Communicative Competence and Focus on Form

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Focus on form (FonF) is the integration of grammar instruction with activities that have a communicative purpose (Long, 1991). Ellis (2006) and Long concluded that FonF leads to faster learning. Moreover, learners need to practice communication to develop communicative competence (Savignon, 1997). However, there is little longitudinal research in classrooms on FonF's effects (Ellis, 2006). This paper summarizes a yearlong study implementing an approach to FonF that Lee and VanPatten (2003) proposed, based on information exchange tasks supported by structured-input and output activities. The study, conducted in a 1st-year Japanese junior high school class, showed that the approach was effective at developing both grammatical competence and overall communicative competence. Additionally, the approach contributed to a high level of student motivation to study. The study has implications for the effective implementation of FonF in Japanese junior high schools.

フォーカス・オン・フォーム・インストラクション（FonF）は，文法指導と，コミュニケーションを目的とした活動とを統合させたものである（Long, 1991）。 Ellis（2006）とLong は，FonFによってより速く学ぶことができると結論づけている。また，学習者はコミュニケーション能力を高めるために実際にコミュニケーションをとる必要がある（Savignon, 1997）。しかしながら，FonFの効果についての長期的な実践の調査はほとんどない。本論文は，structured input及びoutput活動に支えられた情報交換タスクを基本とした，LeeとVanPatten（2006）が提唱するFonFをめざした取り組みの1年間にわたる研究をまとめたものである。この研究は，日本の中学校1年生のクラスで行われ，結果としてFonFが文法能力とコミュニケーション能力の両方を伸ばすのに効果があるということがわかった。加えて，このアプローチによって生徒の英語学習に対する意欲も高まった。本研究は，日本の中学校におけるFonFの効果的な実践にとって意味がある。

THE **J**APANESE Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) emphasizes the importance of communication using the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing (MEXT, 2009). MEXT also lists specific grammar points and functions that students should learn to develop their communicative ability. How can teachers best help their students develop communicative competence within these guidelines?

Savignon (1997) said that communication practice is necessary for learners to develop communicative competence. On the other hand, Ellis (2006) pointed out that *form-focused instruction* (FFI) is needed for developing grammatical competence. Long (1991) and Ellis proposed that both can be accomplished most effectively with *focus on form* (FonF). Defined by Long, FonF is the integration of FFI with what Ellis (2001) termed *meaning-focused instruction* (MFI), instruction in which the learner uses the language.

This paper summarizes a yearlong empirical study on FonF in a 1st-year Japanese junior high school (JHS) English class, which I conducted (Rector, 2012). In the literature review I describe an approach to FonF proposed by Lee and VanPatten (2003) integrating *information-exchange tasks* for MFI with *structured input and output tasks* for FFI. In subsequent sections I summarize my implementation of the approach and data collection. Then, based on data from language samples, communication tests, and student surveys, I show that integrating structured input and output and conversation strategy practice with information-exchange tasks were effective at developing students' communicative competence and led to accurate production of target forms. Moreover, the effectiveness of the approach contributed to students' strong motivation and enjoyment of English. I conclude with the suggestion that Japanese JHS teachers replace the traditional FFI in their classes with structured input and output and provide at least 1 hour a week of MFI based on information exchange tasks.

Literature Review

Ellis (2001) defined two broad areas of second language instruction: MFI in which the learner uses the language, and FFI in which the learner studies the language as an object. Savignon (1997) maintained that communicative competence requires the simultaneous, integrated use of grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competences (p. 225). She contended that this requires MFI. However, Long (1991), Ellis (2006), and Lee and VanPatten (2003) contended that FFI is also important.

Long (1991) defined two general design types of FFI, FonF and *focus on formS*. FonF is a design in which FFI is integrated with MFI. Focus on formS refers to designs in which FFI is separate from MFI. Ellis (2001) expanded this to include two types of FonF, planned and incidental. In planned FonF the teacher anticipates the need for FFI and plans intensive study of a form

to support MFI. In incidental FonF the teacher deals with issues extensively as they come up in MFI. Within these three types of FFI, there are a wide variety of techniques that might be used. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss these techniques in detail; however, interested readers can find useful discussion of these techniques in Ellis (2001) and Williams (2005).

Information-Exchange Task

Lee and VanPatten (2003) advocated an approach to planned FonF organized around MFI activities they called *information-exchange tasks*. These are activities in which learners complete a task, such as writing a composition, using information they obtained in open-ended communication. Doing something with the information is important to ensure learners attend to meaning in their conversations. This increases the likelihood that they will improve their accuracy. Lee and VanPatten proposed preparing students for information-exchange tasks with pretasks focused on specific competencies. For FFI they recommend tasks called structured input and output.

Structured Input

Structured input helps learners acquire grammar by drawing their attention to the target form while they process the meaning in comprehensible input. It is based on two ideas. First, learners acquire language when they attend to form to understand the meaning of communication (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). The second is the hypothesis that learners may not acquire form from comprehensible input if they do not need to attend to the form to understand the meaning (VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993). For example, learners generally process content words before they process verb endings, so if a past tense sentence has the word *yesterday*, they will not attend to the verb form. Structured input might deal with this by having students respond to temporal

information in items that convey that information only with the verb form.

Structured Output

In order for learners to develop fluency and accuracy with a particular form, they need to practice *access* (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Access, defined by Terrell (1986, 1991), is the process by which people use their acquired language to express their intended meaning and string form and structure together in appropriate ways. Structured output activities require students to express their thoughts using a particular form. A critical feature is that another person responds to the learners' output in some way. This increases the likelihood that learners will attend to the meaning of what they say (Lee & VanPatten, 2003).

Research Issues

From their reviews of the research, Long (1991) and Ellis (2006) concluded that learners learn more quickly with FonF than with focus on formS or MFI alone. Also, Lee and VanPatten (2003) cited a number of studies showing the effectiveness of structured input and output on development of grammatical competence. Therefore, Lee and VanPatten's approach to FonF is an appropriate framework for developing communicative competence in Japanese JHSs. However, little research has been done on its implementation or effect on learning outcomes.

Two exceptions are Sato, Iwai, Kato, and Kushiro (2008) and Sato, Fukumoto, Ishitobi, and Morioka (2012). Both papers reviewed action research conducted by teachers in Japanese secondary schools. Sato et al. (2008) showed that structured input and output may lead to higher test scores in Japanese high school grammar courses. Sato et al. (2012) looked at FonF instruction in JHSs. In one case study in this paper, Morioka

replaced much of the grammar instruction in her 3rd-year JHS class with information-exchange tasks and structured input and output. Based on student surveys, she concluded that the structured input and output enabled students to use the target language in the information-exchange tasks. However, Morioka's study did not confirm the accuracy of the students' production with language samples or look at their communicative competence overall. In the present study I attempt to fill this gap.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. How can FonF based on information-exchange tasks and structured input and output be implemented to develop communicative competence in Japanese public JHS students?

2. What effect does this have on students' development of English skills?

3. What effect does this have on students' motivation to persevere in class?

Method
Teaching Context

I conducted the study at a JHS where I worked as an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) and collected data from one of nine classes with 34 students each. I chose this class for the study because the class had a positive attitude and did not have behavior problems that might interfere with or complicate the study. Each class had 3 hours each week with a Japanese teacher of English (JTE) and 1 hour with me. The JTE followed the textbook and created some of her own communicative output activities for practicing grammar.

Teaching Procedure

Each term, I developed a lesson plan and administered a communication test based on an information-exchange task. For these tasks, each student wrote a short composition about a classmate, using information obtained in a timed conversation. For preparation, the students practiced the information-exchange tasks as many as six times with different partners after doing a variety of tasks to develop specific proficiencies including:

- structured-input drills developed from Total Physical Response (TPR) (see Appendix A for an example);
- structured-input and output tasks developed from common communication games such as guessing games and bingo;
- various MFI activities, such as writing compositions and interviewing classmates; and
- recursive short conversations focused on practicing conversation strategies, such as introductions, the use of *how about you*, and closing conversations.

A typical class session started with recursive short conversations. In this activity the students practiced a conversation strategy four or more times with different partners, often recycling grammar from previous class sessions. The class spent the remaining time with either structured input followed by structured output or an MFI activity.

Data Collection and Analysis

I collected data from three sources. First, I transcribed and did error analysis on language samples to get a picture of how, and to what extent, students developed their grammatical competence. The samples consisted of recordings of four students' class activities and recordings of the communication tests and writing samples from the entire class. The second source was the students' scores on the communication tests, which demonstrated their progress in developing conversation strategies, listening, and writing skills. The third source was two student surveys in Japanese, which I administered in December 2011 and March 2012 to confirm that the students' performance represented improvement and see how my lessons affected motivation. In December, I asked students to compare their impressions of their present abilities with those of the previous April. In March, students did the same for new questions and then answered the original survey, giving their impressions for March. Students also gave reasons for their feelings about English.

Results

Student Production and Errors

The language sample data show that students produced target forms of structured input and output drills very accurately in the first communication test (see Table 1). Students produced one of these forms, the collocation of *do* rather than *play* with various activities, in the third communication test 10 months after the treatment, though less accurately. Error rates for subject-verb agreement in third-person statements, targeted in the second term, showed a similar pattern. For comparison, subject-verb agreement for *who*-fronted questions was not the target of structured input and the error rate for it was 100% (see Table 2).

Table 1. Error Rates for Targets of Structured Input Produced on the First Communication Test (n = 34)

Target form	Errors	Accurate production	Error rate
Yes-or-no questions	3	288	1%
Yes responses	1	171	1%
No responses	1	99	1%
Positive statements: regular verbs	1	377	0%
Negative statements: regular verbs	2	64	3%
Collocation with *do*	8	36	18%

Table 2 Error Rates For Selected Forms on the Communication Tests (n = 31)

Form	Communication Test	Errors	Correct	Error rate
Collocation of *do* with activity nouns	Term one	6	36	14%
	Term two	3	0	100%
	Term three	12	30	29%
Noun forms with the verbs *like* and *play*	Term one	143	18	89%
	Term two	40	16	71%
	Term three	70	37	65%
Third person singular subject-verb agreement	Term two	34	187	15%
	Term three	53	74	42%
Subject-verb agreement in who-fronted questions	Term three	50	0	100%

Some evidence suggests that recycling target forms enhances the effect and durability of structured input and output. In the second term on 15 September, students completed structured-input and output activities aimed at helping them use appropriate noun forms, plural or noncount, as objects of *like* and *read*. Recordings of the four volunteers revealed that immediately following this treatment, some students produced plural nouns in a short conversation activity. However, when this activity was repeated after a 2-week hiatus, some of the same students did not produce plural forms. This was followed by a 1-month hiatus in which the students did not have my lessons. After this hiatus, these students did not produce plurals at all in the communication test (see Table 3). In contrast, in the first and third terms there were no breaks. The students had opportunities to recycle target language in MFI activities every week. Additionally, in the first term, I found a variety of errors in writing and speaking samples over the course of the term that students did not make on the communication test (see Table 4).

Table 3. Student Production of Nouns as Objects of *Like* and *Read*

Student	Language sample date and activity			
	5 July Term one test	15 Sept Short conversations	27 Sept Short conversations	28 Nov Term two test
Konan	*Lego*		*Legos* (4)	*animal*
Noriko	*cat, dog*	*cats*	*cat*	*bird*
Yuna	*carrot, dog, book, cherry, comics, cat, watermelon*	*books*	*books*	*dog, cat, hamburger*

| Student | Language sample date and activity | | | |
	5 July Term one test	15 Sept Short conversations	27 Sept Short conversations	28 Nov Term two test
Irusa	*strawberry, lemon* (2), *cherry, cookie, orange*	*strawberries*	*strawberry*	*tiger, monkey*
Hiroshi	*carrot, onion* (2), *lemon*		*onion* (4)	*birds*
Kana	*cat, strawberry*		*tomato*	*dogs* (2), *hamburger*

Note. Numbers in parenthesis indicate the numbers of occurrences.

Table 4. Errors in Verb Forms in MFI Tasks in the First Term

Student	14 June	28 June	5 July: Communication test
Koichi	I'**m do** snowboarding. I'**m don't** play golf.		I play baseball I play badminton I play 卓球.
Tomoki	I'**m don't** like NAME	I don't like study. I don't like basketball.	I don't like 焼肉.

Student	14 June	28 June	5 July: Communication test
Momoka	**I'm play** SKE **I'm play** too AKB.	I play soccer. I play swimming. I play shogi.	I play badminton. I play volleyball. I don't play dance.
Nobita	I am from ドラムオウコク I am チョッパー	**I NAME** (5)	I'm NAME.
Hiroshi		I **want like** AKB goods. (5) Do you **want like** AKB goods (5)	I want AKB goods Do you want AKB goods?
Junichi-ro	In response to *do*-fronted questions. Yes, **I am** (2)	In response to *do*-fronted questions Yes, **I am** (9) Yes, I do (1)	In response to *do*-fronted questions Yes, I do. (2) Yes, **I am**. (1)

Note. Errors are in bold. Numbers in parentheses indicate occurrences.

Test Results

Table 5 shows achievement of goals for the conversation portion and selected goals from the written portion of the third-term communication test. This shows the students used conversation strategies they practiced in the third term. For example, the students used conversation strategies representing a range of competencies: sociolinguistic (openers and closers), discourse

(follow-up questions), and strategic competencies (shadowing) (see Table 5). Moreover, more than half the students also used other strategies that they practiced in the previous terms or picked up from demonstrations, an improvement over term two (see Figure 1). As writing goals changed due to the introduction of complex sentences, comparison to previous terms is complicated. Ninety-four percent of the students wrote complex sentences, which they learned in my lessons in the third term. Most of the students also included 10 points of information in their compositions. This suggests that they were able to understand and remember what they learned from their conversation partners.

Table 5. Achievement of Third-Term Conversation Goals and Selected Writing Goals (n = 34)

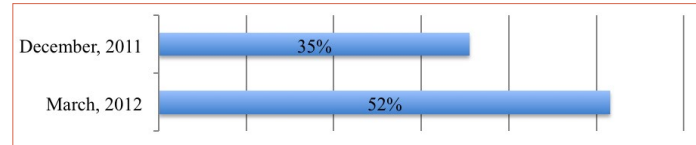| Goal	Percentage of students
Participated for 5 minutes	100%
Used a variety of grammar	85%
Did shadowing	100%
Asked a variety of follow-up questions	100%
Used an opener	100%
Used a closer	91%
Used other conversation strategies	56%
Wrote complex sentences	94%
Wrote at least four sentences	88%
Wrote 10 points of information or more	85%

Figure 1. Communication Tests: Percentage of Students Who Used Other Conversation Strategies (n = 31)

Students' Impressions of How They Improved

In the student surveys, students confirmed that their ability to participate in open-ended conversation improved (see Figure 2). They also confirmed that their ability to use conversation strategies improved for those strategies they had practiced in the first two terms (see Figure 3) and for those they had practiced in the third term (see Figure 4). Finally, the students reported that their listening comprehension improved (see Figure 5).
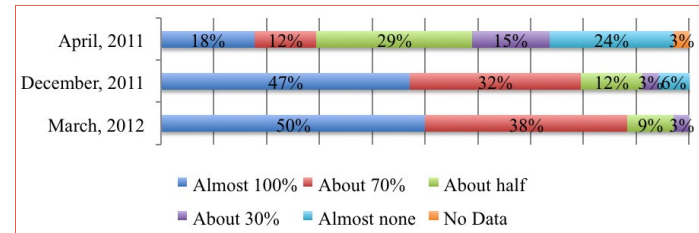

Figure 2. Student Survey: How Long Could You Talk in Timed Conversations? (n = 34)
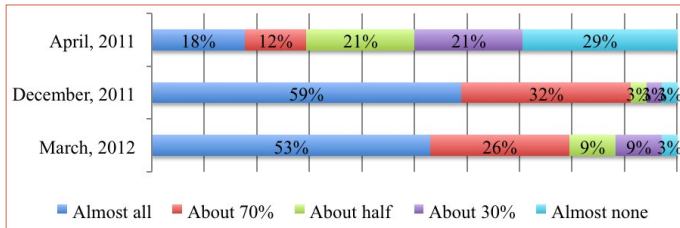
Figure 3. Student Survey: Could You Use Conversation Strategies From the First and Second Term? (n = 34)
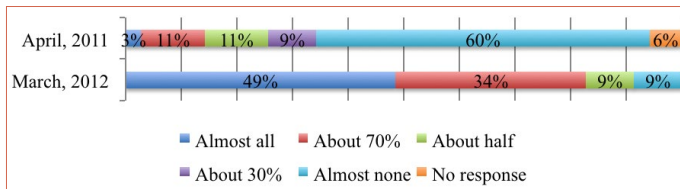

Figure 4. Student Survey: Could You Use Conversation Strategies From the Third Term? (n = 34)
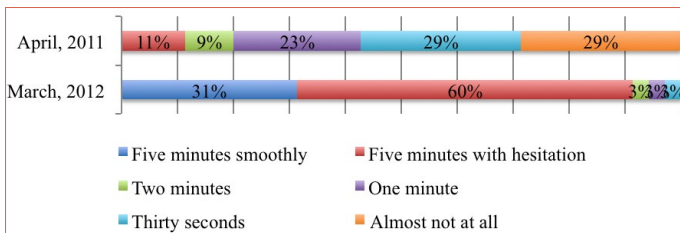

Figure 5. Student Survey: When Talking in Pairs, How Much Could You Understand? (n = 34)

Student Motivation

Concerning their motivation and enjoyment of the class, the students reported an increase in both between April and March (see Figure 6 and Figure 8). Their motivation in and enjoyment of my lessons also increased and was higher than for English in general (see Figure 7 and Figure 9). Two factors stand out as reasons for the students' feelings. First, the most common reason given for positive feelings was success, while that for negative feelings was failure. Second, students found the lessons or specific activities fun (see Table 6).
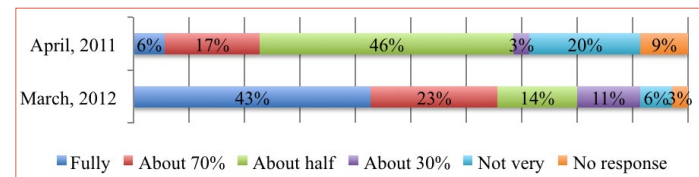

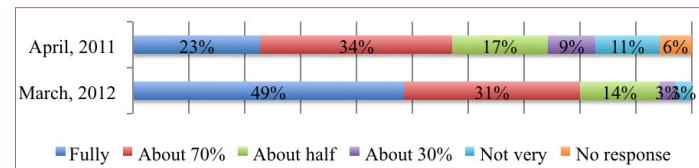Figure 6. Student Survey: How Motivated Were You to Study English? (n = 34)

Figure 7. Student Survey: How Motivated Were You in Mr. Rector's Lessons? (n = 34)
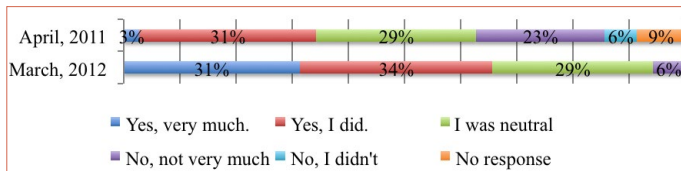
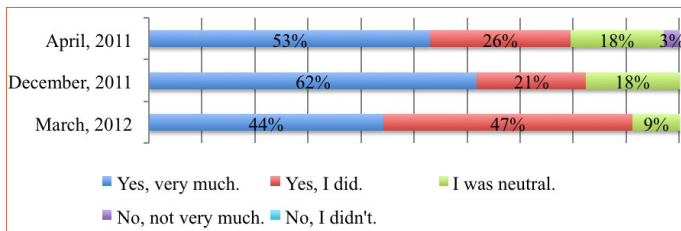Figure 8. Student Survey: Did You Like English? (*n* = 34)

Figure 9. Student Survey: Did You Like Mr. Rector's Lessons? (*n* = 34)

Table 6. Reasons for Students' Opinions or Changes of Opinion About English (*n* = 34)

Positive Responses	Percentage of students
I succeeded in or improved my English.	56%
English or Mr. Rector's lessons were fun.	50%
The games were motivating or fun.	21%
I enjoyed speaking in English.	15%
English was challenging.	15%
English is useful.	12%
I had a chance to study with a foreign teacher.	9%

Mr. Rector created a positive atmosphere in the class.	9%
Other reasons	15%
Negative Responses	
I could not understand the class or I failed the test.	15%
English was difficult.	12%
Other reasons	15%

Discussion

Concerning how the lessons affected learning outcomes, there are two main findings. First, integrating the structured input and output with the information exchange task seems to have helped develop durable grammatical competence. Students did best when targeted forms were recycled repeatedly and continued to accurately produce target structures as many as 10 months after structured input. Production of forms that were not recycled or targeted by structured input was less accurate.

The second finding is that Lee and VanPatten's (2003) approach to supporting information-exchange tasks with pretasks targeting specific competencies appears to have helped students develop communicative competence overall. Test data and student surveys show that practicing conversation strategies may have enabled students to use the targeted strategies in the information-exchange tasks. Also, these data show that students developed their listening and writing ability. They could understand their classmates well enough to write compositions with 10 or more points of information using complex sentences.

Concerning the effect on motivation, based on the student survey, it appears that the students' success in my lessons and their enjoyment of the activities contributed to high motivation

to learn English. It is possible that the positive feelings were the result of the students liking me, but few students reported this. The dominant reasons given were that the students were successful and that they enjoyed the lessons.

Finally, concerning how to implement the approach, in addition to the need for integration and recycling discussed above, the findings suggest two points. First, there is the need for continuity. Integrating and recycling proficiencies require that lessons be conducted without long gaps. Second, the importance of success for student motivation suggests that maintaining students' awareness of their progress with measures such as self-evaluation and communication tests may be valuable.

Conclusion

This research corroborates Sato et al.'s (2012) finding that structured input and output enable learners to use targeted forms in MFI activities. It also supports Lee and VanPatten's (2003) expectation that the information exchange tasks will improve accuracy and that FonF develops overall communicative competence. It does not show that structured input and output are more effective than other techniques for FFI. However, Sato et al.'s (2008) finding that structured input and output may lead to higher test scores compared to traditional grammar instruction, combined with this study's result that recycling language in MFI may enhance the effects of FFI, should give teachers confidence that replacing traditional grammar instruction with this approach will enhance their students' chances of success. Longitudinal studies comparing outcomes on high stakes tests between students taught with FonF and traditional teaching are needed to increase this confidence.

