Ideal Girlfriend

My Ideal Boyfriend	My Ideal Girlfriend
He must be nice to me.	She must be nice.
He has to have many friends.	She has to be cute.
He can help me with studying.	She must talk to me every day.
He can cook.	She must cook.
He has to be funny.	She has to have a nice smile.
He has to be taller than me.	She mustn't get angry.
He doesn't have to be a good student.	She must be interesting.
	She doesn't have to be skinny.
× He must can play sports.	× She has to not be pretty.
× He must handsome.	× She has to long hair.

Appendix C: Using Both Planned and Incidental Focus on Form

Cell Phones — For or Against?

Opinion: Junior high school students may have cell phones.

Step 1 — Brainstorming

FOR / AGAINST

Step 2 — New Vocabulary

Step 3 — Write the reasons

①	
②	
③	
④	
⑤	

Step 4 — Let's talk

A: How are you doing?
B: Fine, thanks. And you?
A: Great. Do you think junior high school students may have cell phones?
B: Yes, I do. / No, I don't.
A: Why do you think so?

B: Because ……

How about you?

A: I (don't) think junior high school students may have cell phones because ……

B: I see. Nice talking with you.

A: You, too.

Final Step－Express your opinions

Poster Session

1　ポスター作成

写真や絵、色ペンなどを用いて、聞く人がわかりやすいよう工夫しよう。

2　発表原稿作成

・できるだけみんなが知っている単語や表現を使うよう心がけよう。

・関係代名詞を必ず入れること。

【発表原稿の例】

I am doing a report on Helen Keller. She was born in Alabama, the United States in 1880. When she was 19 months old, she became sick and had a high fever. After that she couldn't see, hear or speak.

Anne Sullivan was her private teacher. She taught Helen many things and helped her. Helen studied very hard, went to the university and got Bachelor of Art. She was the first blind and deaf person who got BA.

Thank you for listening.

3　発表の後

次の質問がされます。答えを準備しておこう。

（1）Why did you choose her/him/them?　なぜその人を選びましたか。

（2）What did you use when you wrote the report?

レポートを書くのに何を使いましたか。（A book, the Internet, etc.）

（3）How did you feel after you wrote the report?

レポートを書いた感想は？

上の３つの質問の後、聞き手はさらに質問してもよい。質問がなければ "Tell us more."と言い、発表者は時間が終わるまで話し続けること（聞き手に質問してもよい。）

発表原稿　※関係代名詞には下線を引くこと。