Realistically, it is unlikely that teachers will abandon the focus-on-formS approach to FFI as long as MEXT maintains a list of target forms, and entrance exams test them. Therefore, I suggest a mixed approach in which teachers replace all traditional FFI with structured-input and output tasks. They should combine this with at least 1 hour each week of MFI, which, ideally, should be based on information-exchange tasks. With careful coordination between the two strands, this would effectively be FonF. This would likely improve students' entrance exam scores, communicative competence, and motivation to study.

Bio Data

Michael Rector has been teaching English in Japan for 10 years including 5 years in public junior high schools. He completed an MA TESOL course at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies in September 2012. He is currently teaching at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies.

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Appendix A

Example Lesson Plan: TPR-Based Structured Input With Structured Output

Target: Second person singular yes-or-no questions, collocations of *do* and *play*

Materials:

- Response cards: "Yes, I do" and "No, I don't" cards, one pair per participant (see Figure A1)
- Worksheet: １年(1st Year) Unit 3 Communication Drills

Summary

In the structured input activity, students learn a meaning-based physical response to two contrasting forms, second-person statements and second-person yes-or-no questions. The teacher then says questions and statements at random requiring the students to attend to the form to know which response to give. In the output task, the students practice using the question form to ask classmates if they do some activities. This requires them to attend to the collocations for the activities' nouns.

Procedure

TPR-Based Structured Input

- Distribute the response cards to the students (see figure A1).
- Teach the students to respond to second-person statements by acting out the meaning. Use various activities that collocate with *do* and *play*. For example, "You play soccer," and "You do judo," would be appropriate. The activities you use don't need to be on the worksheet and you don't need to use all the activities on the worksheet.
- Teach the students to respond to second-person questions about the activities by holding up their response cards.
- Mix statements with questions so that students have to listen to the form to know which response to give.

Figure A1. Student Response Cards

Structured Output Activity

- Check to see if the students have noticed the difference between *play* and *do*.
- Explain that *play* collocates with games and sports that have an object, such as a ball, that is moved by various players.
- Have the students complete the sentences on the worksheet (see Figure A2) and circle *yes* or *no* to indicate whether they do the activity. Check their answers.
- Demonstrate how to take turns asking questions with a partner to fill out the worksheet. Use the dialog below.
- Let the students do the activity with three different partners.

Dialog

   A: Hi (B's name)

   B: Hi (A's name)

   A: Do you (do cycling)?

   B: Yes, I do. / No, I don't.
      Do you (do cycling)?

   A: Yes, I do. / No, I don't.

   B: Do you (play baseball)?

   A: . . .

1年 Unit 3 Communication Drills

		You			
	I _____ cycling.	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
	I _____ baseball.	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
	I _____ kendo.	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
	I _____ soccer.	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
	I _____ judo.	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
	I _____ skating.	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
	I _____ the guitar.	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
	I _____ shogi.	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

Name_____ class_____ no. _____

Figure A2. Play/Do Worksheet

Appendix B

Image Credits

The images appearing in the 1 年 *Unit 3 Communication Drills* worksheet (see Figure A2) are licensed under *Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike* licenses that allow the free use of the materials, provided the user credits the creator and makes it possible for others to use the materials also. The following is a list of attributions and locations of the original files in order of appearance. In cases in which the image is shared under different conditions, a specific license is indicated.

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Cooperative Learning as a Facilitator to Communicative EFL Teaching

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The final phase of the 2009 Ministry of Education, Sports, Science and Technology—Japan reforms, calling for more communicative and interactive high school English classes, comes into effect in April 2013. In order to make the classes more communicative, teachers are being asked to adopt more student-centered teaching approaches. In order to conduct such interactive classes, we propose the use of cooperative learning (CL). This teaching strategy provides students with opportunities to interact with each other more efficiently. In this paper we discuss the advantages of CL over more teacher-centered approaches and offer examples of practical activities teachers can use to heighten student interaction in class.

　2009年に文部科学省によって改訂された新学習指導要領は、2013年4月に全面実施となる。本改訂により、英語の授業はよりコミュニカティブ、且つインタラクティブに行われることが強調された。そのためには、学習形態を教師中心型から、生徒中心型へ移行することが有効だと考えられる。協同学習は、生徒同士による対話の機会を増やし、学びを互いに高め合う上で、重要な役割を果たす。本論文では、教師中心型と生徒中心型の授業を比較しながら、協同学習の実践的なアクティビティーを紹介する

JAPAN'S **M**INISTRY of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's (MEXT) Courses of Study (CoS) have undergone system-wide curricular reforms in the past few years. The final stage of implementation, to be started in April 2013, states that English shall be the language of instruction in English classes at the senior high school level. These revisions to the CoS were ratified in 2009 and have already been implemented at the elementary school level in 2011 and the junior high school level in 2012. One of the main objectives of the CoS revisions is to have

students using the target language (TL) in a communicative and meaningful way. The strong language used in the document has garnered a great deal of discussion. The new revisions reiterate previous recommendations to have language classes conducted in the TL and further call for a more committed effort on the part of teachers to have the TL reflected not only in student output, but also as the main language of instruction. This phase of the CoS, and specifically the teaching of English classes in English, targets the high school level. Junior high school teachers will also need to adjust their teaching approach as they prepare their students to enter these new types of English environments.

While questions remain as to how strictly the new directives will be applied, there is no doubt that this will prove to be a difficult task since EFL classes in Japan are predominantly taught in the L1 (Gorsuch, 1999; LoCastro, 1996). This means that students will be more dependent on the teacher's ability to create an environment conducive to English language communication. Similarly, it will require the teacher to move away from commonly used translation methods and work on more effectively using communicative teaching techniques. In Section 8, Article 3 of the Foreign Languages section, teachers of English language classes are instructed to conduct classes in English "in principle," in order to provide the best exposure to communicative English for their students (MEXT, 2010). The reforms call for teachers to carefully consider student proficiency levels in English, and have the teachers adjust their level of English accordingly, in the hopes of making classes more communicative while using the target language.

Teacher Beliefs

When it comes to education, teachers' attitudes and beliefs are the strongest guiding influences on instruction (Cuban, 1993; Reynolds & Saunders, 1987), regardless of level of instruction or nationality. This suggests many teachers resist making changes

to their teaching practices when those changes stem from administrative directives. Teachers might not necessarily follow new curricular reforms simply because they are instructed to do so, but they might discard old practices if they are shown new methods that lead to better outcomes.

There are many reasons nonnative English-speaking EFL teachers are reluctant to teach in English. Certainly, if one looks at the scores of public school teachers on English proficiency tests, one can see that they are not meeting the expectations set out by MEXT (MEXT, 2011). In the section entitled "On improving English skills and instruction abilities of English teachers, and the strategic improvement of English education at the level of schools and communities," MEXT posts the low attainment levels of its teachers in relation to its benchmark targets: "The English proficiency of 27.7% of the teachers was above STEP Grade Pre-1, TOEFL (PBT) score of over 550, iBT score of over 80, and a TOEIC score of over 730" (MEXT, 2011).

The low proficiency levels are only one part of the larger issue, that being a lack of teacher confidence. Many nonnative English-speaking teachers do not feel that they possess sufficient sociocultural and strategic competencies to introduce communicative activities in the target language (Butler, 2004; Nishino, 2008; Sakui, 2004; Samimy & Kobayashi, 2004). Even with extensive training, some teachers still lack confidence when delivering EFL lessons in English (Fennelly & Luxton, 2011). This lack of confidence is often attributed to the colonial Self-Other discourse which pits bilingual EFL teachers against the native model teacher (Kachru, 1986). This discourse renders the native status unattainable to the "outsider," no matter how high the level of proficiency (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008, p. 50).

The Changing Roles of Teachers

While there is general agreement that low confidence is not easily overcome, two Dörnyei studies dealing with teacher prac-

tices are instrumental in helping find a solution. In what they called the "Ten Commandments," Dörnyei and Cziser (1998) identified 10 strategies to motivating students. Key among them are the following two: setting a personal example and creating a pleasant learning atmosphere. Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) found a positive correlation between instructor motivational practices and the level of student motivation. These findings reveal a need for EFL teachers to be stronger models of language in use.

In order to become models of language in use, teachers must look at improving the dynamics of the classroom to foster an environment of communication. For some teachers this will require a change in teaching practice and for others it will be a simple refocusing of the weight they place on classroom communication priorities. The MEXT-commissioned survey of the state of education in Japan, Proposal 4, states:

> Reinforcement of English skills and instruction abilities of English teachers is extremely important for the improvement of students' proficiency in English. Besides, English teachers themselves must realize the importance of English communication abilities in the global society. Everyday efforts of each English teacher are of greatest importance. (Commission on the Development of Foreign Language Proficiency, 2011)

These everyday efforts will likely involve a reformulation of teachers' beliefs in the role they play in the achievement of student L2 output. Within a communicative framework the function of the teacher in the classroom changes dramatically. The teacher is not there to merely transmit knowledge and information to passive and wisdom-thirsty recipients, but rather to create the conditions conducive to learning and see to it that learning occurs. The teacher as instructor, as sole repository of truth and knowledge, has lost its universally accepted status,

and in its place has come the teacher as facilitator (Karavas, 1993, p. 231). The role of facilitator is one of the roles MEXT is calling upon public school teachers to adopt.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is a proven teaching strategy that enables teachers to conduct more interactive classes and provide students with opportunities to interact with each other more efficiently. To realize the objective of creating a more communicative and cooperative class, the role of facilitator must be more obvious in EFL classes. The following section introduces CL as a useful tool for making the role of facilitator most effective, not only for teachers with low confidence in L2 teaching, but also for those who strive to make students more communicative in English.

Cooperative learning activities are based around structured group work. Students are put into groups and individually assigned tasks that facilitate all members' participation. Rather than leaving students in groups to compete with each other, cooperative learning activities provide enough structure so that all members participate without the stronger students dominating or the weaker students remaining silent. Kagan and Kagan (2009) measure the effectiveness of an activity by using the following four principles, which form the acronym, PIES.

> P (Positive interdependence): In order to create positive interdependence, tasks need to be organized so that students are on the same team and are working toward the same goal. Tasks should be structured to make it easier for students to work together, rather than to individually complete the task.
>
> I (Individual accountability): The success of the individual student is very important. All students need to be responsible for their own performance while simultaneously contributing toward the goal of the team.

E (Equal participation): It is important for participation to be equal if all students are going to achieve gains in learning. Teachers can ensure equality in effort and opportunity by using turn-taking, time allocation, and distribution of roles.

S (Simultaneous interaction): Multiple students performing the task at the same time are more productive than one student at a time. Simultaneous interaction ensures that a higher percentage of students are actively engaged in learning.

As teachers in Japanese junior and senior high schools work towards making their lessons conform to the MEXT guidelines, they will find that traditional, teacher-centered lessons do not easily meet the goals. CL activities have the potential to help make English classrooms more communicative, as they offer more structured activities than teacher-centered lessons. This promotes student TL use in multiple ways, including interaction, efficiency, and socialization.

Interaction

With CL activities, since students work together in groups, there is more interaction. Students talk with each other, as well as with the teacher, increasing both language input and output. Input is increased because students are given the opportunity to help one another, along with the teacher, in the learning process. Similarly, since there are more opportunities to talk, student output is also increased. In contrast, a more teacher-centered approach tends to be one-sided, with students receiving input from the teacher and repeating as a class or answering questions individually when called upon.

Efficiency

Simultaneous interaction is a key part of a CL activity. This makes for more efficient use of class time, with more students talking simultaneously. In a teacher-centered lesson, students often find themselves waiting in silence as the teacher calls on students one by one to speak. CL activities significantly reduce this wait time. Also, during CL activities teachers are available to monitor student interaction, making it easier to identify someone who might need help with the material.

Another way that CL activities can help with the efficient use of class time is by allowing students to give feedback to each other. Activities can be designed where, as part of their group responsibilities, students comment upon and correct one another's work. In this way, rather than being limited to submitting an assignment and having to wait until the next class to receive feedback from the teacher, students get instant feedback from their peers.

Socialization

By participating in structured group work, students have the opportunity to improve vital social skills, such as listening to others and asking questions. By working together, students can build trust amongst themselves, making for an environment where they feel more comfortable if they make a mistake or need to seek clarification. Similarly, by arriving together at answers or conclusions, students are often more confident in their results.

Additionally, by learning in groups, students are exposed to more ideas than they would be if they were working alone. They have the opportunity to see a problem from as many different perspectives as there are members in the group, making each member an integral part of the whole group's learning experience.

Example Activities

Some example activities can better show how CL can be implemented in Japanese junior and senior high school English classes.

Round Robin

Round Robin (Kagan & Kagan, 2009) is a CL activity in which groups of students take turns working on a particular task. By delegating a time limit for each student, the teacher ensures each student has an equal opportunity to contribute to the task. Compared to a teacher-centered exercise, this activity can lead students to interact more actively by checking each other's comprehension and giving and receiving feedback from each other. Moreover, the teacher can then monitor and observe the language being used in the small groups and have more time to better assess and correct student output.

In one case in a junior high school English class, Round Robin was used to conduct written drills with a newly learned grammar point. Once students had learned the new grammar rule, and were used to its form and application, they were put into groups and given a piece of paper on which to create and complete fill-in-the-blank sentences using the target grammar point as a group.

Jigsaw

Another well-known CL activity that can be used in junior and senior high school is called Jigsaw (Kagan & Kagan, 2009). In this activity, each member of the group is responsible for a piece of information that is vital to the overall completion of the task or problem, creating an atmosphere of positive interdependence. Similar to how the image of a jigsaw puzzle needs all its pieces to be seen clearly, the CL Jigsaw needs all the group members' contribution to achieve full understanding.

Jigsaws work very well as textbook reading activities. Longer reading passages can be cut into smaller segments that are assigned to individual group members who then must rely on their team members to fill in the gaps. In one example, the activity is divided into two parts. In the first part, students prepare themselves to be well versed in the reading segment assigned to them. In the other part, they share their information with their team members. By having each member share their knowledge about their segment, an understanding of the whole reading can arise within the group.

In a teacher-centered class, students might read the whole passage alone and work on the reading task individually. The teacher would control the whole class in terms of checking for comprehension and explanation of content. This kind of lesson could result in a limited or receptive form of learning. On the other hand, in this CL activity, the tasks are shared among the students and they have the opportunity to learn from each other, as well as from the teacher. The act of explaining their segment forces students to restructure language in their minds and develops higher order thinking skills. Also, because students are aware they are individually accountable for explaining their section to their group, there is usually a higher sense of motivation to fully understand the assigned segment. Finally, they can be seen as being an expert on their section, which can boost confidence.

Conclusion

In order for teachers in Japanese high schools and junior high schools to meet the new MEXT guidelines, they will need to create more communicative, interactive classes. Making the transition from a teacher-centered, lecture style of teaching to a communicative approach will be challenging for many. CL activities can facilitate this process by providing a base for learning that is both interactive and effective. By creating more

opportunities for students to interact, there are naturally more opportunities to use English. Additionally, by creating situations where students respond to and give feedback on each other's English use in a structured way, the possibility exists for more efficient error correction. Furthermore, this process, by showing students how to take responsibility for their own learning, can be both inspiring and empowering for them.

CL can be a useful tool for teachers as well, providing an effective form of classroom management and structure that is conducive to all-English environments. Making sure all students participate in a lecture style class can be difficult, but monitoring students as they participate in CL group work is easier since all students have a role to play and, by the nature of the structured activities, participate equally and simultaneously. Also, instructions for CL activities are simple and easily adaptable to many teaching contexts. Regardless of the curriculum, they can be readily reused. Familiarity with the activities will enable teachers to use them in other contexts.

We hope CL will lower teachers' anxiety about conducting their classes in English. Instead of needing to explain everything themselves, they can have students work on their own and then explain the content to each other, so the teacher will have more time to help students when they make mistakes or have questions. In this way, teachers become class facilitators or guides for the students. CL presents itself as a tool for making the role of facilitator most effective, not only for teachers with low confidence in L2 teaching, but also for those who strive to make students more communicative in English. CL has the capability to create a pleasant learning atmosphere for students and a comfortable teaching environment for teachers. Therefore, it can be a powerful tool in helping teachers become facilitators as they implement the new MEXT revisions.

Bio Data

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Effective Language Patterns in the Classroom

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This paper begins with a discussion of the importance of teacher and student beliefs in the learning process. The main body of the paper offers practical suggestions on how to convey these beliefs to students through the usage of effective language patterns including Yes-Sets, modal operators, and embedded suggestions. Advice on delivering suggestions using analogue marking is also discussed. In order to quantify the effects of language pattern usage, a study was conducted and the results are reported in the second part of this paper. The paper concludes with a short summary of a research study, which was aimed at quantifying the benefits of these language patterns in the language learning process.

　この論文は学習過程における、先生・生徒の信念の重要性に関するディスカッションからスタートする。文の主体はそれら信念をイエス・セット、様相論理演算、埋め込み形の提言などを含む効果的な言語パターンを使い、生徒にどうやって伝達するかについて実践的な方法を提案する。アナログマーキングを用いた提言伝達のアドバイスについても言及されている。この論文は言語習得過程におけるこれらの言語パターンの利益を測定することを目的とした研究の手短な要約で結ばれている。

IF YOU have applied for a teaching job at a Japanese university recently, you may have been asked to write an essay outlining your beliefs about language teaching. While this may seem like just another hurdle to cross, thinking about your own beliefs and making them explicit can be a powerful exercise. A famous quotation attributed to Henry Ford says, "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't—you're right," and there is increasing psychological research, particularly from the field of self-efficacy (e.g., Bandura, 1997) that our beliefs are powerful frames that determine how we perceive the world.

Teachers are in positions of influence, and whether a teacher's beliefs are implicitly or explicitly held, they will have a strong effect on the amount and type of learning that takes place in any course. We begin this paper by suggesting that teachers can benefit greatly by explicitly deciding the beliefs that they wish to hold as important and the beliefs that they wish to convey to their students about learning. We then offer specific examples of effective language patterns that have been shown to help learners take on beliefs that will support their language acquisition. These language patterns are drawn from hypnotherapy (Bandler & Grinder, 1975a; Grinder, DeLozier, & Bandler, 1977) and neuro-linguistic programming (Bandler & Grinder, 1975b, 1976). We conclude with a summary of a research study that we are undertaking to quantify the effects of these language patterns. This study, in particular, examined the effec-

Making a **Difference**

tiveness of language patterns as an intervention for stimulating the writing speeds of university freshman students using a control and experimental group over a longitudinal time frame. The study explored the following research questions:

1. Did the timed-writing intervention have an impact on the experimental group's ability to increase their writing speed?

2. What were the differences, if any, in the number of words written between the experimental and control group?

Useful Beliefs

Most of our beliefs are formed by consciously or unconsciously modeling the people around us. Vygotsky (cited in Lock, 1989) suggested that every function in cultural development actually appears twice, "first, on the social level, and later on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological). All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals" (p. 59). In other words, we perceive the beliefs of influential others and eventually internalize those beliefs within our own cognitive systems. A teacher in a classroom has the attention of students for long periods of time and is certainly in a position to influence student beliefs, and teachers' expectations and beliefs have been recognized for many years as a powerful shaper of learner performance.

Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) analyzed teacher expectations and demonstrated the effects on teacher behavior in the areas of socio-emotional climate (e.g., smiling, nodding), input (e.g., the amount of learning material given to students), output (e.g., repeating or rephrasing questions), and affective feedback (e.g., the amount of criticism and praise). In a later review of studies spurred by the original research, Rosenthal (1980) noted that "altogether, 345 studies have been conducted and they show be-

yond doubt that interpersonal self-fulfilling prophecies not only occur, but that their average size of effect is far from trivial" (p. 156). More recent reviews of the research in this area (Raths, McAninch, & McAninch, 2003) strengthened this view by noting that many teacher beliefs are "incompatible or inconsistent" (p. 3) and that these beliefs can be "stumbling blocks" (p. 2) to student learning.

Teacher expectations and beliefs become self-fulfilling prophecies, yet many teachers do not take the time to consider the beliefs that they consciously and unconsciously convey to students. Perhaps even more important to consider are the beliefs that we *want* to hold or *want* our students to hold. Some of the desired beliefs that we elicited from participants in a recent presentation (Cullen, Deacon, Backwell, & Mulvey, 2012) are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. A Sample of Teachers' Desired Beliefs

As a teacher, I want to believe . . .	I want my students to believe . . .
I'm doing the best that I can do.	It's okay to make mistakes.
I'm well prepared.	English will be very useful in my life.
I have my students' best interests at heart.	I am able to learn English.
These students are capable of learning.	I will learn new skills and knowledge in this course.
My classroom is a fun and safe environment for learning.	My teacher can be trusted and has my best interests at heart. I can go to my teacher with questions and concerns.

In the next section, we will introduce several language patterns and techniques that can be used to convey these beliefs effectively to students, which include Yes-Sets, embedded suggestions, and modal operators.

Effective Language Patterns

Yes-Sets

After reading about the power of beliefs, you may have begun to consider some of your own beliefs and the ways that they are impacting your student's learning. In addition, you may be wondering about how language patterns can be structured effectively to deliver more empowering learning beliefs and other messages to your students. Yes-Sets are one way to achieve this goal.

In a Yes-Set we *pace* people with a series of statements with which they are likely to agree. These are also known as "truisms." Truisms are effective for pacing because they create a momentum towards "Yes" which then makes it easier to *lead* people in the direction that you want them to go. Yes-Sets are a particularly useful language pattern in classroom situations because teachers are often leading their students in directions that necessitate focused attention on various materials, activities, language features, and amongst others, the teacher himself or herself. A Yes-Set can be an elegant way to gain rapport by first pacing students then leading them to where we want to focus their attention. A good rule of thumb is to use about four or five of these truisms before leading students to a desired goal.

So, how specifically can we apply Yes-Sets in order to pace and lead our students in the classroom? Imagine for a moment that you want your students to review their former lesson before starting something new. You could simply say, "Okay everyone, today we are going to begin by reviewing our last lesson before starting today's lesson." In all likelihood, however, some students will have forgotten what was done in the previous lesson, some may have been absent, and others may not yet be in a settled state to learn. With a Yes-Set, they can be gently guided to recall what was covered in the former lesson before they actually review and practice what they had previously learned (or did not learn, as the case may be).

Thus, a teacher could use the following Yes-Set pattern to review the former lesson:

1) Hello everyone. It's a lovely sunny day and *we are here to learn English together again*; 2) You might *remember that last class we focused on the topic of* _____ (substitute your topic, e.g., sports); 3) And in our last lesson we (substitute what you did, e.g., listened to a dialogue about various sports; learned some collocations such as *do*, *play*, and *go* that connect to various sports; and practiced conversations); 4) And *you can remember those activities that we did now*; 5) And that means *we can begin by* _____ (doing the activity that you want students to do, e.g., reviewing the sports collocations).

You will likely notice that the pacing occurred in #1 – #4 and the leading occurred in #5. The students will also likely agree with the pacing patterns, and will then participate more readily in the leading step.

Yes-Sets can also be effective, not only in order to lead students to do various activities but also to get them into more resourceful learning states such as curiosity, relaxation, and excitement. To lead students into a state of relaxation, for instance, we could substitute the following sentence in place of #5 above: "And that means *you can relax as we review our previous lesson*." (Note: See the section below on analogue marking to amplify this example of relaxation even further.)

So, in this section we focused on Yes-Sets including: what they are, how they are structured via pacing (truisms) and leading,

and some examples of how they can be used as effective language patterns in the classroom. Now you can design a Yes-Set to use with your own students.

Modal Operators to Embed Suggestions

One of the great things about modal operators for creating suggestions is that they can seem to create a choice for the students. Sometimes, of course, that choice is an illusory choice. In other words, we are really only pretending to give our students a choice by using the options that satisfy our goals and objectives. Another lovely thing about modal operators is that they make it easy to embed suggestions for our students.

The following example illustrates the combination of modal operators and embedded suggestions (the underlined parts are spoken in an emphasized manner) that teachers could use with students: "You can _do your homework_ tonight, or you could _do your homework_ on the weekend. It's really your choice when you decide to _do your homework_."

Some useful modal operators include:

You could …	You have to …	You might …
You can …	You may …	You might …
You will …	You would …	You shall …
You should …	You ought to …	You don't have to …

The following examples show further ways that modal operators can be used in teaching contexts for the purpose of encouraging various learning outcomes:

- You could _begin to enjoy learning English_ in this course, or perhaps you have always enjoyed English, and you might _start to enjoy English even more_.
- You don't have to _enjoy English as much as your favorite music_,

and you might not even _enjoy English as much as your favorite food_; you may just choose to _make English your favorite subject_, or perhaps you just ought to _think of English as a great communication tool_. And you may be wondering how you can _get the most out of this lesson._

- You will sometimes make mistakes . . . and it's good to _know that mistakes can be useful_, and you can l_earn from your mistakes._
- You shouldn't _enjoy learning English_ too quickly because you want to _continue learning English all your life_.
- You shouldn't _believe every word that I say_ just because I'm your teacher . . . you can _believe me_ because I give you your grade.

In summary, you don't have to use all of these modal operators with your own students. Instead, you may enjoy designing your own and then noticing how the results help your own students to achieve greater results.

Delivering Suggestions

To this point, we have introduced Yes-Sets, modal operators, and embedded suggestions as effective language patterns as tools for encouraging more effective learning. However, _how_ you say something is just as important as _what_ you say. Of course, people use embedded suggestions unconsciously all the time, but you could choose to really motivate your students by taking the time to consciously construct and embed suggestions throughout your classes in order to: (a) motivate your students; (b) help your students learn English more easily; and (c) make a difference in your students' learning and lives.

Analogue Marking

In this section we will explore analogue marking as a way to embed powerful learning messages in our students. Analogue

marking is a simple process that can give impressive results. The idea of analogue marking is that you are marking out certain words in a sentence or paragraph with the purpose of giving a suggestion consciously or subconsciously to your students. Analogue marking can happen in various forms: talking to the class, using body language, or writing messages on the board. Table 2 offers various examples of each.

Table 2. Some Types of Analogue Marking

Voice	Body	Writing
Slightly pausing Making changes in pitch/speed/tonality	Changing positions in the room Gesturing Tapping the desk	Using various colors Underlining words Circling words

Even without being aware of it, you have already used analogue marking many times in your life. For example, most teachers have said to a noisy class, "Everybody please BE QUIET." The most important words were BE QUIET, so they were marked, or stressed, and said louder. This is an example of analogue marking. The important part of the message was highlighted by changing the volume of the voice.

Another way to analogue mark is to use pauses effectively by pausing before and after key words. If, for instance, one of your core teaching beliefs is that it is okay for students to make mistakes, then you might start a class discussion by saying,

> So, we're going to talk with our partners and remember to keep talking even if you make a mistake because . . . everyone makes mistakes . . . and it's okay to make mistakes

. . . mistakes are small steps to learning . . . so with that in mind, let's start.

Another form of analogue marking to stress key words is the use of body language. In the classroom when a teacher wants students to start conversing with their partners the teacher could say, "Are you ready to talk? Go!" (handclap). The handclap, the pause, and the word *Go* are all ways to analogue mark the start of a student conversation. Students recognize the meanings of these markings and immediately initiate dialogue. When done consistently, the effect is amplified as students are on task immediately, thus saving valuable learning time.

So far we have considered voice volume, pausing, and body language as forms of analogue marking. Here is an example of how all of these were structured together at the start of a class recently. The teacher wanted to remind the students that learning English can be fun, so after the Yes-Set, the teacher said:

> Today we're going to . . . continue the fun work . . . we started last week. And remember the research from last class that found students who are *happy and relaxed (*slightly louder) learn 25% more. So, it's okay to . . . get comfortable now . . . as we start class. And you can turn to your partner who will help you *practice and learn English.* So *enjoy* a 1-minute warm up conversation with your partner about the homework. Are you ready? Go! (handclap).

All the forms of analogue marking shown thus far powerfully send messages we believe will be useful to students in their learning process.

One more form of analogue marking is visual marking such as with the color of chalk. When we write a message on the board, we can highlight the key point in a different color, or underline it, as in the following: "Answer the questions on page 67." This is a powerful and simple visual marking technique. Of

course, we can also make the key words bigger too. Below, we offer one more example of a teacher's instructions notated with the three types of analogue marking we have explored so far through <u>pausing</u> before delivering the suggestion, using *timbre* (changing voice tone while delivering the suggestion), and through **kinesthetic** application (such as a tap on the desk while delivering the suggestion).

> So, today we're going to, <u>continue the fun work</u>, we started last week. And remember the research from last class that found students who are *happy and relaxed* learn 25% more. So it's okay to **get comfortable now** as we start class. And you might be wondering who will be your *<u>interesting and mysterious</u>*, new partner today, who will be helping you to *practice and learn English*.

So, as you continue and think about the use of analogue marking to reinforce the beliefs and suggestions you offer your students, you could choose to explore . . . or you might just like to play with analogue marking . . . in your next class.

Quantifying the Results of Language Pattern Use

To this point we have offered several examples of language patterns and how they can be used to convey more facilitative learning beliefs and suggestions to students. Our aim has been to invite the reader to consider ways that these language patterns can be delivered in the classroom to more consistently communicate empowering messages to students.

In the final section of this paper, we describe a condensed version of a study on Timed Writing, one of several ongoing research studies we are carrying out in order to quantify the effects of language pattern usage in the classroom.

Language Patterns and Writing Activities

In the timed-writing activity (see Elbow, 1981; Goldberg, 1986) several guidelines were adopted for students: (a) write as much as possible; (b) use a pen, not a pencil, and simply cross off any mistakes; (c) don't use a dictionary, instead write unknown words in the L1 and carry on; and (d) focus on fluency rather than grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Furthermore, the students were given simple topics of personal relevance as it was believed that they would be able to focus more on their writing fluency within the 10-minute fixed time period if the topics were within their realm of present knowledge and lexical capacity.

Participants

The study was conducted within the framework of a coordinated English language program at a 4-year private Japanese university. The 36 participants were 18-to-19-year-old students who were in required 1st-year writing classes for non-English majors. They attended one 90-minute class every week for two 15-week semesters. Although they had been streamed to the advanced level within the program, their general level of English proficiency actually ranged from low intermediate to advanced. A placement test given prior to commencing the course showed that the students could be evenly divided into two levels.

Procedures

The students were divided into two groups: Group 1 (the control group, $n = 20$), and Group 2 (the experimental group, $n = 16$). A baseline was set up in the first lesson by measuring the initial writing speed of all students by simply giving them a topic and asking them to write as much as possible within the 10-minute fixed time frame. Over a period of 10 weeks, Group 1 was told to write as many words as possible within the

fixed time limit. Group 2, on the other hand, was given numerous suggestions in the form of language patterns (including Yes-Sets, modal operators of possibility, and other embedded suggestions) prior to writing. The results were measured across three weekly time frames: weeks 2-4, weeks 5-7, and weeks 8-10, in order to demonstrate any differences that emerged over the initial, middle, and concluding phases of the timed-writing period. Over the course of a semester, it was hypothesized that Group 2 would show greater gains in writing speed.

Results

Group 2 made significant progress in its writing speed compared with Group 1 (see Table 3).

The initial baseline demonstrated that Group 2 was already ahead of Group 1 by 24 average words. However, by the end of the 10-week time frame, Group 2 had increased their average writing speed by 48 words, while Group 1's average had only increased by 17 words from the initial baseline measurement. The results also show that Group 2 increased their writing speed at each of the three time-period measurements: +34, +13, and + 1 words; whereas Group 1 averaged +19, -2, and +0 over the same three time-period measurements. Clearly, Group 2 made more consistent and overall gains than Group 1 during the course of the timed-writing activity study.

In answer to the two research questions above, it is clear from these results that the experimental group did benefit from the intervention. In fact, they made consistent incremental gains across each of the three time periods, whereas the control group remained relatively flat across the same time periods.

Conclusion

Based on the results, it seems that language patterns may have had an impact on the students' ability to write faster in the timed-writing activity. In future research, we will study this impact in more depth. For now, we will make some tentative conclusions.

First, careful use of language patterns by teachers appears to help students to get into appropriate learning states that allow them to more fully focus on the goals (such as writing faster) of their lessons.

Second, students can achieve more when they are guided to first imagine what it is that we want them do through the suggested beliefs provided by language patterns, resulting in an enhanced ability to achieve what it is that we actually want them to do in the leading process.

Third, simply leading students to our desired outcomes is not enough; rather, they can achieve more when they are adequately

Table 3. Average Words Written by Group 1 (Control) and Group 2 (Experimental)

	Baseline (Sept. 21)	Weeks 2-4 (Sept. 28 – Oct. 12)	Weeks 5-7 (Oct. 19 – Nov. 2)	Weeks 8-10 (Nov. 9 – 23)	Baseline vs. Weeks 8-10
Group 1 (Control)	109	128	126	126	+ 17
Group 2 (Experimental)	133	167	180	181	+ 48

paced beforehand. Teachers can have an impact on a student's success through the language they use to structure classroom activities.

Thus, it is not only crucial that we become more aware of the language patterns that we are actually using with our students now, but we should also structure our language to facilitate greater learning. In doing so, we can create more empowering messages for our students, which, in turn, will support their learning potential.

Note. We invite any teachers who are interested in replicating or extending these studies to contact us. We also have a collection of useful language patterns and scripts that we are happy to share with other teachers.

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Exploring Extensive Listening With Graded-Reader CDs

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In this paper we present the results of a yearlong study on using Graded Readers with CDs for listening and students' attitudes toward English in general in required English classes at a large university in Japan. The main purposes of the study were to examine how much students' listening skills changed over the course of a year and to explore the impact of Graded Reader-related activities on students' attitudes toward English. The study employed pre-, midyear-, and posttests in listening, in addition to surveys. To obtain further insights, selected students participated in interviews at the end of the year. The findings suggest that the activities with Graded Readers and CDs (e.g., listening, interaction through pair and group work, and shadowing) have a potential to help develop students' English abilities. This is because through the activities, they became more aware of their strengths and weaknesses in English than they were before.

　本研究は、CDを使用したグレイデッド・リーダーズ（段階別読本）が大規模大学で英語必修科目を1年間にわたり履修した学生のリスニングや英語全般に対する認識に、どのような影響をもたらすかを論じる。研究の主な目的は、学生のリスニングが1年間の授業を通してどのように変わっていったか、またグレイデッド・リーダーズに関わる活動が学生の英語に関する態度にどのような影響をもたらすか、調べることであった。リスニングにおいては事前、中間、事後のテストを行い、その後アンケート調査をした。さらに研究結果の理解を深めるため、選択した数人の学生にインタビューを行った。結果、グレイデッド・リーダーズとCD使用の活動(リスニング、ペアー/グループワーク、シャドーイング等)は学生の英語能力を高める可能性があることが示唆された。なぜならば、この活動を通して、学生自身が自分の英語の向上点や弱点についてさらに認識を深めることができたからである。

WE HAVE been interested in extensive listening with Graded Readers (GRs) because there is not much research in this area, though there are many studies on extensive reading and GRs for EFL learners. Extensive reading with GRs, based on Krashen's theory, is promising for improving English learners' reading skills (Krashen, 2004; Day & Bamford, 1998). Could extensive listening with Graded Readers with CDs (GR-CDs) also help improve their listening in the same way? This was the theme of this research project.

The project started with required English classes in a large Japanese university in 2007, since which several research designs of the project using GR-CDs have been examined. Every academic year, the project employed a new design slightly different from that of the previous year in order to find the best way to measure students' listening improvement with GR-CDs. In

Making a **Difference**

2010 and 2011, the project used the same instruments, but under slightly different conditions.

This study, based on the 2011 data, discusses the results of a yearlong study on using GR-CDs for listening and on university students' attitudes toward English. The main purposes of the study were to examine how much students' listening skills changed over the course of a year and also to explore the impact of GR-related activities on students' attitudes towards English in general. The study employed pre-, midyear-, and posttests in listening, in addition to surveys. At the end of the year, selected students participated in interviews.

Research Questions

This study was designed to answer the following questions regarding the effectiveness of GR-CDs:

1. Does using GR-CDs improve students' listening ability?
2. How do students feel about GR-CDs?
3. What do students feel about their abilities in English?
4. To what do students attribute their improvements in English?
5. What are the impacts of GR-related activities on students' attitudes toward English in general?
6. What have students realized about their strengths in English?
7. What have students realized about their weaknesses in English?

Methodology

Participants

The participants were a group of more advanced students from a large Japanese university. More advanced students were cho-

sen as they were thought to be more motivated to study English. Teachers of four classes were included in the research project, and all their students participated in the study. Students were in their 1st year of university beginning in April 2011 and were enrolled in required English courses.

Context

Three of the four student groups each had around 30 students who met twice a week, 30 weeks in the year, for a total of 60 times. The fourth group consisted of 18 high-intermediate students who met four times a week, for a total of 120 times a year. Each class was 90 minutes long. Three of the groups were taught by Japanese teachers for one semester and English native-speaking teachers for the other semester in the year. The last group met an English native teacher as well as a Japanese teacher four times a week. For all four groups, teachers whose native language was Japanese taught the classes mainly in English because the project researchers knew the merits of such a linguistic setting from experience and from surveys in 2009 and 2010 (Ware, Yonezawa, Kurihara, & Durand, 2012). Many students appreciated the English-only classes.

The project started with the rule of using 20 minutes each class for listening and shadowing with GR-CDs. However, the enforcement of the rule varied according to the instructor and the semester. The main reason for this was the time needed for covering class materials required by the university's English curriculum. Most of the teachers in the project could not give regular time for listening and shadowing in class: sometimes 20 minutes or sometimes none at all. However, students could always access GR-CDs both in and out of class. Since bringing GR-CDs into the classroom is very important in terms of accessibility, all classrooms in the project were provided with a mobile library of GR-CDs with instructions on how to read, listen, and shadow. Students were instructed to choose GR-CDs that they

thought would be easy to read. They borrowed GR-CDs and finished (or were supposed to finish) reading at home, or when time permitted, in class. Students listened to GR-CDs and practiced shadowing with them. Students were also encouraged to read, listen, and shadow outside of class.

The way in which students choose GR-CDs was based on ideas of extensive reading with GRs, which have been employed by many GR researchers, including Sakai (2005), Furukawa (2010), and Takase (2010). That is, students were instructed to choose books for reading and listening that they could easily understand without using a dictionary. Students were told that following this rule is key to enjoying the GRs.

Listening Tests

Participants were tested in May 2011, near the start of their first semester at the university. The test was a listening examination with multiple-choice questions made by the research project members. The recordings on the tests consisted of several different genres, including conversations, speeches, and narration. The same test was given again at the end of the students' first semester in July 2011 and then finally near the end of their second semester in December 2011. In May 2011, 104 students completed the listening exam, and 102 completed the exam in July 2011. In December 2011, only 93 students completed the listening exam. Overall, 88 students completed all three tests.

Surveys

Around the same time as the tests, students completed surveys two times, in July and December, regarding their views of GR-CDs and of learning English in general. The survey included both closed and open-ended research questions. The survey questions included the above research questions (1 through 7). Some of the students, however, did not turn in the surveys.

Complete data exists for 69 students. The missing data can be considered missing at random. In general, any available student data is included when possible.

Interviews

Out of all the students in the project, eight were selected for qualitative interviews. These students were selected among the survey respondents because they were willing to participate in the interviews. It was believed that these eight would most likely be rich sources of information. The candidates were all from Japanese teachers' classes because interviews were to be conducted in Japanese. Each student was interviewed once after the 2nd semester, in either January or February 2012. The interviews lasted approximately 1 hour each. The interviewers focused on four question categories: participants' English educational background before entering university, their gains from GR-CDs activities, their perceived weaknesses in the activities, and the next steps they would like to take for improving their English. All interview participants, named S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, and Z, started to learn English from Japanese teachers of English and native English speakers when they were elementary school students, though on a limited and irregular basis. According to the participants, the classes they took in their junior and senior high schools were grammar and reading focused, but included speaking and listening activities. Among the participants, four students had special English learning experiences in high school. For example, student T had participated in a homestay program in Canada for 1 month; student X had participated in a homestay program in Australia for 2 weeks; and student Z had participated in an English program for almost 2 months in Hawaii and was at the time planning to study English for another 8 months starting in the summer of 2012. Furthermore, student W had gone to school in England for almost 4 years, from mid-6th grade to mid-9th grade, and then transferred to a Japanese girls'

combined junior-senior high school. The other four students had not been abroad or had special experiences of studying English abroad.

Survey and Interview Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study involved both deductive and inductive reasoning processes. In the former processes, counts of each category from closed-ended questions were obtained for survey questions. In the latter, inductive processes, we searched for patterns, categories, and themes that emerged in the interview data. To strengthen the trustworthiness (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the qualitative data analysis, two researchers collaboratively coded the data, first individually analyzing the interview data and then comparing (adding to and modifying) the results.

Findings

Quantitative Results

Overall, there was little correlation between listening score improvement and GR-CDs. Spearman's rank correlations, also called Spearman's rho, between listening score gains (the scores for the December test minus the scores for the July test) and the number of books completed, the number of books started but not completed, and the number of minutes spent reading are all very close to zero and not statistically significant. (Spearman's rho was used since none of the variables measuring amount of reading are normally distributed.) The only significant correlation, albeit quite modest at .227, is with other books read ($p = .038$). This figure indicates that the students who read in English on their own more had a slight tendency to improve more than others in listening. Results for the yearlong period (May to December), based on 69 students, also show nonsignificant correlations close to zero.

Results of Surveys

Even though these correlations are not significant, students still perceived benefit from the GR-CDs. In particular, responding to the open-ended question, *What have you realized about your strengths in English,* more than one in five students felt that their listening skills improved, as shown in Figure 1. Students reported improvement in many other areas as well, including reading speed and skill. In general, students also felt more interested in listening to English. In response to a related question, approximately 63% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they had become more interested in listening to English since the beginning of the school year (data not shown).
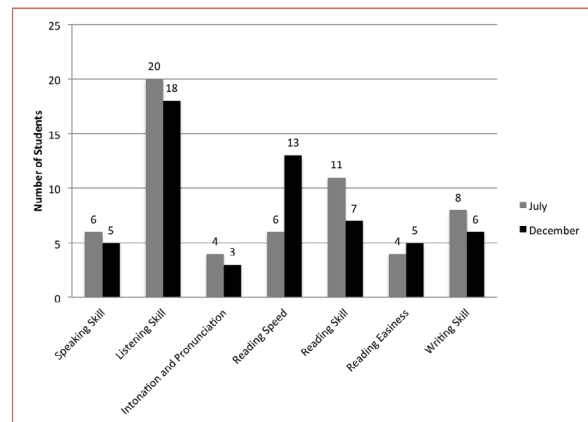

Figure 1. Student Perceived Areas of Improvement Through GR-CDs. In July, *n = 83.* In December, *n = 93.* Multiple answers (or no answer) were allowed.

Students were somewhat ambivalent about their general improvements in English. Figure 2 shows the results of the closed-ended question, *Have your general English abilities improved since April 2011?* In December 2011, 42% of students felt that their English had improved, but 37% said that it had remained the same, and 21% felt that it had actually decreased. Figure 3 shows the main reasons for improvement among students who felt they had improved. This includes 35 students in July and 38 students in December. To the multiple choice question, *Which activities do you think have helped improve your English abilities*, in July 2011, 38% of students who felt they had improved reported that reading, listening, or shadowing with GR-CDs helped improve their English. Writing was another reason for improvement in English. In December 2011, though, among the students who felt their English had improved, the number of students who felt that activities with GRs were the main reason for their improvement decreased slightly to 28%. Other unspecified class activities were seen as the main reason for improvement at this time.

Through the class activities and GR-CDs, students also gained an understanding of their weak points in English, as shown in Figure 4. The open-ended question asked was, *What have you realized about your weaknesses in English?* Vocabulary was most keenly and consistently felt to be a weakness, with 19 students reporting this in July and 17 reporting this in December. Speaking skills and problems with intonation, pronunciation, and stress are another area of concern, with 25 and 19 students showing concern with these in July and December, respectively. The GR-CDs may have made students more aware of issues related to speaking.
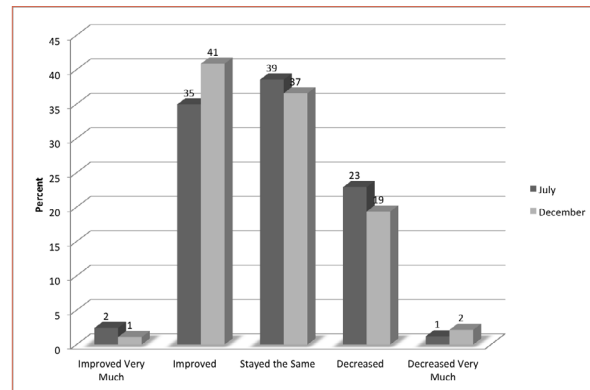

Figure 2. Student Feelings of Improvement in General English Ability (Percent). In July, $n = 83$. In December, $n = 91$.
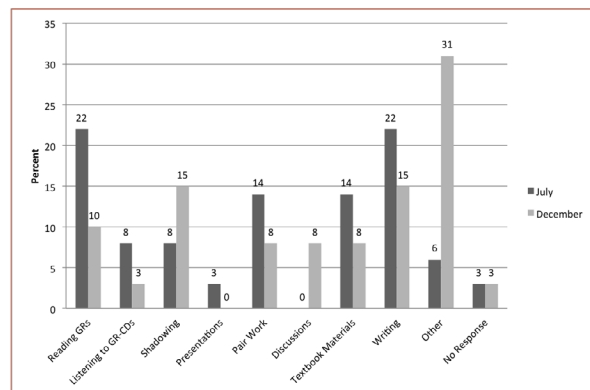

Figure 3. Student Perceived Main Reason for Improved English. In July, $n = 35$. In December, $n = 38$. Due to rounding error, December data total to 101%.
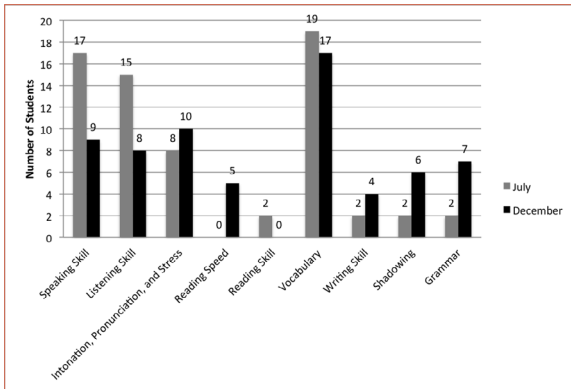
Figure 4. Student Perceived Areas of Weakness. In July, *n* = 83. In December, *n* = 93. Multiple answers (or no answer) were allowed.

Using GR-CDs had little effect on student listening test scores. It is likely, however, that most students were not reading or listening extensively enough. Out of 93 students, 75 reported reading 9 or fewer books in the second semester. They also may not have studied English enough in general. In December, out of 51 students, 21 said that they did not study English very much. Students felt, though, that the GR-CDs especially improved their listening skills and helped them understand weaknesses in English that they may not have thought of before. Results from the qualitative analysis provide richer insight to students' use of the GR-CDs.

Qualitative Results From Interviews

Students' Perceptions of Their English Strengths

The results from the open-ended survey questions (research questions 5, 6, and 7) considerably overlap those from the

interviews. The findings suggest strong credibility in themselves, which is "the match between the constructed realities of respondents and those realities as represented by the evaluator" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 237). Just as survey respondents perceived benefits from the activities of GR-CDs, the eight interview participants also considered that the GR-related activities—reading, listening, and shadowing—helped develop positive attitudes toward their English abilities, especially in terms of realizing differences between the English spoken by native speakers and by the students themselves and in improving silent reading skills.

Regarding differences between the English spoken by native speakers and by students, three students (S, T, and U) noticed a gap between the English pronunciation and intonation of native speakers and those of students. For example, student U commented, "While listening to GR-CDs, I came to understand the intonation of English. While listening, I was getting used to how to speak in English with proper intonation." (The students' quotes throughout this paper were translated into English from Japanese by the researchers.)

In addition, four students (S, T, W, and Z) mentioned that the activities with GRs helped improve their reading skills, especially their speed of silent reading. For example, student T mentioned:

> [After using GRs], my reading speed has increased a little . . . I used to translate each word and sentence. But even if there is something I cannot translate, I try to understand the general meaning of the story. In my class in the fall semester, we checked our reading speed and I could read about 100 words per minute. After a while, I did it myself. Now it is about 150.

Student W further commented how her reading speed increased with GRs:

It was not like reading with a flow but reading each sentence clause-by-clause, and the reading speed was slow . . . I tended to look at every word like "in" and "a" when I was not accustomed to fast reading. But the more I read . . . the more I came to look at important words. . . . I've started to read like I talk. [I had that kind of feeling] when I finished with the 20th book.

Student W further commented on silent reading, that reading less difficult books helped develop the skills of guessing the meaning from the context written in the text. She mentioned:

You read lots of easy books, and you will barely miss what an author wants to say in an easy text. You know, the flow of a story . . . You will understand the cohesion of the story and you can guess the author's main idea . . . You can improve your skill of understanding the text.

Moreover, student W mentioned that reading less difficult books like GRs also helped her realize the role of conjunctions used not only in reading but also in writing, and it would eventually help her read more difficult books. Student W commented:

[When you read easy books like GRs,] you will realize the important role of conjunctions . . . You will also realize their importance even when you read a difficult book [because it works in the same way]. You understand the author brings in a conjunction like "but" or "however" if he wants to contradict his argument . . . My teacher says the same thing in my writing class, and I understand it like, "Oh yes, I know it."

Students' Perceptions of Their English Weaknesses

Vocabulary, phonology, and listening and shadowing skills are the main weaknesses that the students noticed, according to the written comments in the surveys. The interview participants also referred to the same weaknesses. Student Y referred to his lack of comprehension of vocabulary: "I don't have enough vocabulary. I just have a feeling of understanding a word, but I actually don't comprehend the full meaning of the word." In other words, student Y became aware that he comprehended words superficially, which meant that he had not reached a good enough level to fully use some words.

A second weakness that interviewees noticed was phonological differences between their native language and their target language, English. Two of the interviewees noticed their inability to comprehend connected speech patterns, such as word assimilation, reduction, and elision. Student S said, "I couldn't comprehend linking words," and student T said:

While I shadow, I've noticed that it is hard to connect the words of English. I could not say "What's your~?" for example. I realized that English sounds are different when words are connected, but I could not make the sound.

Finally, two interview participants noticed their difficulties in following what they read when they were more concerned about shadowing phonologically. They said that they could not comprehend the meaning of the story they read aloud while they were involved in shadowing. As student T said, "I can understand better when I listen rather than shadow . . . . When I shadow, I focus on both listening and speaking. I ended up trying to precisely follow English and speak without getting the meaning of the story." He contended that it was hard to do two things at the same time.

This project using GR-CDs has shown that the activities give learners opportunities to become aware of their strengths and weaknesses in English.

Input and Interaction Through Pair and Group Work

Extensive reading and listening are likely to be beneficial ways to improve English. Some advanced students achieved a high TOEIC score after GR-CD activities. Student W achieved a score of more than 600 at the end of the 2011 fall semester, after reading 40 GRs. She kept independently reading GRs until the end of the spring semester 2012 and reached a score of 800 after finishing another 40 GRs. Student W attributed the increase in scores to GR-CDs. This is not the only successful case in the years of our project; however, not many students turn into automatically successful independent learners with GR-CDs.

Bringing a library of GR-CDs to class and encouraging students to read and listen to many books does not mean that students necessarily improve such skills. How then can students be hooked into reading and listening with GR-CDs and transformed into successful learners?

In 2009 and 2010, our research showed students' strong interest in interacting with their classmates in reading and shadowing activities. For example, open-ended questions from the 2009 surveys indicated that fun, interesting, and helpful activities included pair-work, group work, and discussions, with or without GR-CDs and shadowing (Ware, Yonezawa, Kurihara, & Durand, 2012). Furthermore, an interview participant in 2010 talked about the merits of pair-work with shadowing, saying:

> Doing shadowing with GRs in pairs is better . . . You'll be more careful not to give a difficult time to your partner . . . You'll make a commitment to shadowing if you shadow with your partner.

It was found that activities with pair and group work could boost student motivation for learning English or contribute to finding their problems in learning English. Thus, in the 2011 project, a lot of pair-work in class was conducted in all study classes, and a group presentation was used in one of the classes.

The group presentation used the following procedure. Each group of three or four students got together and chose their favorite GR, discussed it, and finally made a 5-minute PowerPoint presentation on it. Following Furr's (2007) role samples for GRs, every member of the group had a clear, differentiated role that their teacher had assigned at the start. For example, different students had the roles of summarizing a GR story, comparing similarities and differences between the story's culture and their own, or discovering the connection between the story and their own lives. Three out of four interviewees who participated in the presentation project responded positively. Student S said, "I found reading a GR in a group interesting. I read the same book with my classmate, student A, but we discovered different cultural perspectives in the book, which I thought was interesting."

Student X, who was usually good at listening and speaking, became aware of his poor presentation skills. He said:

> When I made a presentation about a GR with my classmates using PowerPoint, I noticed my poor persuasive skill. I read from a prepared text in a monotone voice. My pronunciation was bad. My message was not so smooth. I couldn't say much in my own presentation . . . but the presentation was beneficial.

After the project, student X started to study grammar, which he found was his weakness. The merits of working with others were also mentioned, as when student U said:

> It was hard to read the book we chose because it was a strange story, but I had a feeling of achievement when I

finished reading it. It took weeks to understand the whole story. I had some part of the book that I didn't understand and I asked my partner about it.

Pair-work and group work using GRs have the potential to elevate student motivation, and at the same time, to make them aware of what they need to do next to learn English.

Conclusions

The results of the three listening tests did not statistically show any positive impacts on students' listening skills from GR-CDs. However, we found from students' written comments and interviews that they thought that the activities with the GR-CDs were beneficial. The activities have the potential to help improve students' English because students become aware of their strengths in English in such areas as listening, phonology (pronunciation, intonation, stress, etc.), and reading speed.

On the other hand, the use of GR-CDs also helped the students notice the weak points of their English through listening to English at natural speed. Students became aware of their lack of vocabulary and their difficulty with phonology (connected speech patterns in addition to pronunciation, intonation, and stress) and their problems in understanding when shadowing. This last problem should not be ignored. Unless students comprehend the text they are shadowing, their improvement in English and their feeling of achievement will be limited.

Another important finding is that students benefit from pair and group work related to the GR-CDs. The important role of interaction in language acquisition has been shown in this study. This conclusion is in line with Schmidt (1995): "While input and interaction are important to establish a secure level of communicative proficiency, this is not because language learning is unconscious, but because input and interaction, attention, and awareness are all crucial for learning" (p. 3).

In conclusion, though this study found that the activities with GR-CDs did not affect students' listening scores much, our qualitative data suggest that using such activities (e.g., listening, shadowing, and interactions through pair and group work) has the potential to improve students' English.

Bio Data

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Foreign Reactions to Japan as a Teaching Resource

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One overlooked aspect of language teaching is the importance of also teaching culture. Communicating with people from different cultures involves not just linguistic competence, but also intercultural awareness. Additionally, cultural literacy about the target culture can improve fluency in the target language. Despite the role of culture in language teaching, there are obstacles to creating culture-rich language courses. First, identifying what the target culture is in EFL settings such as Japan can be a challenge. Second, traditional EFL coursebooks are often not designed to also sufficiently teach culture. One remedy to these issues is to first focus on the students' own culture. Many students, however, are not certain as to what makes their own culture interesting or unique. In this paper, I examine using foreign reactions to Japan as a resource for helping Japanese students better understand and explain their own culture in English.

　言語と文化の統合教育の試みにおいて、EFL教師はターゲット言語の文化についての習得に焦点を置く傾向がある。しかしながら、学生に英語で自国の文化の説明や議論をすることができるように支援していく必要性があることについては、あまり認識されていない。その要因として、関連教材が少ないため、このような授業に対する取り組みが難しくなっていることが考えられる。こうした背景にもとづいて、本稿では日本の大学の英語の授業の中で、日本文化に焦点を当てた授業の取り組みが可能になるような方法と教材について論じる。

I N OUR ever-internationalizing world, more and more pressure is put on Japanese universities to produce students highly proficient in English. Companies such as Rakuten and Uniqlo have gone so far as to establish English as the official workplace language. Schools and companies, however, need a convenient means by which to measure English proficiency. The most common method of measuring this proficiency is by standardized tests such as the TOEIC, which has seen more than a five-fold increase in Japanese test-takers in the past 20 years ("Adopting English," 2011).

Relying on such standardized tests, however, has obvious drawbacks. As the TOEIC test does not have a speaking component, a high score does not guarantee fluency in English. Of equal importance is the fact that a high test score also does not reflect intercultural competence, an overlooked element of language proficiency. Many researchers have argued that intercultural competence needs to be an integral component of foreign language instruction. Krasner (1999) stated that linguistic competence alone is not enough to be proficient

in a foreign language. Byram and Risager (1999) similarly maintained that the role of language teachers is not limited to teaching linguistic forms, but includes cultural competence. In other words, we cannot communicate effectively in the target language without also knowing about the target culture. Genc and Bada (2005) thus dismissed language teaching as "inaccurate and incomplete" (p. 73) without the accompanying teaching of culture.

The Role of Culture in Language Teaching

Why is such an emphasis placed on the role of culture in language teaching? First, as Peterson and Coltrane (2003) pointed out, "in order for communication to be successful, language use must be associated with other culturally appropriate behavior" (p. 1). Foreign language learners need to know the proper ways of, for example, greeting, asking advice, or apologizing. To give one example in the context of Japan, it is not uncommon for Japanese to ask someone in English "How old are you?" just after meeting for the first time. This may be appropriate in Japan, where the *senpai/kohai* (senior/junior) hierarchy places a great value on age. In the West, however, where age is a more sensitive issue, such a question could be dismissed as rude and inappropriate. This example illustrates the claim by Gao (2005) that communication and culture are inseparable. Another example would be the countless times my Japanese students have awkwardly addressed me as "Mr. John" or "John-teacher," as they fail to find the proper linguistic balance between honorific Japanese and the American tendency to use first names.

Using direct translation when studying a foreign language can result in inappropriate language use. Considering a Japanese language example, if you ask how to say *goodbye* in Japanese, you might be told *Mata ne*. If you used such an expression when leaving the office at the end of a workday, however, your language could be dismissed as inappropriate or rude. Office greetings in Japan are divided into a rigid series of set phrases, so in this context the more formal *Osaki ni shitsurei shimasu* [Excuse me for leaving before you] is necessary. When speaking a foreign language, it is therefore possible to have perfect grammar and pronunciation, yet still be culturally inappropriate, illustrating Chlopek's (2008) warning that "communication that lacks appropriate cultural content . . . is the source of serious miscommunication and misunderstanding" (p. 10). About the need for Japanese learners of English to also understand the target culture, Ogawa (2011) argued that this honorific nature of the Japanese language is one reason many Japanese fail to become confident speakers of the more direct English language. Again, memorizing vocabulary lists may improve one's TOEIC score, but it does not guarantee intercultural competence.

Another reason for the importance of culture in language learning is the issue of cultural literacy. This term first gained widespread attention with the release of E. D. Hirsch's (1987) seminal work in which he attempted to outline the "shared knowledge" which Americans need in order to "communicate effectively with everyone else" (p. 32). Although Hirsch was not writing in the context of foreign language education, researchers in this field have also emphasized the importance of cultural literacy in language learning, arguing that communicating effectively with someone from the target culture entails not only a knowledge of linguistic features, but also a familiarity with, for example, that culture's famous people, places, and historical events. A study by Ziesing (2001) established a correlation between language fluency and cultural literacy. In other words, the more we know about someone else's culture, the more smoothly we will be able to communicate in the target language.

Cultural literacy refers not just to people and places, but also to culture-specific idioms and slang. My Japanese students in New Zealand were initially perplexed when locals invited them for a *cuppa*, not understanding the local slang for a *cup of tea or*

coffee. Going back to the shortcomings of standardized English tests such as the TOEIC when it comes to cultural knowledge, *cuppa* is obviously not the type of vocabulary item you would need to know for such a test. If you were going to actually communicate with New Zealanders, however, it could very well be one of the first words you would need.

Challenges of Integrating Language and Culture Teaching

Effectively implementing culture-rich language courses, however, comes with many challenges. As with many other components of any curriculum, time itself is often the main obstacle. As one teacher (Hong, 2008) wrote, culture teaching "is ignored simply because language teachers feel that they do not have enough time to talk about the target culture in regular language classes" (p. 2). As this paper argues for a fuller integration of language and culture teaching, I would like to focus more specifically on two common obstacles faced in EFL contexts such as Japan.

What is the Target Culture?

In most EFL contexts, it is arguable whether we can define what the target culture is. Should we focus on the culture of inner circle countries such as the United States, England, and Australia as target cultures of English? With the rise of English as a global language and the number of nonnative speakers of the language far exceeding the number of native speakers, a Japanese person could be just as likely to communicate in English with someone from Germany or Egypt as someone from Canada or New Zealand. This more far-reaching potential of English seems to be what Cates (2004) referred to when he called English "an international language for communication with people from around the world" and a subject for "learning about the world's

peoples, countries, and problems" (p. 31). As promising as this approach sounds, time once again becomes an issue. With the typical university English course limited to 15 lessons, there is a limit to how much foreign culture we can expose our students to.

A further complication arises when you consider the needs of individual students. Although Japanese universities do offer classes such as study abroad preparation, a majority of classes are general English classes for students with a great variety of needs and interests. Even in study abroad preparatory courses, it is not uncommon that the students will not be studying at the same institution, but rather at a range of different institutions scattered across the globe. Even in this context in which cultural knowledge is of greater importance, it is difficult to define what the target culture actually is and, thus, what type of cultural content should be included.

Limitations of EFL Teaching Materials

This difficulty of defining the target culture can be reflected in EFL teaching materials used in Japan. Culture is not properly emphasized in a majority of coursebooks. Many books do attempt to include a "Culture Corner" type of feature, but this again relegates culture to something that seems merely tacked on and not a core component of the course. In a culture-rich language course, culture should be "always in the background, right from day one" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 1).

One reason many current EFL coursebooks fail to be proper vehicles for culture-rich classes is that they are not Japan specific. If books are intended to be sold and used by EFL students in a number of different countries, it is difficult to make specific cultural comparisons between the featured target cultures and Japan. Additionally, the average coursebook user in Country A may have different background knowledge

and cross-cultural interests than the user in Country B, making it difficult to add much culturally rich material to the text. Featuring culture in a tacked-on manner can actually do more harm than good; studies by Fischer (1998) and Kilickaya (2004) criticized the over-generalized presentations of foreign culture in EFL coursebooks.

This issue with a lack of proper culture-rich teaching materials means that individual teachers are left to their own devices in preparing a great deal of supplementary materials and activities. It again becomes a matter of having enough time to design courses that fully integrate culture and language teaching.

Starting with the Students' Own Culture

Given the difficulties of defining the target culture and the lack of culture-rich EFL teaching materials, one option is to start by looking at the students' own culture as a foundation for raising awareness about intercultural competence and cultural identity. While the importance of integrating culture learning with language learning has been firmly established, such an approach has usually emphasized looking outward. Literature on this topic tends to focus on what foreign language students need to know about the target culture in order to communicate effectively. However, this is only part of the equation. Intercultural communication entails *exchanging* cultural information. Japanese speakers of English are not just investigators of foreign culture, but also representatives of their own culture.

To return to the importance of cultural literacy, it makes perfect sense for students preparing to study abroad in the United States, for example, to learn as much as possible about the future host culture in order to improve their ability to communicate with local people. However, it is equally important for these Japanese students to be prepared to discuss their own culture in English, as they will likely be asked countless ques-

tions about Japan. Additionally, they may be required to give presentations about their own culture. An inability to describe Japanese culture in English can cause just as many communication problems as a lack of awareness about American culture. While we as English language educators want to do our best to prepare our students to achieve both language proficiency and intercultural competence, we also have to remember that acculturation is defined as not just being able to function in a new culture, but also retaining one's own culture (Corbett, 2003). Even if our students remain overseas long-term, they will always be representatives of Japan and have the need to express their unique cultural identities in English.

Challenges of Discussing Japanese Culture in English Classes

Using Japanese culture as a starting point for increasing intercultural competence comes with its own challenges and limitations. First, as with young people around the world, a majority of Japanese university students have not yet spent a significant amount of time in a foreign country. When discussing cultural differences between Japan and foreign cultures, it helps to have some real experiences to build on. Although many students do have an interest in cross-cultural issues, they often do not have enough firsthand experiences—whether overseas or within Japan—to make informed cross-cultural comparisons.

Perhaps due to this lack of cross-cultural interactions, when it comes to defining what exactly makes Japan unique many Japanese give oversimplified explanations. For several years I have served as an English interviewer for cross-cultural exchange programs between Japan and other countries. One question I regularly ask Japanese interviewees is, "What do you think makes Japan a unique or special country?" By far, the most common answer given is that Japan is unique because it

has four seasons. This is certainly not unique. Another popular answer is that Japan is unique because it is an island nation. Throughout history Japan has indeed referred to the *shimaguni konjou* (island nation mentality), which has had a great effect on the national character. Again, however, from a geographical standpoint, being an island nation is not terribly unique. We should not necessarily dismiss these answers as incorrect, but they do require a lot more clarification. A culture-rich curriculum in which students have more opportunities to describe their own culture in English would help better prepare them for this necessary clarification.

Foreign Reactions to Japan as a Teaching Resource

What the above challenges suggest is that students also need the input of non-Japanese perspectives to help them better comprehend and describe their own culture. The teacher can give opportunities for practicing vocabulary related to Japan and Japanese culture. As a native of upstate New York, for example, I can explain to students that I also come from a place with the four seasons and provide guidance for helping them to better articulate what exactly makes the four seasons of Japan special and unique. Finally, students will also undoubtedly be able to state some obvious, surface-level cultural differences, such as using chopsticks versus using silverware. In order to truly become more interculturally aware, however, students need a greater number of perspectives about what people from other cultures have found interesting or different about Japanese culture. This variety of perspectives will provide students with a better foundation for knowing what they need to be able to express about their culture in English in order to better communicate in intercultural settings.

Newspaper Columns as a Source of Foreign Perspectives of Japan

One resource for using foreign perspectives of Japan in the classroom is English-language newspapers such as *The Japan Times*. Letters to the editors or different columns often feature non-Japanese reactions to Japan. One resource I have frequently turned to is the columns of Alice Gordenker. Gordenker's first column, "Matter of Course," ran from 2001 to 2004 and focused on educational issues. As the American mother of two children attending Japanese elementary schools, Gordenker described customs she found surprising about Japanese schools, such as *ensoku* [school excursions], *hogoshakai* [parents' meetings], or *ondoku* [reading-out-loud]. These are aspects of the education system that most Japanese might take for granted.

Gordenker's current column "So, What the Heck is That?" has run monthly since 2005 until the present. In this column, Gordenker explains objects from daily life in Japan which non-Japanese readers find peculiar or interesting. After receiving questions about the respective objects, Gordenker researches the topic and then publishes a detailed explanation. Some topics covered have included *mimikaki* [ear picks], *noshibukuro* [decorative Japanese envelopes used for money giving], and *waipu* [screen-in-screen pop-ups that are a constant feature of Japanese television programs]. Although researched by Gordenker, the original questions come from non-Japanese, both in Japan and abroad.

Advantages of the Columns

When I piloted these columns in my university classes, my students were particularly intrigued by the foreign reactions to everyday aspects of Japanese culture that they had taken for granted. Additionally, students were surprised to find that Gordenker's columns could also teach them new things about

their own culture, such as why Japanese five-yen coins have holes in the middle or the origins of White Day. In addition to the positive student response, I found several other advantages to the columns as a teaching resource.

The basis of Gordenker's current column is real questions submitted by non-Japanese readers. This use of real questions justifies the authenticity of using the columns as a teaching resource. If the columns are dealing with actual questions about Japan submitted by non-Japanese, it is worthwhile practice for Japanese students to also attempt to explain these aspects of Japanese culture in English. This gives Japanese students a more realistic sense of what non-Japanese find interesting or peculiar about their culture, potentially increasing their awareness about cultural differences between Japan and other countries.

The fact that Gordenker's columns are also based on first-hand research lends them authority for use in the classrooms. Rather than merely giving a cursory explanation to answer the questions, Gordenker actually interviews Japanese experts about the subjects in question. This adds authenticity to the readings and a content-based component to the resource. The topics covered by Gordenker are subjects Japanese are generally very familiar with but may not actually know the history of. By reading these columns, Japanese students are not only studying English, but also learning about their own culture, thus increasing their cultural literacy about Japan.

A Framework for Designing Culture-Rich Courses

The discussion in this paper argues for culture to be a core component of language classes, rather than something that is merely auxiliary. There is a need for an organized and systematized teaching of culture in language classes. One way to address this need is the creation of university-level textbooks that more fully integrate language and cultural content. With this approach in mind, I contacted the newspaper column author about modifying a selection of her columns to make a textbook for university English classes in Japan. The result is a textbook entitled *Surprising Japan* (Gordenker & Rucynski, 2013), comprised of 15 units based on her columns. The goal was to create a resource that ensured that culture was a part of every single lesson. Furthermore, my students were exposed to a wide range of foreign reactions to Japan, thus satisfying Byram and Risager's (1999) assertion that the role of the language teacher is to teach both language and culture.

The discussion in this paper stresses two reasons why culture has an important role in language teaching. First, communicating effectively with someone from a different culture requires not just linguistic competence, but also an understanding of cultural values and behavior. Second, cultural literacy has a positive effect on language fluency. Cultural literacy refers in this context to not just knowing about the target culture, but also being knowledgeable about your own culture and being able to describe it in the target language. These two criteria were considered when choosing topics and designing activities for the textbook.

When considering the above two criteria, different types of cultural differences are better suited to satisfy each one. When discussing cultural differences, Shaules (2010) distinguished between explicit and implicit differences. The former refer to more obvious, concrete differences (such as the "four Fs" of *food*, *festivals*, *folklore*, and *facts*), while the latter refer to behaviors or values which are more difficult to uncover, leading Hall (1966) to initially label them "hidden culture." In a culture-rich course, it is important to have a mix of both. Explicit examples serve as a foundation for building students' confidence and ability to describe their own culture in English. Meanwhile, implicit examples are necessary to help students grasp more complex dif-

ferences and consider cultural identity more deeply. As a culture learning material, the textbook introduces students to both the surface elements as well as to the deeper elements of their own culture. (See Appendix for a full list of topics).

One example of explicit culture chosen for the textbook was a column comparing *wagashi* [Japanese sweets] and *yogashi* [Western sweets]. With the recent global boom in interest in Japanese food, this serves as a good topic for cross-cultural communication. Still, describing Japanese foods in English can be quite challenging, considering the wide range of dishes and ingredients. Reading about the health benefits of *wagashi*, however, could be one way for Japanese students to both learn more about their own food culture and also acquire more vocabulary required to explain it in English. Another column discusses the Japanese-created custom of White Day. As this event started before current Japanese university students were born, some may be unaware of its origins. Knowing the history of such Japanese events makes students more aware of their own culture and can potentially improve their ability to smoothly explain these explicit differences when communicating in English with people from other countries.

Whereas discussing explicit differences has the potential to improve cultural literacy and fluency, implicit differences serve to improve students' awareness of different culturally bound behaviors and values. One example of implicit culture chosen for the book was the tendency in Japan to offer gender-specific discounts. Whereas many Japanese regard such discounts positively as favorable treatment (*yūgū*), they may be surprised to hear that some people from other cultures might actually consider them discrimination (*sabetsu*). Another example is the tendency for Japanese parents not to praise their own children at parents' meetings (*hogoshakai*), which highlights, in this case, different communication styles of Japanese and Americans. Exposing students to such implicit differences can raise their awareness

that communicating in intercultural contexts involves not just language ability, but also culturally appropriate behavior. The 15 different examples in the textbook of what people from a variety of different cultures find surprising about Japan can hopefully serve as a foundation for helping Japanese students realize that achieving true English competence involves not only getting a high TOEIC score, but also the ability to communicate with people with different cultural values.

Language Learning Component

While the discussion thus far has been on how this framework can give language classes a stronger cultural element, language development itself cannot be overlooked. Students need not only a stronger understanding of their own culture, but also the language to express these ideas in English. As culture teaching should consider both examples of explicit and implicit culture, language teaching should provide a mix of structured and open-ended activities. To assist and check understanding of the reading passages, each unit of *Surprising Japan* includes a prereading vocabulary check and postreading comprehension questions. It is vital to monitor student understanding of the main points of each reading before moving on to more open-ended activities such as class discussions. Additionally, these exercises provide opportunities for recycling the key vocabulary. Finally, each unit includes a listening exercise that introduces new words and expressions connected to the respective unit theme.

As different English courses may focus on different language skills, each unit includes a range of open-ended activities that can be expanded in a variety of ways. Every reading passage is followed by a series of discussion questions, allowing students to practice stating their opinions about the topic in English. Each unit also includes an open-ended task that gives students a creative outlet to express their ideas about their own culture. Each task can be done in small groups or expanded to whole class

presentations. For teachers who prefer to focus on writing skills, the Teacher's Manual includes a sample topic sentence for the main theme of each unit that can be used as a springboard for paragraph or essay writing. By providing this range of language learning exercises, the goal was to create a resource in which every lesson has both a language learning and culture learning component.

Conclusion

Although learning about foreign culture is an intrinsic part of language learning, the ability to describe one's own culture in the target language is of equal importance. Any person tends to take his or her own culture for granted and may not be aware of what truly makes each country culturally unique. Learning the viewpoints of non-Japanese with regards to Japanese culture can help Japanese students identify the unique points of their own culture. Furthermore, considering the growing global interest in Japanese culture, a strong awareness of their own culture is an important part of English proficiency for Japanese students. According to a report by the Agency of Cultural Exchange, Japan (2003), keeping up with an internationalizing world requires Japan to "strengthen its efforts to disseminate its culture" (p. 2) and requires "individual Japanese to be knowledgeable about the culture around them and to possess a desire to share it with others" (p. 40). One context in which to help Japanese achieve these goals starts in the English language classroom. Designing courses that more fully integrate language and culture is one way to improve not only language skills, but also intercultural competence. This paper has summarized just one possible framework for implementing such a course. However, further research is necessary in order to gauge the effectiveness of this resource as a tool for integrating language and culture teaching.

Bio Data

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Haptic (Movement and Touch for Better) Pronunciation

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In this paper we describe a series of new techniques for the teaching of pronunciation using movement and touch. The "haptic approach" described here assumes that speaking is essentially a physical act that engages the entire body and not just the speech organs. This paper reviews the theoretical foundations of a haptic system, describes 9 haptic-based techniques, and explores the specific application of these techniques with Japanese learners of English.

この論文は、現在開発中の身体の動きと接触を利用した発音指導のための新しいテクニックについて書かれたものである。「触覚アプローチ」とは動作と接触を用いるという意味で、話すこととは、本質的に身体全体を使った身体的行動であり、単なる「発話器官」ではないという考え方に基づいている。この論文では、触覚アプローチのシステムの論理的根拠を考察し、その触覚に基づく9つの教授テクニックを紹介し、なぜ日本人の学習者にそれらのテクニックが効果的かを述べる。

WHERE IS the spoken language spoken? Using articulatory descriptions of spoken language, one might conclude that the spoken language is located only in the mouth. Detailed diagrams, such as a cross section of the human head, include terms that should be familiar to language teachers including *upper lip, upper teeth, alveolar ridge, hard palate,* and *velum.* There are more. How many more depends on how precisely you want to portray the vocal mechanism. From that perspective, it is almost as if the human head were but a laboratory for producing different sounds, not unlike the ingenious do-it-yourself vowel resonators created by Huckvale (2013). On the website, Huckvale shows how to add tubing of different shapes to a duck call in order to produce fairly convincing reproductions of a few English vowels. In the same way, we might be able to get our students to produce a few beautiful vowels in isolation, but it turns out language use is much more complicated than reproducing individual sounds.

In contrast to "mouth-centered" learning, we present a holistic or, to be more specific, a *haptic* (movement plus touch) approach that attempts to engage more of the rest of the body. Indeed, pronunciation is considerably more than a handful of vowels and consonants. If a student learns these 38 sounds of American English, as described in Ladefoged (1999, pp. 41-42), is the student now ready to speak a new second language? Unfortunately, those sounds are not spoken in isolation but may morph substantially when they appear in connected speech.

In addition, there are complicated interactions with the body itself and with other levels of the language, such as the suprasegmentals that include other linguistic areas of intonation, rhythm, pitch register, and word and sentence stress. The haptic approach addresses the body first. So the answer to our question as to where spoken language resides is: in the body—the whole body.

The term haptic in its most basic form refers to touch plus movement. Haptics has recently gained importance in modern technology in varying applications such as haptic interfaces, which allow users to interact with devices such as smart phones or tablet computers using touch. Haptic gaming in applications such as the now familiar Wii connect the user with the gaming environment using touch and movement. Haptic video (or cinema) engulfs the watcher in a sensory shell that engages senses beyond the aural and visual aspects familiar to movie watching for the last 100 years or so (Marks, 2009.) Theatregoers are now able to "feel" the movie with vibrations, movement, wind, and other sensations, along with seeing and hearing it.

The Roots of Haptic Pronunciation Teaching: Acting and ESL

The work of Arthur Lessac (1997), well-known voice and acting teacher, was influential in the early development of the Essential Haptic-Integrated English Pronunciation (EHIEP) framework (Acton, 1994, 1997). His dictum, "Train the body first," serves as one of the basic principles of the approach outlined here. Lessac is recognized as one of the first to successfully reconcile fundamental mind-body "antagonism" in vocal training. Of course, in reality, virtually all speaking or pronunciation teachers use movement and gesture in class, whether for emphasis or depicting the "shapes" of sounds such as intonation contours "in the air." Beyond pronunciation alone, Asher (e.g., 1972) developed

the widely used Total Physical Response (TPR) approach for language teaching, which involves the use of movement in the form of commands and student nonverbal responses (McCafferty, 2004).

Examination of any student pronunciation textbook will reveal numerous recommendations for use of gesture or physical gimmicks to reinforce pronunciation learning, such as clapping hands or tapping feet during music, poetry, or jazz chants (e.g., Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Goodwin, & Briner, 2010; Morley, 1991). The important distinction of the haptic approach, however, is the extent to which movement and gesture are used *systematically* in classroom teaching.

Using the Visual Field to Teach Pronunciation: Observed Experiential Integration

The concept of the visual field in this approach is derived to some degree from the *Observed Experiential Integration* approach to psychotherapy developed by Cook and Bradshaw (2013) and others. In that system, eye movement is exploited in a number of ways, along with other sensory modalities such as focused touch (massage) or aroma therapy, in enhancing the efficacy and efficiency of therapy. EHIEP essentially establishes positions in the visual field in front of the learner and then directs learners to move their hands to designated positions as they say words or sounds to help them learn and recall new pronunciation. It was in that context about 6 years ago (Acton, 2010), that a possible solution to the problem of ineffective or inconsistent kinesthetic pronunciation teaching techniques came into focus.

Having made extensive use of kinesthetic procedures such as gesture and body movement for decades, Acton (e.g., 1984) had been looking for ways to use directed movement so that learner and instructor actions were performed *with sufficient consistency* and in prescribed patterns so that results could be measured

and methods replicated. Haptic engagement provided the answer (Acton, Baker, & Burri, 2009). Given almost any gesture in the visual field, if it could be anchored (or terminated) with touch (either hands touching each other or some spot on the upper body), the effect of the technique became much better defined and regularized—so that the impact could be explored in multiple contexts (Acton, Baker, Burri, & Teaman, 2012).

English Haptic-Integrated English Pronunciation

EHIEP represents the culmination of decades of work in pronunciation teaching by Acton (2013). It should be noted that the EHIEP model is quite experiential in nature. As such, this text-representation of it can only be a partial introduction to it, at best. One needs to at least see, if not experience it firsthand, to really understand its power in shaping the new phonology of an L2 English speaker. (See the *Haptic-integrated clinical pronunciation* blog, HICPR, 2013, for links to video demonstrations of EHIEP techniques.)

The core of the EHIEP system is the concept of *haptic-integrated*, defined as "the systematic engagement of hand movement through the visual field with a touch termination on a stressed syllable as the word is spoken" (HIPCR, 2013). In the EHIEP system, hand movement through the visual field is a crucial link in the haptic experience. Although the center of haptic anchoring is vocal resonance tied to movement and touch, that process has a visual complement, in which the haptic event is marked by the learner in a very multisensory process, making for a richer and deeper learning experience. There are three crucial, nearly simultaneous events that characterize our use of haptic: hand movement through the visual field, touch on a stressed syllable, and simultaneously spoken language. For a representation of one of the haptic movements, see Figure 1. For a video version please see https://vimeo.com/61198065. The nature of those elements will become clearer as the protocols and techniques are introduced in

the following section. This haptic "trinity" come together and are embodied in *pedagogical movement patterns* (PMPs).
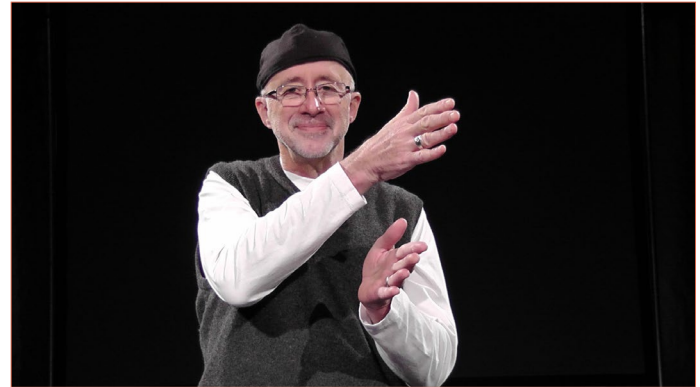
Figure 1. Demonstrates the EHIEP Rise-Fall Intonation Pattern. The right hand moves at chest level from the right to left (left to right here for the viewer) and strikes the stationary left hand on the nucleus of the intonational phrase, moves upwards with the rise of the intonation (this peak position between the rise and fall is pictured here), before falling once again to chest level along with a fall in pitch at the end of the phrase.

The EHIEP Protocols

There are nine basic protocols, which are ordered sets of procedures that train a learner in how to work with one PMP. Those PMPs are designed to be later used in classroom instruction or independent study. The protocols generally target one particular aspect of the L2 phonology. In briefly characterizing the nine protocols, note the use of the terms *left* hand and *right* hand or direction

across the visual field. The left/right distinction could, however, easily be reversed in some instances and often is performed both left/right and right/left within one protocol. There are both important pedagogical and neurophysiological reasons for choosing the specific handedness of a PMP for particular phrases (HICPR, 2013; Acton, in press). Essentially it has to do with exploiting brain hemispheric specificity. Some PMPs may be more effectively learned or used by designating more right hand (left brain) or left hand (right brain) engagement (Minogue & Jones, 2006).

The Warm-Up Protocol

The Warm-Up Protocol (WUP) functions to enliven the student's body and begin to accustom the student to the coming EHIEP tasks by having students move and produce several nonsense (English) syllables such as /i/, /wi/, /yi/, /hi/, or other pure vowels or diphthongized vowels. As in this protocol and the other protocols, the movement, touch, and vocal productions are modeled by a person recorded on video but could also be modeled by a trained instructor. The WUP is intended as a gentle introduction to the visual, tactile, and expressive or auditory anchoring experienced throughout the EHIEP protocols. The PMPs employed include moving from a central position in front of the body outward, movements of the hands from a low position below the waist upwards to a head level and snapping the fingers while speaking the syllables. The PMPs are then mirrored by the learner, as is the case for most of the protocols. Performing this warm-up should feel relaxing and rhythmic. It serves to connect the learner's body, visual space, and vocal tract in the L2.

Visual Field Anchoring Protocol

The Visual Field Anchoring Protocol (VAP) is a PMP that maps the vowel space to the positions on the clock. It serves as a critical stepping-stone to the entire system. It is as if a clock is superimposed on the human body with 6 at the lateral center of the body at the level of the waistline and 12 centered just above the head. Three is at mouth height to the right and 9 at the same level but to the left. The corresponding vowels for these positions (going around the clock in a clockwise fashion) the tense /e/ at 3, open /a/ at 6, /o/ at 9, and finally the y-offglide at 12. There are vowels corresponding to each of the other numbers of the clock. It is not necessary to go into all of that detail for this brief description of the protocols, in part because that can vary, depending on the dialect of English that is targeted.

Vowel and Word Stress Protocol

The Vowel and Word Stress Protocol (VWSP) is based on the VAP clock described above. There are really three sub-protocols that follow the same basic form, but cover different parts of the vowel space. One VWSP is for the lax vowels—*rough vowels* in our terminology. Phonetically (using symbols from Celce-Murcia et al. (2010), they are written as [ɪ], [ʊ], [ɛ], [ɔ], [æ], [ʌ], and [ɑ]. The tense vowels and diphthongs, represented phonetically as [iy], [uw], [ey], [ow], [ay], [ɔy], and [aw] (again the symbols are taken from Celce-Murcia et al., 2010)—are called *smooth vowels* in our terminology. This protocol involves learning the vowels as isolated syllables and then practicing them in poems that cover the vowels from "top to bottom" on the vowel clock in words. For example the VWSP for rough (lax) vowels uses the poem: "if it fits the f<u>oo</u>t, I b<u>e</u>t you b<u>ough</u>t, the h<u>a</u>t and the st<u>u</u>ff from the sh<u>o</u>p of my p<u>o</u>p!" The poem is recited rhythmically with precise movements that correspond to the key underlined vowels.

Syllable Protocol

The Syllable Protocol focuses on syllables and their relative

prominence. For this protocol, one hand rests on the opposite shoulder with the other hand's palm cupping the opposite elbow. In utterances containing from one to seven syllables, of which one and only one syllable is stressed, fingers gently tap near the elbow for unstressed syllables and the other fingers tap near the shoulder for the one stressed syllable. To demonstrate the tapping pattern here we will use "S" for the shoulder (focal) tap and "e" for the elbow tap marking the nonfocal syllables. The tapping pattern for the two-syllable phrase *that's nice* the pattern is e-S**.** The seven-syllable phrase *that's very interesting* would have the corresponding tap pattern of e-e-e-S-e-e-e.

Intonation Protocol

The Intonation Protocol focuses on embodying intonation contours (Acton, Baker, & Burri, 2009). For this protocol one stationary hand is raised to shoulder level while the opposite hand moves at the same level, crossing the center of the body and touching the stationary hand on the stressed syllable. After meeting the stationary hand, one of several possible intonation contours is traced by the moving hand, depending on the intended phrase. For a level monotone contour, the voice and the hand continue in a flat trajectory without varying pitch. For a rise or fall, the voice and hand either rise together or fall together. At the end of the sentence, there can be an additional final fall after the tonic contour.

Fluency Protocol

The Fluency Protocol targets the speed and fluidity of speech by accompanying speech with quick fluid movements with simultaneous tapping. In the starting position, the learner's left hand is open, positioned adjacent to the left quadricep. The right arm is in the same position, on the right side. For example, as the phrase *Tricky?* is spoken with a rising intonation, the right hand moves upwards and taps the left hand on the stressed syllable and continues upward. For *That's tricky?* the exact same movement is performed with the addition of a hip tap with the right hand on *that*. Other phrases are repeated as a reply using the reverse hand positions. This protocol creates a soothing, fluid, and rhythmic effect using Tai Chi-like moves.

Rhythm Protocol

The Rhythm Protocol (RP) is performed with hands in the position of a jab used in boxing. The hand alternates syllables with a forward (f) punch and return (r) to the original position. On the tonic syllable of the phrase, a large forward jab (F) accompanies it. So the phrase *That's easy* would be r-F-r. *That's very easy* would be r-f-r-F-r. These two phrases begin with the return because you need to end up with a forward movement on the stressed syllable jab. So the phrase *That's amazing!* would start with a quick forward jab and therefore be f-r-F-r. The function of the rhythm protocol is to compact the syllables of speech, especially the unstressed syllables, creating a much more conversational "felt sense" for the learner. The RP is generally the one with the most immediate impact on conversational speaking style.

Expressiveness Protocol

Building on the Intonation Protocol, the Expressiveness Protocol takes the intonational contours and then situates them in conversational discourse by assigning them (a) pitch, (b) volume, and (c) pace, along with explicit reference to "discourse orientation," that is the relation of that discourse turn to the previous one of the other person in the conversation. For example, if the conversational turn of one speaker was FAST, HIGH PITCH, and LOUD, the response might well match those three parameters or intentionally change the intensity somewhat, depending on the emotional and textual qualities of what is to follow.

For high pitch, the hands would be moving near the top of the visual field; for low pitch, near the bottom. For differences in volume, the hands may either move more quickly or move further away from the body. For differences in pace, the silence after a rhythm group is either shortened or lengthened by changing the time between gestures.

Integration Protocol

The Integration Protocol has been developed, as its name suggests, to assist learners in integrating key elements of the EHIEP system: vowel quality, stress assignment, rhythm grouping, intonation contour/tone groups, expressiveness, fluency, conversational speed—and new or changed consonant sounds. Just as in the case of the conductor of an orchestra, the baton (or pencil or rod or stick of some kind) serves to set up the basic rhythmic beat or tempo and expressive intensity or volume of the phrase or sentence being repeated or produced for the first time. The effect is to drive the speech mechanism to more rapid and contrastive production. The baton simply takes over direction and the voice and body follow. It is also, in some contexts, a very reliable tool in initial diagnostic work. If a learner can move his or her baton with their speech at the outset, the prognosis for their rapid improvement is good.

These nine protocols can be used in varying ways. Using a rather selective approach, certain protocols could be introduced as stand-alone activities used to reach specific teaching goals. For example, the WUP can be done in a few minutes at the beginning of class and serves as a great way to invigorate students and get them focused and ready to use their bodies for speaking. The Syllable Protocol can be quickly taught and used to reinforce the learning of syllabification and stress for new vocabulary. Many other stand-alone scenarios are possible; however, the most effective use of these protocols would involve working with the complete set over a couple of months. In the

approach that we have developed and that we commonly use in our classes, one or two protocols are introduced every week in class with a video and practice for about 20 to 30 minutes. Students then practice the protocol by themselves a few times in the following week. As new protocols are added, old protocols can be reviewed and practiced periodically to keep the varying haptic skills alive for the learner. Within each unit are chances to practice short dialogues that allow learners to focus on producing language in context. With this kind of extended training and practice from individual sounds to words, phrases, and conversations, learners can expect gains in their pronunciation accuracy even in spontaneous speaking.

Conclusion

Several aspects of the EHIEP system were developed in Japan when we were teaching together in the 1990s at Nagoya University of Commerce. In working in large conversation classes, it was essential to be able to assist individual students with correcting pronunciation. An earlier kinesthetic version of the EHIEP method that we developed there provided important insights that later evolved into the current system. The EHIEP system is especially effective with Japanese learners for two reasons. First, the body-based rhythm group focus is very helpful in assisting student in moving away from their more syllable-by-syllable way of speaking of English. Second, the location in the visual field of several key vowels of English that are not part of the Japanese phonological system has proven to be a feature of the system that learners immediately identify as most helpful, especially in being able to produce the distinctions between word pairs such as: *sit/seat, let/late, kook/cook,* and *coat/caught.*

One major advantage of the EHIEP system is that for most instructors, regardless of background in pronunciation teaching, it is reasonably simple for them to learn the techniques and teach them to students so that they can later be used in

integrated classroom instruction. In other words, once students have experienced the haptic PMPs, those PMPs are ready to be used whenever the pronunciation of a new word is targeted or a correction is executed. Another key advantage of the EHIEP approach should be the ability to use improved pronunciation in spontaneous speech. The haptic anchoring of sounds enables integration of changed pronunciation, just as the use of haptics in various kinds of physical training has been shown to be exceedingly effective in integrating knowledge in many disciplines. Finally, it is guaranteed to be a moving experience for both you and your students.

Bio Data

Brian D. Teaman does research in CALL and speaking/phonetics/pronunciation. In his recent sabbatical he spent a lot of time learning and researching haptic pronunciation techniques in British Columbia with Bill Acton. He is also an avid cyclist and vocalist. <teaman@wilmina.ac.jp>

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Silence in the Classroom Can Be Golden

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In this study I reevaluate silence in classroom discussion in Japan. I propose that a modest amount of silence, when integrated appropriately into classroom activities, is productive for both teachers and students. Silence in the class is conventionally regarded as negative. Because active academic engagement from students is absent, silence produces an awkward atmosphere; it brings a bad rhythm to the class. With the results of this study, I attempt to reverse such images. Silence in fact can help students create a good rhythm in their discussions. It also becomes beneficial when they need time to digest what they have learnt or to organise their thoughts. A case study of my English literature seminar classes at university was done. The reevaluation of silence in the class will make a difference in our ways of designing a lesson by giving Japanese students more autonomy in classroom discussion.

　本研究は、授業でのディスカション演習において生じる沈黙を再評価する試みである。適度な沈黙は授業活動に有効に取り入れられれば、教師と学生の双方にとって生産的なものとなる。従来、授業中の沈黙は否定的に受けとめられてきた。学生からの積極的なアカデミックな関与の欠如、あるいは、教室に気まずい雰囲気を作り出し、授業に悪いリズムをもたらすものと考えられてきた。本研究はこうしたイメージの転換を目指す。沈黙は、学生がディスカッションの良いリズムを作るための助けとなり、さらには、学生が受け取った情報を吸収したり、自らの考えをまとめたりするのに必要な時間になる。本研究を行うにあたって、著者は自身の英文学演習の授業をケーススタディとしている。授業中の沈黙を再評価することは、ディスカッションにおける日本の学生による主体性を促すことに繋がり、従来の授業の進め方に一石を投じるであろう。

DISCUSSION IS a meaningful academic activity. In discussion students share knowledge, ideas, and perspectives, which stimulate their further appetite for creativity and help both teachers and students to (self-)check the students' progress in and understanding of the class. Discussion also serves students as a good practice for voyaging into the academic world or making a successful performance at corporate meetings after graduation. However, one common problem teachers are often confronted with in classroom discussion in Japan is silence. Because this silence is an archenemy of teachers, discussion time is likely to become "lecture time." To fill in silence, teachers start to talk, but this act conversely results in their dominating the class. They wish for a voluntary exchange and sharing of ideas among their students, but soon find themselves continuing to talk while their students are only listening.

This urge by teachers to say something in order to fill in the silence is understandable. For a practical reason, classroom time is finite. Classes in most of the Japanese universities last 90 minutes. These 90 minutes may be long for students, but not for teachers. The time is hardly

Making a **Difference**

long enough to teach satisfactorily. Teachers, new teachers in particular, often make a tight class plan: Each activity is given a 5-to-15-minute slot, aligned in as perfect an order as the teachers think they can. However, seldom does teaching go as planned. A teacher asks a question and none of his or her students dare answer. Time is ticking. The teacher says to him- or herself, "Oh dear. We have more to do today."

Our common understanding of silence in the class is negative. For many teachers and students alike, silence is rarely appreciated. Awkwardness descends when a lesson is disrupted by silence. This is because such disruption can undermine feelings of belonging and control that the smooth flow of communication is usually expected to foster (Koudenburg, Postmes, & Gordijn, 2011, p. 512). Therefore, it is generally understood that the lesson flow is not *lubricated* but *disrupted* by silence. Furthermore, silence is also regarded as an expression of students' reluctance or refusal to participate in a class activity as well as a symbol of unproductivity. Experienced teachers know how to cope with silence in a relaxed and relaxing manner, but for them too, it is best avoided.

The results of this study challenge such fixed ideas about silence in discussion classes in Japanese higher education by embracing the silence, not by preempting it. Suggestions will be made to actually integrate the silence into the discussion so that discussion will become student oriented, not teacher centred. I argue that silence provides foreign language learners with time to organise their ideas as well as the confidence to speak up. They need such thinking time or "wait time" (Rowe, 1986), because it takes longer for them to prepare answers in English than when they do the same task in their first language.

Literature Review on Classroom Silence

Silence in discussion means a situation where no participant is speaking (Schmitz, 1990). This definition is a truism, but

scholars and educators have struggled to find out what causes silence. A silent student may be just shy; she or he does not know the answer and feels hesitant to say so; the atmosphere of the class may not be conducive to talking. On the other hand, the cause could be rooted more deeply, for example, a trauma or wish to avoid a sensitive issue such as race or religion. A number of attempts have been made to grapple with the last point mentioned above, especially in the US where race, class, gender, and ethnicity have been important issues for national construction (Ladson-Billings, 1996; Rogers, 2006; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995; Weis & Fine, 1993). Rather than identifying the cause of each silence in the class and trying to get rid of it, some of these attempts focus on the effects of silence and indicate that "the absence of talk does not mean the absence of learning" (Schultz, 2009, p. 5). Some students prefer to absorb knowledge and think further through listening or "silent participation" (Schultz, 2009, p. 61). Scholars also argue that silence is not necessarily attributed to individuals, but to the interactions among students and between the teacher and students. In other words, silence is contextual and it is therefore essential to create a classroom atmosphere that allows silence to be taken positively by both teachers and students (Bosacki, 2005; Schultz, 2009; Shuttleworth, 1990).

In Japanese schools, students are notorious for being "too quiet." Researchers attribute this cultural tendency to various factors: Japanese preference to be perfect; their respect for listening to others rather than for speaking for themselves; the traditional one-way teaching style in Japan where the teacher speaks and the students listen; Confucianism that used to be taught intensively at school from the Edo period (Finkelstein, Imamura, & Tobin, 1991; Harumi, 1999; Lebra, 1987). In Confucianism, for example, respect for social order and seniority is highly valued. This top-down teaching style, scholars argue, still remains to be the norm in Japan (Zembylas, 2004).

While it is agreed that this stereotype has some validity in examining the general tendency for Japanese students to be silent in the classroom, it is also a fact that there are a few students who are exceptionally talkative. They like taking a leadership role and willingly contribute to discussion. It is also undeniable that there are students all over the world who are quiet in the classroom. While the focus of this article is the particular context of Japanese schools, some of the suggestions here would potentially be applicable to other cultural contexts.

Methodology

These experiments were conducted in two classes. Both were English literature discussion classes at university. The languages used for the discussions were English and occasionally Japanese. The texts used were a Nigerian novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, in one of the classes, and an English novel, *A Pale View of Hills* (1982) by Kazuo Ishiguro, in the other. The English levels of these novels were appropriate for the students. The majority of my students agreed that the books were manageable to read. The progress in both classes was to read one chapter (normally about 15 pages) every week. The students were given discussion topics in advance for the following week so that they could roughly prepare what to say for the next class. Discussion topics were, for example, character analysis ("Read this chapter and tell us anything that you know or can guess about the characters") or comparison ("Compare this scene and that one").

The students who took these classes were 3rd-year and final-year undergraduates, whose TOEIC scores ranged from 450 to 800, except for one student whose father was a Filipino and for whom English was one of his first languages. Because of their low English abilities, students sometimes misunderstood the plot. Therefore, in discussions. students also aimed to self-check their understanding of the plot through listening to other students' remarks as well as to improve their skills in examining the text.

The class reading the Nigerian novel was taught in the winter term of 2011. It consisted of 41 students. Due to its large size, the discussions took place in small groups (four to seven students each). In each group the students decided who would chair the discussion. While they were discussing, the teacher walked around the classroom and joined in their discussions when appropriate. The other class, which had 11 students, was taught in the summer term of 2012. With this class size, sometimes all the students sat at one table so that the teacher could supervise them all at one time, and sometimes they sat at two tables in order to create a more comfortable atmosphere for discussion.

The research employed the following three methods: a questionnaire at the beginning of each term (see Appendix), observation of the classes, and interviews. The main focus of the questionnaire was the students' perspectives on silence in the class so that the class could be designed to satisfy both the teacher and as many students as possible. Therefore some of the questions asked for *their* (the students') suggestions about silence. Common questions concerning why they become silent were also included. Other questions were designed to see if there is any difference in terms of the frequency of silence between discussions in English and in Japanese.

The interviews were intended to endorse or clarify the findings in the questionnaire and in the classroom observation. 36 students in the 2011 class and 7 students in the 2012 class were interviewed. The period during which the interviews were done spanned one term, following the interviewees' schedules. Each interview lasted about 10-20 minutes. All of the interviewees were asked both common and individual questions. In common, they were asked the reasons for their answers to the questionnaire, whereas individual questions were asked about their own attitude in the discussions (this also served as feedback

to the students to improve their discussion skills) and about certain phenomena noticed in the class observation.

Results and Discussion

Effects of Wait Time

The results of questions 3a and 3b of the questionnaire show that if a student is not hesitant to comment or answer in classes conducted in Japanese, he or she is likely to not be hesitant in English either. On the other hand, there is a difference between English and Japanese, and it is about time. In the interviews, many students said something like, "Normally I first think in Japanese and then translate my idea into English, so it takes long to answer or comment." Admittedly, they were feeling a language barrier between English and Japanese. Some felt frustration due to their limited vocabulary or became nervous every time they spoke English because, as one of the students stated, "other students paid attention more to [his] English ability than to [his] opinion itself." Interestingly enough, however, they also said that this did not necessarily stop them from speaking. They did not think the language barriers were insurmountable even if they had difficulty expressing their ideas in English. Some even went so far as to say, "I speak more because I think more seriously in a discussion in English than in Japanese" or "I try to speak more because I think it a good English practice to discuss in English."

This hopeful and rather unexpected outcome suggests the need to give Japanese students longer wait time. In spite of the stereotype concerning Japanese students, not all of them are hesitant to speak in class. At Japanese schools, these exceptionally talkative students do not dominate their groups, nor do they deprive other students of a chance to speak. Their bravery encourages other students who would otherwise remain silent. To the question "In what kind of class do you *not* become si-lent?" 27 out of 52 students said yes to when "other students are actively talking" (see Appendix, Q5).

What teachers need to do is, therefore, to alleviate the difficulty that their talkative students have in stating opinions in English, as a result of which the whole group will actively begin to exchange ideas. In other words, students need longer thinking time, which normally emerges as silence. This provides them with time to translate in their minds ideas from Japanese into English and to organise their ideas. Longer wait time is suitable for Japanese students who are, though somewhat stereotypically, said to be perfectionist: they remain silent until they come up with a "perfect" answer (Harumi, 1999).

We have to be careful, however, because long wait time can become more awkward if the teacher does nothing but simply prolong the silence. On the other hand, if both teachers and students accept a certain length of silence in discussion as being beneficial for further discussion, they will come to feel more comfortable with it. To achieve this, teachers can frequently refer to the role of silence in their classes. For example, if you teach an English novel, you have ample examples of a scene where characters are being silent. One such example is a scene from Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills*:

For a moment, they fell silent again.

"I'm glad everything's going well," Ogata-San said, eventually. "Yes, we were just passing this way and I was telling Etsuko-San you lived here. . . . In fact, I was just about to tell her about a curious little thing. I happened to remember it, when I saw your house. A curious little thing."

"Oh yes?"

"Yes. I just happened to remember it when I saw your house, that's all. You see, I was reading something the other day. An article in a journal. The *New Education Digest*, I think it was called."

The young man said nothing for a moment, then he adjusted his position on the pavement and put down his briefcase.

"I see," he said. . . . *He nodded, but said nothing*. (Ishiguro, 1982, pp. 145-146. Italics added.)

Three sentences which describe silence appear in this short passage. A retired teacher, Ogata-san, visits a young one, Shigeo Matsuda. They once got on well, and Ogata-san even did Shigeo kindness by helping him to find the job. However, after the war Shigeo wrote an article and criticised the pre-war Japanese education, especially teachers such as Ogata-san and his colleagues. Having read this article and being unable to understand Shigeo's intention, Ogata-san visits him in the quoted scene. I used this scene in my class to show the students that silence does not mean there are no activities involved. In fact the two characters are thinking about the best possible action to take next. In other words, they are silent and yet engaged. We can use literary scenes like this to drive home the significance of silence as time to think for the next step (also see Appendix Q8).

Students Imitate Their Teacher

There was an interesting phenomenon observed among my students. After the first few classes did not quite work as was originally intended because they were too quiet, I chaired one of their discussion tables to lubricate their talks. Then from the next class the table leader began copying the way I had chaired, even using the same words for asking individual students for comments and the wait time spent for their thinking time. Previously, table leaders waited 7-8 seconds on average before they started to ask individuals for opinions. However, I endured from one-half to a full minute, pretending to be comfortable with the long silence. In the next class the discussion leader waited for almost as long as I did. The student acted so, as she explained later, because of a lack of experience with discussion

in primary and secondary school; the students had been desperate for a model to follow. This discovery shows that teachers can create unwritten rules for discussion, and this makes it relatively easy to control wait time.

It was also observed that my students tended to fall silent on the following two occasions in particular. First, silence descended on them when they felt that reaching a conclusion by themselves was beyond their knowledge and that they needed help from their teacher. In this situation they were at a loss as to whether they should carry on with the current topic or move on to a new one with the topic at hand unsolved. Second, students were not good at responding to remarks made by other students. Consequently, there usually occurred a considerable length of silence between remarks.

On occasions such as the first one, what I took advantage of was my students' tendency to copy their teacher's style. They were shown some examples of words that are useful for changing a topic as well as a timing to do so. They first struggled to imitate, but in the end learnt how to proceed on their own.

This educational policy to allow students to grope for their own discussion style through imitating their teacher's not only encourages their initiative to learn and teaches them the joy of learning, but also helps resolve the second occasion in which they are likely to become silent. As the term went on, my students gradually developed a good rhythm in their discussions, and their effective use of silence played a role of accent in making this rhythm. In this rhythm, first one or two students stated something as an icebreaker. Soon the discussion table had a long wait time that lasted up to one minute, followed by an intensive exchange of ideas. Then there was another long wait time for digesting what they had just discussed and organising ideas for further discussion. Then the second round started. Intervention in their talks by the teacher became less necessary.

As a result of our attempt to become accustomed to longer thinking time, we saw not only improvement in the quality of opinions from the students, but also the number of opinions raised during each discussion. At the beginning of the term, only one or two students commented, feeling, as they described in the interviews, either "unbearable towards silence" or responsible to say something because they were labelled as good students. On the other hand, many others chose to remain silent. Those who did comment made facile comments. In character analyses they only managed to say, for example, "She seemed nice" or "I don't understand why he behaved like this." Towards the end of the term, more and more students began to contribute to discussions by stating their ideas and commenting on their classmates' comments. Their opinions became more insightful, logical, and convincing. For example, they began adding "because" to their remarks, which was a sign of developing logic. They became aware, for example, of the symbolic use of the river in the climax of *A Pale View of Hills*. One of the students referred to the Styx and the prevalence of death in the scene (Ishiguro, 1982, pp. 172-173). Then the students stated their own understandings of the significance of the river in this passage and inspired each other through sharing ideas.

Multiple Ways of Assessment

The premise of the points raised and suggested so far is that after a wait time students are expected to express the ideas that they were pondering upon during the silence. However, some students prefer to remain silent or simply like listening to their classmates throughout the discussion. We have to acknowledge such intended silence as a way of participating in discussion. As Schultz (2009) said, "a singular focus on talk as successful participation obscures the myriad ways that students might also participate through silence" (p. 3). In silence they are actually learning. It is only that their ideas or what they learn through listening is not audible to others. Of course, we can encourage them to talk, but such an act could end up intimidating them.

Discussion classes should, therefore, combine discussion and other modes of learning. Multiple ways of stating opinions are, for example, writing or occasional tests. Drawing is also enjoyable for both teachers and students, and a creative method to check students' comprehension. It illustrates their (mis-)understanding, which they are not always good at explaining verbally. Drawing is educationally effective especially when the teaching material is set in a culture or place unfamiliar to the students. For example, in the 2011 class about the African literature, my students were given an assignment to draw a slum in Nairobi. Some of them drew in their pictures what is around their own everyday life: a clock, plastic bottles, water, and electricity (see Figure 1). This exercise helped them notice the cultural gap between the world in the text that they were reading and their own world. Alternative ways such as these allow students to have an opportunity to express their ideas so that they do not feel neglected. With consent by the students, teachers can also show their writings or drawings on the classroom TV monitor to share the ideas with the other students. These alternative ways are important, too, for checking students' progress and understanding of the text, especially when the class is large and the teacher cannot pay attention to the whole class throughout the lesson.

Figure 1. One Student's Drawing of a Slum in Nairobi

Note. In the centre at the bottom of this picture, we can see a tap from which water is flowing into a bucket.

Conclusion and Further Suggestions

The results of these experimental discussion classes in Japan show the importance of encouraging students' initiative to create their own rhythm of discussion. Accepted silence plays an important role in this rhythm. It gives students time to process knowledge, new information, and comments from other group members as well as to prepare their own comments. This is especially applicable to language learners. They need longer time to think and prepare comments. On the other hand, teachers should focus on facilitating such student-oriented discussions. Of course teachers' intervention is necessary if the silence is prolonged and an expression of asking for help from the teacher clearly appears on the students' faces or in their gestures and attitudes. However, such intervention has to be minimal as the purpose of it is to induce the next cycle of talk among the students, not to remove the teacher's fear towards silence.

Teachers are also expected to create a classroom environment to encourage comments. Friendly atmosphere is vital in creating such an environment. However, this does not deny the importance of silence because no matter how talkative students are in discussion there always comes silence, and it is to this silence that both teachers and students should give a positive value. On the other hand, even in a friendly atmosphere some students choose to remain silent. For those students, multiple ways of stating opinions need to be provided in order to give all the students an equal opportunity to express ideas.

This paper also suggests further possibilities for study and reform. First, there is a numerical limitation in the design of this study. The number of the students involved is not enough to provide a comprehensive picture of classroom silence in Japanese higher education, and further studies will be necessary. Second, Japanese students should be given more opportunity to experience discussion in whatever language in primary and secondary schools. This will require systematic as well as curricular changes. Because of lack of experience, for example, my students at first did not know how far they could deviate from the given discussion topics. A scene was frequently observed in which only a handful of students brought up opinions strictly sticking to the main topic, while the others only agreed or added little to the stated opinions, and the whole group stopped talking altogether. Deviation from the main topics might have led to unexpectedly interesting talk. This constipated situation stemmed from their inexperience in discussion. Students are full of ideas, regardless of their nationality. Before they reach higher education, they should learn the joy of discussion.

Bio Data

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Note. The original version was in Japanese, translated here by the author.

1. Do you usually answer your teacher's questions actively?

- Yes   **9**
- No   **10**
- It depends   **33**

2a. Relating to Q1, do you think a smaller size of the class would make you feel relaxed to answer?

- Yes   **47**
- No, it would be the same   **5**
- No, it would make it more difficult to answer   **0**

2b. To those who answered "Yes" in Q2a, what size of the class would make so?

- 8 or fewer students   **30**
- 9-15   **21**

- 16-21   **0**
- Others   **1**

3a. Do you often become silent when your teacher asks a question and points out directly to you?

- Always yes   **0**
- Often so   **13**
- Not very often so   **27**
- Seldom so   **9**
- Never   **3**

3b. In a class conducted in English only, do you become silent more often than in a class taught in Japanese?

- Yes   **28**
- No   **24**

4. In what kind of situation do you become silent in the class? (You can choose more than one of the following.)

(About Q3a)

- I do not understand the question   **0**
- I do not know the answer   **8**
- If I remain silent, the teacher will point to somebody else   **9**
- I do not have confidence in my answer   **11**
- I have fear that I may answer it wrong   **1**
- I will be embarrassed if I answer incorrectly   **2**
- Others   **0**

(About Q3b)

- I do not understand the question   **11**
- I do not know the answer   **17**
- If I remain silent, the teacher will point to somebody else   **14**
- I do not have confidence in my answer   **17**
- I have fear that I may answer it wrong   **3**
- I will be embarrassed if I answer incorrectly   **3**
- Others   **1**

5. In what kind of class do you *not* become silent? (You can choose more than one of the following.)

- The teacher is approachable   **36**
- The number of the students is small   **32**
- The students are friendly to each other   **41**
- Other students are actively talking   **27**
- Many questions are easy to answer   **6**
- Others   **2**

6. Do you like silence in discussion?

- No   **0**
- Yes   **2**
- Not dislike, but feel it awkward   **48**
- Others   **2**

7. What do you usually think in silence? Choose the most appropriate.

- Waiting for others to speak   **15**
- Thinking what I will say next   **37**
- Thinking nothing in particular   **0**
- Others   **0**

8. When instructed by your teacher that you do not feel silence awkward because it gives you meaningful time to think, do you think you will be able to make much of silence?

- Yes   **32**
- No   **10**

- Others   **10**

9. In discussion, if the language were switched from Japanese to English, do you think you would speak less?

- Yes   **26**
- No   **11**
- Others   **15**

Stronger CLT: Getting Students to Speak in English in Class

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It is well known that pretertiary English education in Japan fails to foster basic conversational ability in many students. In order to prepare students for entrance examinations, a focus on reading, writing, and translation comes at the expense of communication practice. Many students enter university without the ability to engage in basic English conversation. It has also been observed that some students are reluctant to participate in communicative tasks, even when given the opportunity. This reticence can be vexing for instructors of lower proficiency students in mandatory English classrooms. Drawing on Howatt's (1984) "strong" version of Communicative Language Teaching, I outline a discussion and debate classroom method that fosters small group conversation even among students of mixed proficiency and confidence levels. The results of a pilot survey asking what students thought of these activities showed that students are willing, given the right conditions, to speak English in class.

　日本の高等学校における英語教育は、大学入試対策のための、読み、書き、和訳が中心であり、そのため英会話の練習時間が取れなくなるため英会話力を養うことができないことでよく知られている。そのため基礎レベルの英会話さえできない多くの学生が大学に入学することになる。また大学において英会話の機会を与えられても、積極的に参加しようとしない学生も少なくない。特に習熟度が低い学生に対して必修英語を教える教員にとって、どうやってこのような学生の積極性を引き出すか悩ましい問題であろう。本論文はHowatt　(1984) による「コミュニケーション」言語の教授法の「強い」バージョンを土台とし、大学生の英会話習熟度を問わず、また少人数グループでの英会話練習法を提案するものである。この教授法について予備調査を行ったところ、この方法を通じて習熟度の低い学習者でさえも積極的に英会話に参加するといった、目覚ましい結果が表れた。

AFTER A minimum of 6 years of compulsory English study, many students entering university cannot engage in basic English conversation. As Mulligan (2005) observed,

> Japanese students study English 3 to 5 hours a week or more, anywhere from 6 to 10 years, yet Japan has one of the lowest levels of English language proficiency of any developed country in the world. This is further reflected in their international TOEFL scores, which languish at the bottom. (p. 33)

Many university EFL teachers attempt to address this proficiency deficit by trying to develop communicative competence. Their students' study for entrance examinations finished, teachers are free to focus on communicative classroom tasks, to adopt a learner-centered approach, and—ideally—to get their students to speak to each other in English. These efforts

Making a **Difference**

may be well received among groups of motivated or proficient students. However, often teachers face the reality that their students *won't* talk to each other in English. It may appear that they can't, or that they do not want to. Indeed, getting students to speak in English in the classroom can be a formidable challenge (Boston, 2005; Fellner, 2005). Speaking tasks may be met with mumbling or dead silence.

Nunan (1998) stressed the importance of using classroom time for activities that practice real conversation (p. 27). Many university EFL instructors choose from an array of textbooks advertised to include communicative approaches and activities. However, for lower proficiency, lower confidence groups, some instructors find themselves starting all over again, reteaching a limited set of basic language forms embedded in a notional-functional syllabus. These students become so-called false beginners. "The students just can't speak," "Japanese students are shy," "They have no opinions," "They do not know what to say," are not uncommon complaints among instructors who encounter resistance to speaking activities.

In this research, I examined whether classroom materials orientated towards discussion—real conversation—and a stronger communicative approach are indeed effective. A previous study (Murphy, 2013) challenged the presumption among many instructors that Japanese learners cannot or will not speak English in the classroom. The small case study showed more language production with a student-centered discussion style lesson as detailed below. Spontaneous adlibbing in L2 was remarkable. The amount and quality of language produced in class and oral testing are one gauge of effectiveness. The present study of academic year 2012 went further and looked at effectiveness from the learner's perspective. This study relied on the learners' experiences as reported in an end-of-year survey. It is one thing for the instructor to look at test data and to surmise the efficacy of the lesson, but another for the students to report whether they felt their language ability improved and whether the teaching material and class style were beneficial.

Students' Pre-University EFL Classroom Experience

Two methods commonly used in junior high school and high school English classrooms are (a) *yakudoku*, whereby instructors mainly use the learners' L1, students learn English through analysis of grammar forms, and translation between English and Japanese is the main method of language learning (Hino, 1988; Gorsuch, 1998, 2001); and (b) adaptations of the Audiolingual Method, in which the learners are led by the instructor to practice grammar forms in oral repetition. This method focuses on engraining form-correct statements, questions, and responses as habit. Language forms are explained in L1, practiced in isolation, and later applied in possible communication situations through a variety of drills.

The dearth of communicative activities can be attributed to teachers' attitudes that they should use classroom time to prepare students for entrance tests (Law, 1994; Gorsuch, 1998). However, in her 1998 study of two Japanese teachers using the *yakudoku* method, Gorsuch (2001) observed that the teachers "reported that they did not ask the students to produce their own original spoken or written English utterances or sentences, because it would be too 'difficult' for students" (p. 4). Although it is arguable which methods are actually in use and which are the most beneficial to language learning (Saito, 2012), it is clear that many English language classrooms in Japan remain very teacher centered and focused on language forms (Nishino, 2008).

Less frequently, a learner might encounter one of the more current Communicative Approaches. Such lessons are more student oriented rather than using the traditional teacher-as-the-center-of-instruction approach. In addition, students break from

the typical method of grammar and pattern practice and use English in order to learn English (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983).

Toward a Learner-Centered, Discussion-Based Lesson Format

Strong CLT, Weak CLT Case Study—Academic Year 2011

Howatt (1984) identified *strong* and *weak* versions of communicative language teaching (CLT). He posited that the weak version is found in standard four skills textbooks and lessons focusing on the functional-notional approach. This weak version generally results in structure-based dialogs aiming at linguistic competence. Most of the speaking tasks are, as Littlewood (1981) observed, designed "to equip the learner with some of the skills required for communication without actually performing communicative acts" (p. 8).

Howatt (1984) further made a distinction between "learning to use" English, and the stronger version of CLT which results in "using English to learn it" (p. 279). He saw it as gaining knowledge of the language and acquisition through learning to use it to communicate and developing a deeper understanding of the complexity of language through experimentation in genuinely unrehearsed conversation. Communicative competence becomes the driving force of language learning and not a far-off end result. In this sense the discussion-based lesson format described herein can be considered to be a strong version of CLT in which learners generate their own language. They draw on receptive knowledge of English from previous years of study. More noteworthy is that students put together phrases and useful arguments on the spot by struggling to communicate a particular point of view.

Prior to the end of the 2010 academic year, I used what I considered to be a communicative, learner-centered lesson style

only in classes with higher proficiency learners. In these lessons speaking activities focused on small-group discussions with no drills, very little explicit grammar–form instruction, and almost no controlled practice of language forms. Like the teachers in the Gorsuch (1998) study, I thought that lower proficiency students could not handle open-ended speaking tasks. Therefore, for groups of students who scored low on the placement test, I chose a typical textbook that focused on language forms.

Because my small-group discussion lessons at the higher levels tended to be successful and, in fact, more enjoyable for both the learners and me, I began to test them out on other classes. The students liked the change: the classes transformed. Particularly surprising was that students in all classes were able to handle this stronger version of CLT, were willing to engage, and were able to produce their own free conversations. After a while, the remaining textbook-based classes seemed tedious and frustrating. So, I instituted the same discussion-based lesson format in my lowest level classes.

In Murphy (2013), I described my classes in the 2011 academic year, which I started with Howatt's weak CLT version and then switched to a strong approach. Teaching with two different sets of materials and teaching styles was revealing. In that study, oral testing revealed that the fairly predictable end result of standard textbook model dialogues was the memorization of grammar forms and established phrases. Students dared not deviate from textbook models for fear of making a grammatical mistake. They seemed to feel that *less was better*. On the other hand, the discussion style led to significantly longer conversations and linguistic variation. *More was better*. Transcripts showed students overcoming the struggle to be understood. In conversation that is unpredictable, more concise explanation of ideas is needed; more language and more varied language are necessary to communicate with clarity.

Furthermore, the study (Murphy, 2011) showed that even the lowest proficiency students generated arguments impromptu, their *own* arguments—not the ones provided by teaching materials. On a given topic, each group of students created their own mainline reasoning, their own memes. Many ideas were completely original, beyond the boundaries of the possible debate arguments I had imagined as I made my teaching materials. Some students used their own anecdotes and stories to support their thinking. The study documented one student group that began an oral test discussing fast food. The conversation soon segued to a discussion of Japanese traditional food, Japanese culture, and Western culture, fashion, and music. It finally made its way to a discussion of how young Japanese find hip-hop and popular American trends more appealing. This is what the students *really* wanted to talk about. The freedom to produce their own language provided a sense of personal investment and ownership in the discussion. Such original and hard to explain concepts required negotiation of meaning and rephrasing or repetition. This discussion took place in a so-called *low* class. Without L1 to help, learners by necessity demonstrated a deeper understanding of English. This also occurred in much of the extensive classroom practice in which students picked up or passed on newly gained understandings of language and its usage as well as general knowledge. That language acquisition had taken place became apparent when such usage and knowledge showed up in unrehearsed and unrelated topics many weeks later.

Discussion-Debate Lesson Format and Evaluation—Academic Year 2012

The lesson materials I have been developing are built around a number of debatable topics. Nearly all class activities involve semi-structured conversation leading to a final discussion. Each lesson opens with a "find someone who" activity. Learners become familiar with a topic by asking questions, eliciting opinions and actual experiences from their classmates. To the limit of their ability, students are asked to make follow-up questions. Some carry out the task more successfully than others; however, the learner-centered nature of the task leaves students free to mine the depths of a topic. Compared with a textbook-based lesson format, language forms are not rehearsed. Practice questions and answers are not read verbatim from a book. Rather, students generate the questions themselves. In low proficiency classes, the teacher acts mainly as a facilitator and provides hints and corrects grammar only as needed. For example, in a lesson in which the topic is education problems, the handout reads: "Find someone who . . . sleeps in class." Students may generate questions like *Do you sleep in class? Do you fall asleep in class?* or *Do you see others fall asleep in class?* Follow-up questions might be *Why?* or *Why not?* Possible answers are up to the imagination, for example: *I didn't sleep last night, The classroom is hot,* or *The teacher is boring.* Students are instructed that there is no set answer and that they are free to talk as much as they can with whatever English they can manage. This activity serves two purposes: moving beyond mere automatic yes or no answers to probing for more information and practicing a wider variety of English. The process of this activity allows the students to be creative and talk to many other classmates at their own level of competence.

The next exercise is a role-play in pairs or groups of three. It is another chance for the learners to generate questions, understand answers, and use arguments in a setting that does not expose what they might really think about a given topic. For example, a role-play might be a conversation between two parents and a teenager. In this scenario, one parent thinks that children should study more and never stay out late; the other parent thinks that more socializing with friends is a good thing. The third role-play member is a teenager who wants to stay out with friends. The exercise varies each time, but the goal is

for students to enact a conversation that is close to real life. The role-play moves the topic from the abstract to students producing their own dramas, making the issue a real-world problem to be considered.

The final task is a discussion in groups of three in which not everyone agrees. In one example topic, education problems, students hone their arguments about education problems in schools. Possible approaches are the "bad" students: they lack motivation or willpower, or they lack study skills. Or is it the teachers and schools that are not up to task? Or is it the parents' responsibility? The three students engage in debate. The main rule is simple: *All students cannot agree*. Having gone through the previous activities, students should understand both sides of the issue well enough to take a position on either side of the debate. After a set amount of time, the group members change. All students A move clockwise to another group, and students B move counter-clockwise, making completely new conversation practice groups. Students C do not move.

Students start again with completely different groups. With each change of group members, learners have a chance to experiment with what worked in the previous group. They pick up new ideas from classmates. These become tools or ammunition for the next discussion. This changing of partners and restarting the discussion was found to be highly effective in practicing the material several times without drilling or rote memorization.

In addition to the *not everyone can agree* rule, another key rule in this discussion activity is: *no non sequiturs allowed*. Arguments must follow logically from another partners' previous statements. Meaning is paramount, so if they do not understand they must seek clarification by asking, *What do you mean?* or *I don't understand*. Once the point is made the conversation can be skillfully shifted to another aspect of the topic, using expressions like *That's true but . . .* or *On the other hand*. Previously, the textbook-based lessons focused on a particular set list of phrases

and learners generally sought and passed on predictable information. With that, the conversation ended. In contrast, the discussion-based lessons are much more open-ended. Learners are free to expand on a dialogue for as long as they want or are able.

Evaluation, in brief, entails written essays plus written and oral tests. In the speaking tests, to prevent coordination and memorization, three students are chosen lottery style and must be prepared to take either side of the debate. Based on standards set and explained by me, students are tested on communication fluency, strength of arguments, and logic. The grading criteria are transparent and reflect the in-class discussion practice. Oral test feedback is given on the spot immediately afterwards. This makes the test a part of the learning process. I have observed that during following tests many flaws are corrected. Relative improvement of each student is noted and can play a part in final grades.

The Learners' Experience—A Survey

At the end of the second semester of the 2012 school year, I surveyed all classes with a brief questionnaire at a time when students had had ample experience with the classroom routine. The survey consisted of 11 Likert-style statements (see Appendix). There was space at the end for free comments or reflections. Of the 11 statements, a detailed treatment of the first three is not included in this paper. With those statements, I sought to determine the amount of English the students' high school teachers had used in class, the percentage of English speaking activities in their high school classes, and the degree to which the students think they will use English in the future. My intention was to find out if there was a connection to the other survey items. For example, if a student was comfortable with the class style, might the student have already had a similar conversational lesson in high school? However, the results of statements

1 and 2 were uniform and showed little high school English practice. I was not able to make any correlation with later items that specifically evaluated the current class style. Also outside the scope of this study are several factors beyond approach and materials that undoubtedly influence class outcomes: class size, group chemistry, and motivation.

The responses to statement 4, among both higher and lower proficiency learners, were weighted towards being challenged by the class (agree or strongly agree, 88%). It is possible that many students saw the class as a double-edged sword. The class material was difficult and challenged them to think, but it did not necessarily overwhelm or demotivate them. Generally, challenge was not seen as negative, but rather as positive in terms of being more academically rigorous. The following comments were similar to others:

• It was interesting. But sometimes the topic is difficult for me even in Japanese!

• This class is good for me because I can speak English smoothly in class. But teaching materials (sic) is difficult for me.

In statement 5 about nervousness, I attempted to determine whether students felt pressure from participating in the class activities. The activities were less form focused and instead put a premium on understandable communication. Mistakes were forgiven and learners had the chance to correct their own English. The neutral response (neither agree nor disagree, 33%) suggests that most students were comfortable with the class style. However, there were a few strong comments about nervousness, such as: "自分はすごく緊張してしまうけど、まあまあ楽しくやれているとは思う [I was extremely nervous, but I managed to do it fairly enjoyably, I think]." It is hard to generalize, but I often observe nervousness at the start of a discussion as students try to come to grips with a topic they have never previously thought about seriously. In particular at the beginning of the course and occasionally thereafter, there were uncomfortable silences. For some, this experience may have left a memory of having been nervous.

As a way to motivate students to engage in the classroom tasks, often I explained the pedagogical approach. Thus, it is no surprise in statement 6 that the learner-centered approach was preferred by 47% over a more teacher-centered class (preferred by 15%). Clearly, the active participation was popular. On the other hand, when I examined the comments, there was no explanation why some students favored the teacher-centered approach. Perhaps it can be chalked up to low motivation to engage in communication with classmates or a desire for a more passive classroom. Most wrote positively about the free nature of the class conversations with friends. A small number noted that it was difficult for shy people. Comments included the following:

• I like this class style . . . I like speaking English more.

• This class style is good. Speaking is very important I think. But sometimes it is difficult for me. I make effort.

One student directly compared the lessons with other styles: "I think active class is much better than traditional class."

Over two-thirds agreed to statement 7 that the discussion style helped foster thinking ability. Many students commented on having to think:

• I could think many topics what I didn't care until now.

• This is a little difficult for me, but my thinking ability maybe rise.

• 自分の興味のtopicないも話せて考えの幅が広がる。考える力がつく [I talked about topics outside of my interest, my range of thinking widened. I accrued thinking ability].

Many students perceived this challenge to think as a positive—as *helping* them. A small number merely wrote one word: "difficult." However, as in the comments above, almost all other such comments were qualified with a positive silver lining.

In terms of improving confidence and explaining ideas (statements 8 and 9), the results were not clear; the responses spread evenly. To *improving confidence*, nearly half (48%) agreed or strongly agreed. But it was not preponderance; many had no strong feelings either way (34%), and 15% did not get a feeling of confidence. The classes were heavily focused on speaking activities and discussion practice, and I had expected the responses to show more agreement. After all, from a teacher's perspective, on quite difficult subject matter nearly all students improved and were able to get their opinions across in the end. A possible explanation from a learner's perspective could be that in a discussion, one party carries the day with his or her arguments. Although I try to encourage friendly and mutual exploration of the topic, competition does occur. Further, I am certain there are those who felt disappointed by their discussion test results. However I found no such specific comment to this effect. Most comments were positive, such as:

• I can speak English a little. I like speaking English more. I thank this class.
• Speaking English connects with confidence.

To statement 9, the responses were evenly distributed, with most answers in the neutral zone. *Explain my ideas* goes hand-in-hand with *challenge* and *degree of difficulty*, as expressed in the comments above. The students in the lower level classes had some difficulties getting their thinking across:

• できる人とできない人の差がすごいきがいした [I felt there was a big gap between the people who could do it and couldn't do it].

This comment likely reflects the same sentiment as those who did not get a boost in confidence. It is likely that they judged their performance in terms of relative success against stronger classmates. Again however, from the teacher's perspective, it seemed most were able to communicate their ideas. Nobody was mute, and all expressed a logical and understandable point of view. If not, real conversation would have been impossible.

One more positive comment summed that up:

• 毎回、必ず、英語でコミュニケーションをすれる機会があって良かった [Every time—without fail—there was a chance to communicate in English, which was good].

There were more positive comments about the class style (statement 10) than about any other item. Most were to the point: "I enjoyed this class!" While this was encouraging, it could be an indication of a good relationship with the teacher. However, it could also be a marker of success. If the students liked the teacher but hated the activity, this should have shown up elsewhere in the questionnaire.

Overall effectiveness (statement 11) was rated highly, nearly 90% agreed or strongly agreed. An incomplete version of the survey without this question was mistakenly photocopied for half the classes. However, given that it was more highly motivated classes that did not respond to this statement, I feel that if all classes had taken the full survey, the average results would still remain high. Indeed, in the advanced classes several students marked 110% or 120%. There were many variations on the following kinds of comments:

• このクラスでspeaking abilityが上がった [My speaking ability got better in this class].
• I can get many skills.

With the large amount of time spent on unguided real conversation, it is not surprising that almost all students wrote a positive reflection on the class and materials. Further, it is encouraging that the class played a part in improving some aspect of their English or education in general: speaking, communicating, thinking, gaining insights, and increasing knowledge. Most heartening were the responses from an advanced-level English class at Otaru University of Commerce, a high-ranking national university, as well as from English majors at Sapporo Gakuin University:

- I've never taken such an interesting class. I hope I will be able to take same style next year.

This kind of approval appeared several times, indicating that the degree of challenge to think and express ideas was particularly well suited to those with high proficiency in English, those who are more academically inclined, and those with a real interest in improving their English.

Finally, as noted earlier, testing and test feedback was observed to have facilitated language learning. However, this is beyond the scope of this study, and it is indeed impossible to argue that compared to other methods and approaches this class set-up is more or less effective. Lacking empirical evidence, I cannot say definitively how the method described above fares in terms of language acquisition. If the student self-evaluations are any measure, the stronger communicative approach is effective for many students. Among the free comments, second only to *like class style* (35.2%) was a broad category of *improvement in skills, ability, thinking* and *usefulness in learning* (30%). The latter comments were the longest in length, the most thoughtfully written, and particularly introspective regarding the learning process:

- I think discussion is important. It is useful for the future.
- 中学や高校でも文法についてばかりでまったく会話や議論をすることがなかったのでこのクラスを通して、はじめはすごくむずかしくて大変だとおもたけど英語が上達したと実感できたのでもっとディスカッションはするべきだと感じました [Junior and senior high school were only about grammar and there was no conversation nor discussion . . . taking this class at first I thought was extremely difficult and hard. But I feel my English improved and feel we should do more discussion].

Conclusion

Literature on CLT with respect to the Japanese university context deserves further examination. There is a view that the strong version of CLT I have outlined would not be universally appropriate to all university English classrooms in Japan. The strong version of CLT has been criticized as a situation where students are flung into a conversation "as a prelude to any instruction: all subsequent teaching is based on whether they sink or swim" (Harmer, 1982, pp. 164-165). Others have argued that CLT may not be appropriate to the Japanese educational context (Li, 1998; Samimy & Kobayashi, 2004; Tanaka cited in Kavanagh, 2012). Further development and wider implementation of the method I have outlined above should take these criticisms into account.

As the final student quote reveals, many learners had never previously experienced a class built around discussion. Like others in the survey, this student was properly challenged and improved his speaking skills. I found ample evidence in the test transcripts that almost all students struggling to convey their ideas could successfully accomplished the task with the help of their partners. The survey data in this report suggests that cobuilding spontaneous dialogue with classmates helped students improve ability and left them with a higher sense of accomplishment and positive attitude toward their ability to communicate in English. Considering the nature of the language produced (Murphy 2013), it seems evident that lower proficiency students don't fail, but rather they thrive with a strong version of CLT. Many students will swim, if given the right incentive to do so, and not only because they will sink if they don't. When the focus of speaking activities and tests is on certain language structures, learners will place value on what they can memorize and recite smoothly. When they perform poorly, "I couldn't remember" is a common refrain. On the other hand, in a discussion-based activity format, there is little sense

of regret among students that anything was missed or left out. Most students follow the basic rules of making a dialogue in which statements and counter-statements are linked logically. They succeed with what they have. Particularly in the Japanese university EFL context, where getting students to speak English in the English classroom is an unending challenge, development of this method deserves further attention.

Bio Data

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Appendix

End of the Year 2012 Survey Results

Statement	Student responses					
	5	4	3	2	1	*n*
4. This class challenged me more than other English classes.	36.0%	52.0%	1.5%	8.6%	0.7%	
5. Speaking in class made me nervous.	6.5%	28.2%	33.3%	18.1%	13.8%	
6. I prefer the traditional teacher-centered classroom.*	2.9%	12.3%	37.7%	26.8%	20.2%	
7. This class style helped my thinking ability.	29.0%	47.1%	17.4%	5.8%	0.7%	138
8. This class style improved my confidence speaking English.	14.5%	34.1%	34.1%	15.2%	2.2%	
9. I was able to explain my ideas in English.	8.0%	24.6%	37.7%	23.9%	5.8%	
10. I enjoyed this class style.	39.9%	31.9%	21.0%	6.5%	0.7%	
11. This class style was effective.	56.1%	33.3%	5.3%	5.2%	0%	57

Note. 5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree; * 5 = Teacher-centered 100%; 4 = More teacher; 3 = Neutral; 2 = More student; 1 = Student / learner centered 100%

The Value of Peer Feedback in English Discussion Classes

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Peer feedback is a student-centered activity in which learners apply set criteria to assess peers' performance and provide feedback. As a way of enhancing learner autonomy, its benefits have been recognized from theoretical and pedagogical perspectives. Unlike studies on peer assessment in writing classes (Braine, 2003; Kurt & Atay, 2007; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009), it was in recent decades that peer feedback in speaking classes started drawing attention. This study looks at peer feedback in discussion classes, investigating its reliability, quality, and students' perceptions of peer feedback. The data were collected from self-reported questionnaires, check sheets, and recordings of student interactions in the classroom. The findings of this study reveal that overall attitudes to peer feedback were positive and became even more so in the post-questionnaire and that although its quality varied individually, the peer feedback was fairly reliable, showing a certain degree of accuracy when compared to teacher feedback.

　ピアフィードバックとは、一定の基準に基づき、相手を評価し助言を与えるという学生主体の活動である。自立的学習を促す手段として、その効果は理論的、教育学的観点からも認識されている。ライティング授業でのピアフィードバック活動の研究（Braine, 2003; Kurt & Atay, 2007; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009）に対し、スピーキングに特化した報告はまだ少ない。英語ディスカッション授業でのピア活動に着目した本研究は、アンケート、授業内で使用したチェックシート、フィードバックのやり取りの録音を集め、フィードバックの信頼性と質を検証し、学生の意識調査も行った。その結果、ピア活動実施当初より好意的であった学生の反応は、活動を繰り返すことでより一層強まり、またピアフィードバックの質において個人差はあるものの、その信頼性と正確性は比較的高いことが明らかになった。

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT, which is also known as assessment for learning, is an ongoing and interactive process that demands an active role for teachers and students (Brown, 2004). One way of involving students in this kind of assessment is through peer feedback in which students apply set criteria to the work of their peers in order to assess and provide feedback. The use of peer assessment in speaking classes has been underresearched, compared to its use in writing classes (Braine, 2003; Kurt & Atay, 2007; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). This study investigates peer feedback in discussion classes, focusing on students' perceptions and its reliability and quality.

Values of Peer Feedback

One theoretical framework commonly used for collaborative work in classroom contexts is a social constructivist approach. This approach is based on Vygotsky's (1978/1930s, cited in She-

hadeh, 2011) claims that human mental activities are mediated and that children develop cognitively and linguistically in collaboration with more capable members of society. It is viewed that learning occurs through face-to-face interaction and shared processes. In foreign language settings, peer feedback has also been understood to provide learners with opportunities to use language in a meaningful way (Shehadeh, 2011).

Other theoretical grounds come from the theory of metacognition. Metacognitive awareness is defined as "learners' awareness of their knowledge, of the task, and their thinking/learning strategies" (Negretti & Kuteeva, 2011, p. 97) and is considered to play an essential role in learning. By analyzing their peers' work, students are expected to develop a better understanding of the criteria and consequently to reflect on their own performance (De Grez, Valcke, & Roozen, 2012; Patri, 2002). For example, Lundstrom and Baker (2009) conducted a study to determine which was more beneficial in improving student writing, giving or receiving feedback. They concluded that students who learned how to review others' writing made more significant gains in their own writing than the receivers. The findings of the study support the idea that the abilities students learn when reviewing peer texts are transferable and enable them to critically self-evaluate their own performance.

Additionally, from a pedagogical perspective, multiple benefits of peer feedback have been reported in the literature. Peer assessment can increase student-student interaction time (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009), promote learner autonomy (Tuttle & Tuttle, 2012), and even motivate students to perform better (Kurt & Atay, 2007). Some learners may feel less anxious and more confident when receiving feedback from peers more than from the teacher (McDonough, 2004). Moreover, sharing responsibilities for assessment with learners can reduce teacher workload (Topping, 2009), which—in addition to the educational benefits above—is worth considering since teachers are often overloaded.

Two Challenges That Peer Feedback Faces

Considering these significant benefits, peer feedback can be regarded as a complement to teacher feedback. This does not mean peer feedback is free from challenges. As Nilson (2003) noted, there are mainly two concerns with peer feedback, alleviating students' anxiety and ensuring reliability.

Mitigating Students' Anxiety

Previous studies conducted in different contexts indicate that in general, students respond positively to peer feedback while some remain skeptical (Braine, 2003; Cheng & Warren, 1997; De Grez et al., 2012). Cheng and Warren's (1997) study, conducted in a university in Hong Kong, is worth reviewing here because their primary focus was to investigate students' attitudes toward peer assessment by administering a pre- and post-questionnaire. Fifty-two 1st-year Chinese students, enrolled in a course of English for Academic Purposes, conducted peer assessment on various English skills such as group presentations.

The results of the questionnaires revealed that the most common trend was a positive shift in students' attitudes, which suggests that "implementation of peer feedback alone goes some way toward dispelling students' initial reservations" (p. 237). On the pre-questionnaire, only 21.2% of the participants answered that they would feel comfortable in making peer assessments, but that number increased to 48.1 % in the post-questionnaire. However, the post-test did show that some students switched from being positive, or unsure, to negative for various reasons. Limited English proficiency made some students feel unqualified to assess their peers' work while others felt compelled to award a higher score to those with whom they were friendlier. Lack of adequate training prior to the peer feedback activities made some students doubt the objectivity of their peers' assessment.

Ensuring Reliability

Some researchers (De Grez et al., 2012; Patri, 2002; H. Saito, 2008) believe that training is vital to guarantee the benefits that peer assessment may bring to the classroom and so focus their research targets on exploring training effects on rating or commenting. One way of analyzing the reliability of peer feedback is calculating an agreement rate between peer and teacher assessment as seen in Patri (2002), H. Saito (2008), and De Grez et al. (2012), even though the findings of the three studies, which investigated peer assessment for oral presentation skills, were different. In Patri's (2002) study, students received a 2-hour training session and were able to make peer evaluations that were comparable to those of the teacher. De Grez et al. (2012) gave students formal instructions on presentation skills and the use of an evaluation rubric. Despite a positive relationship between teacher and student assessment, they concluded that peers and teachers interpreted the criteria differently. H. Saito (2008) compared a control group to a treatment group with an additional 40-minute training session. He found that although there were not statistically significant differences between the two groups, students in the treatment group referred to more skills of peer performance in their feedback.

The Focus of the Present Study

As the findings of Cheng and Warren's (1997) study show, the two challenges are closely linked; students' negative attitudes toward peer assessment can be improved if they see it as a reliable tool. However, the criteria used in all four studies (Cheng & Warren, 1997; De Grez et al., 2012; Patri, 2002; H. Saito, 2008) were complicated. For example, the assessment rubric for oral presentations in Patri's study included six categories, each of which was further divided into subcategories. It could be argued that using less complicated criteria in peer feedback would result in different student reactions and agreement rates. Hence, the present study looks at peer feedback that was conducted with easy-to-use criteria in discussion classes and reports students' attitudes toward it while examining the peer feedback's reliability.

Moreover, this study is distinguished from the earlier four studies in that it investigated student feedback qualitatively because not only the statistical reliability of peer feedback, but also its contents are worth researching. Black and William (1998, cited in Chappuis & Stiggins, 2002) emphasized the importance of feedback being specific. Specific feedback—as opposed to abstract feedback such as "You did a good job!"—should pinpoint learners' strengths and weaknesses. For example, in discussion classes, specific feedback says, "You discussed both advantages and disadvantages of living in the countryside. For example, you talked about your hometown in Akita, explaining how friendly people are there. Good job using today's function, sharing experiences. But don't forget to agree and disagree more!" Contextualizing feedback with examples is of great importance because "feedback has no effect in a vacuum: to be powerful in its effect, there must be a learning context" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 82).

The aim of this study was to investigate as follows:

1. What are university students' perceptions about peer feedback in discussion classes?
2. How statistically different is student rating from teaching rating?
3. Can student feedback be specific?

To answer these research questions, data were collected in three ways: pre- and post-questionnaires, peer review check sheets, and recordings of student-student interactions in the classroom.

Method

Participants

Participants were 46 first-year university students enrolled in an English discussion course during the spring semester of 2011. The class was conducted on a small scale with a maximum of nine students and met once a week for 90 minutes over the course of 14 weeks. Students first learned useful functions for conducting discussions, such as giving opinions, reasons, and examples, and then participated in discussions on various topics using the phrases they learned. Since the participants were predominantly accustomed to teacher-centered instruction in their previous learning experiences, the first 5 weeks of the course were conducted with more guidance from the teacher. During this time, students learned the basic skills of English discussion and how to work in a student-centered classroom. Peer feedback was introduced in week 6.

Classroom Procedure

Peer feedback was conducted in weeks 6, 8, 11, and 12. All the participants worked in pairs or groups of three if the class had an odd number of students. They were asked to monitor their peers while participating in a 10-minute group discussion by putting ticks on a check sheet (see Appendix A) if they heard their partners using target phrases. They were also instructed to give feedback on their partner's ideas and use of functions. After the first round, students switched roles and repeated the same procedure. The whole activity took from 25 to 30 minutes of class time.

Results

Research Question One

Questionnaires were administered in weeks 6 and 12 to examine how students' views on peer feedback changed before and after the peer feedback activities. Two students who were absent in week 12 answered the post-questionnaire in the following week and 46 pre- and post-questionnaires were collected. The only difference between the pre- and post-questionnaire was that statement 5 (S5) appeared only in the post-questionnaire. Each statement was provided with a 4-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. (See Appendix B for an English translation of the questionnaire administered in week 12).

Table 1 shows the mean scores, as well as the points given by individual participants, for six statements in the questionnaires, which are listed below the table. As can be seen in S1 and S2, before the peer feedback activities, students generally responded favorably toward peer feedback and their attitudes became even more positive in week 12. S3 and S6 were designed to explore their attitudes regarding the anxiety of giving and receiving feedback. Students initially felt less comfortable in giving feedback ($m = 2.96$) than receiving feedback ($m = 3.28$). The mean scores for giving and receiving feedback both gained a statistically significant increase ($m = 3.37$, $m = 3.52$) according to the results of paired t-tests: $t(45) = -4.29$, $p < .05$. d = .63 and $t(45) = -2.54$, $p < .05$. d = .37, respectively.

S1: I think peer feedback is a useful way of learning.

S2: I think I can learn a lot from my peers.

S3: I feel comfortable in giving peer feedback.

S4: I can give helpful advice to my peers.

S5: I think my skill of giving feedback has improved since the first time I did it.

S6: I feel comfortable receiving peer feedback.

In response to S5, 42 students (91.3%) marked either *agree* or *strongly agree*. This item allowed students to give reasons for

Table 1. Mean Scores and Individual Scores for Statements 1-6 ($N = 46$)

	S1		S2		S3		S4		S5		S6	
Week	W6	W12	W6	W12	W6	W12	W6	W12	W6	W12	W6	W12
Mean scores	3.20	3.37	3.26	3.35	2.96	3.37	3.11	3.20	n/a	3.04	3.28	3.52
Strongly Agree	9	17	12	16	8	19	7	13	n/a	6	16	24
Agree	37	29	34	30	29	25	37	30	n/a	36	28	22
Disagree	0	0	0	0	8	2	2	2	n/a	4	1	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	n/a	0	1	0

Note. A 4-point scale was used (4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree).

their answers in Japanese and their comments were translated by the researcher.

One of the reasons given for self-reported improvement in feedback, which was referred to in eight comments, was familiarity. By repeating peer feedback four times and working with different students, they became familiar with not only the task but also their peers. For instance, one student wrote in the questionnaire, "I have become used to giving feedback by practicing again and again and now I feel it is relatively easy to give feedback. This is maybe because I get along with everyone in this class."

Awareness of the criteria, which was hypothesized from the metacognitive perspective, also emerged as another category to explain improved skill in giving feedback. One student said, "I remember the phrases so it gets easier to check them. Also I know which point to give feedback on." An example of the transfer of skills that learners had acquired from peer feedback to improvement of their own performance was observed during the feedback session. A male student, who paired up with a female student, said, "I said to you, 'Ask follow-up questions!' so I felt I had to ask follow-up questions and I did." Thirdly, their feedback per se became more contextualized with examples and more practical with concrete advice. This point will be examined in more detail in answering research question three.

Research Question Two

This section looks at how statistically different peer rating is from teacher rating. Simple yes/no check sheets, where students ticked boxes for their peers, were used during the four peer feedback sessions. The basic format of the sheets was the same each time, but target functions were accumulated as the semester proceeded. Appendix A shows a check sheet used in week 12, which included six functions and three communication skills. At the bottom of the chart, some phrases were provided to help students construct their feedback based on ideas, things to keep doing, and things to do more. At the end of each session, the sheets were collected but only 44 week 12 sheets were analyzed for this study—two of the participants were absent that week. The teacher kept a check sheet of her own for each student during the discussions and this was regarded as teacher rating.

The average agreement rate for each student (n = 44) between peer and teacher rating, calculated by dividing the number of peer ticks by those of the teacher, was 0.83. A statistical analysis was also conducted to see the internal consistency estimates of reliability. The mean of student rating was 5.11, which was slightly lower than the mean teacher rating (m = 5.75). However, the value for coefficient alpha was .86, indicating satisfactory reliability.

Research Question Three

Now that the question of the reliability of peer feedback has been answered, the focus shifts to the quality of peer feedback. For this analysis, student-student interactions during the peer feedback sessions were audio-taped by putting two IC recorders on the tables. Although there were constraints on capturing all the simultaneous interactions clearly, it was expected that several examples from the recorded data could provide insights into actual peer feedback.

The extracts below illustrate different degrees of specificity. Phrases in bold were already written on the sheet and examples of ideas and function phrases are underlined for this analysis.

A. **I enjoyed your discussion because** I can hear about some part-time job story. For example, <u>your tutor work's income is so good.</u> **You did a good job because** you used follow-up questions and said <u>"Can I say something?"</u> so it's good thing.

B. **I enjoyed your discussion because** your ideas were clear so I hear, I understand. **You did a good job because** you asked a follow-up question. For example, you asked Kaori, <u>"Why did you choose this?"</u>

C. **I enjoyed your discussion because** good discussion. For example, you used <u>"for example" "Can I start?"</u> and so on. **You did a good job** of these three functions.

Extract A is the most specific; a student gave feedback on the content by giving an example of her peer's part-time job and on the use of functions by specifying the phrase her partner used. Although some students, as represented in Extract A, were able to give feedback whose quality was almost equivalent to that of teacher feedback, there were a few students who found it challenging to give examples, as indicated in Extract C. This student struggled to complete the first sentence probably because he did not remember ideas discussed or could not articulate them sufficiently. Extract B lies somewhere between A and C. In this case, the student was able to pinpoint his partner's strengths by referring to a follow-up question she asked, but failed to fully develop his reason why he enjoyed the discussion due to a lack of concrete feedback on the ideas.

Although the three excerpts above are only a part of the data from the recordings (see Y. Saito, 2013 for more examples), the degree of specificity in peer feedback seems to vary, depending not so much on English proficiency, but on individual differences: even within the same class, to which students were allocated based on their English scores on a placement test, the quality of student feedback varied from one student to another.

Discussion

Overall, the students' initial take on peer feedback seemed to already be positive and these favorable perceptions were reinforced after the repeated peer feedback activities. Unlike what Cheng and Warren (1997) found, a noticeable shift in their attitudes from positive to negative was not observed in the present study. One of the significant benefits of peer feedback, metacognitive awareness, seems to have been raised as can be seen by some participants' comments in the questionnaires. Furthermore, the recordings of student-student interactions captured one example of skills acquired through peer feedback being transferred to reflect their own performance. This is in

parallel with the finding of Lundstrom and Bakers' (2009) study in which students who learned how to review peers' work benefited more than those who received peer feedback.

One of the challenges peer feedback faces is students' anxiety, especially related to giving and receiving feedback. As shown in earlier studies, some students might be concerned about their inexperience in evaluating, feel uncomfortable criticizing others' performance, or be afraid of losing face (Braine, 2003; Cheng & Warren, 1997). However, in this study, 42 out of the 46 participants indicated on the pre-test that they felt comfortable in giving peer feedback and all 46 participants responded positively in week 12. These numbers were much higher than those found in Cheng and Warren (1997). Regarding the anxiety of receiving peer feedback, a similar pattern emerged. Initially, 44 students answered they would feel comfortable in receiving feedback and this number also improved to 100% in week 12.

There are some reasons why the students' reactions were much more positive than those reported by Cheng and Warren (1997). The assessment criteria used in the current study was straightforward and easy-to adopt; the students were simply asked to do yes/no checking, not to give scores to their peers, which could explain an increase in students' comfort level. Additionally, the nature of this class—a small class size with many opportunities to exchange opinions on various topics in pairs and groups—contributed to a learning environment that could help students feel comfortable in giving and receiving peer feedback.

Although specific training was not provided in this study, a relatively high agreement rate between student and teacher rating was found and this is consistent with the findings of H. Saito's (2008) study that instructions on presentation skills were sufficient enough to achieve a certain level of correlation between the instructors and students.

The qualitative analysis of student feedback showed a differ-ent picture. All the students were instructed to give feedback on three points—the ideas discussed, things peers did well, and things peers should do more—and to provide concrete examples. This instruction, however, did not guarantee equally valuable feedback from every participant. Some students were able to provide feedback that was as specific as teacher feedback while others struggled to remember or verbalize examples of ideas or function phrases used in the discussions.

Although the degree of specificity varied individually, the differences in the quality of student feedback were not considerable enough to offset the value of peer feedback as seen in the high correlation between peer rating and teacher rating.

Conclusion

The findings of this study should be interpreted with caution due to some methodological limitations. One limitation is the social desirability bias of questionnaires (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). The participants of this study were reminded that their answers on the questionnaire were solely for a research purpose, yet some of them might have tried to posit themselves in a good light and chose answers which were favorable to peer feedback. Another limitation is that this study did not demonstrate the changes in their feedback. The number of functions listed in the check sheets increased as students learned more function phrases, which made it difficult to compare the reliability of peer feedback during the 4 weeks. Similarly, with no pre-test to check the quality of feedback at the beginning, this study did not fully address the issue regarding what kinds of changes occurred in the student feedback. Additional research, comparing student feedback in weeks 6 and 12 using discourse analysis, for example, might clarify this point.

In spite of these limitations, this study reveals important results about the under-explored role of peer feedback in speaking

classes. One finding is that students favorably perceived peer feedback and their perceptions were reinforced as they repeatedly experienced this activity. The other important finding is that regardless of the differences in the degree of specificity, peer feedback was fairly reliable, showing a certain degree of accuracy measured against teacher feedback. Therefore, as a complement to conventional teacher-centered feedback, peer feedback can provide students with meaningful learning opportunities.

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Bio Data

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Appendix A

Peer Feedback Sheet Used in Week 12

Functions	Used?	Discussion 1	Discussion 2
Giving opinions	In my opinion, … / What do you think?		
Giving reasons	One reason is … / Can you tell me why?		
Giving examples	One example is … / For example?		
Joining a discussion	Can I start? / Can I add something?		
Connecting ideas	As [you/name] said, …		
Sharing experiences	When I was in high school, …		
Checking understand-ing	Do you follow me?		
Agreeing/ Disagreeing	I agree with you. / I'm not sure I agree.		
Asking follow-up questions	Where…? / What …? / Do you …?		

Please give your peer feedback on ideas and the use of functions!

- I enjoyed your discussion because ….. For example, …
- You did a good job because…
- In the next discussion, try to ... more!

Appendix B

Questionnaire Conducted in Week 12 (translated)

Read the questionnaire items below and choose one answer for each statement. Put check marks in the boxes below.

(4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly disagree)

	4	3	2	1
I think peer feedback is a useful way of learning.				
I think I can learn a lot from my peers.				
I feel comfortable in giving peer feedback.				
I can give helpful advice to my peers.				
I think my skill of giving feedback has improved since the first time I did it.				
Why do you think so?				
I feel comfortable receiving peer feedback.				