

Shared Identities: Our Interweaving Threads

Teaching Islamic culture in English writing classes

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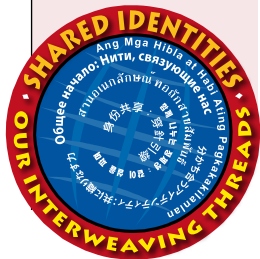
Kita-Takanezawa Junior High School

Reference data:

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Although Japan has become more internationalized since the late 1980s, Japanese students still have relatively little exposure to foreign values and opinions. Furthermore, students do not have much of a chance to come into contact with different cultures and religions either. It can be argued that religion greatly influences ways of thinking around the world, so teaching the basics of major world religions to Japanese students can be a stepping stone for them into the global world. In this study, we examined how content-based instruction affects students' attitudes on Islamic culture and Muslims and how that improves their writing. This paper shows an example of the process approach to English writing, and a set of classroom activities using DVD clips as supplementary classroom resources to help students' understanding of Islamic culture, and to help them think critically about stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and scapegoating. At the end, the pedagogical implications of using popular culture will be discussed.

1980年代以来日本は国際化が進んだとはいえ、日本に住んでいる学生にとっては、世界の多様な価値観や考え方に直接さらされることは未だにまれであり、様々な文化や宗教に触れる機会もほとんど無い。この研究は、人間の思考が宗教に多大な影響を受けていることを念頭に置き、日本で勉強している学生にとって、世界の主な宗教の基本を学ぶ目的とする、グローバル教育の英語授業の成果を検証する。また内容重視の授業におき、学生のイスラム教とイスラム教徒への理解と、英語ライティング力の上達の関連性を論証するものである。この論文では、プロセス・アプローチに基づいたライティング学習と、補助教材としてDVDを使用した授業例を紹介する。これらの授業におけるタスクは、異文化理解を含め、更に固定観念・偏見・差別などの負の姿勢や考え方について批判的に考えさせることをねらいとするものである。



Global issues in English language classrooms

As teachers involved in school education, we should not reconcile ourselves only to the teaching of academic knowledge and skills of English language; we should also consider another important role, which is to prepare students to be global citizens. Accordingly, Japanese school education should provide opportunities for the students to critically think about how various people have different views and opinions on certain issues. Also, from the viewpoint of English language teaching, English language classes need to be a place where students can gain a broader perspective and learn to appreciate diverse values and opinions of people around the world. In this regard, dealing with world religions and their cultures in English language classrooms seems to be sound.

Moreover, the class should not be limited to a brief overview and should never be one-sided. It should contain a more analytic approach such as cause-and-effect and comparison-contrast tasks which facilitate students' thinking processes. For example, if the class dealt with just Islam and its role in terrorism, and one-sidedly taught students how to protect themselves from terrorist attacks, it would not help students' understanding of Islam. Rather, Japanese students would develop a negative attitude toward Islamic cultures and people and come to fear and be prejudiced against this foreign culture. However, if the class continued to examine diverse values and perspectives of Islamic culture, students would learn to think critically about complicated aspects of Islam and terrorism or images about Muslims and prejudice, and then learn to form their own opinions. Finally, they would hopefully come to acquire a more balanced view about Islam.

Japanese students and world religions

We are also concerned about dominating influences from one culture on another. In our opinion, many Japanese students have enough access to Western and Christian culture through TV and other media, if only on the surface. However, they have very little exposure to other world religions and cultures such as Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and even Buddhism, the traditional religion of Japan. This may lead them to feel that Western ways and thoughts are standard, which in turn could bias their own views on unknown cultures and different ways of thinking and beliefs. Therefore, exposure to cultures other than Western and Christian can develop a broader and more tolerant attitude among the students.

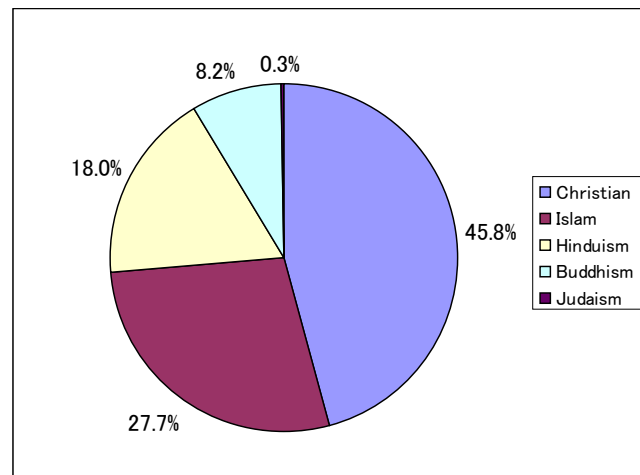


Figure 1. Major world religions by Wikipedia

Need for learning about Islamic culture

Islam is one of the major world religions which Japanese people generally used to consider unrelated to their everyday life, but their perspectives seem to have changed since the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11th, 2001.

Appendix 1 shows the results of an Internet survey by Herstory Co., Ltd. on Japanese people's perspectives on terrorism after 9.11. A total of 506 people answered the questionnaire with five questions. 77% answered that they are more concerned about terrorism problems. 5% said they know nothing about Islam; 41% said only a little and 21% said hardly anything. As for the question asking the most effective way to end terrorism, 32% answered repression of terrorism-supporting nations in some ways, but not by military force. However, 35% answered that we need to learn about the background of terrorism and endeavor to understand alien culture; 8% said that we need to listen to terrorists' demands and make concessions.

The results of this survey enforce the necessity of bringing the topics of Islamic culture into school education and the legitimacy of dealing with its ways and thoughts in classrooms as an opportunity to critically think not only about Islam and terrorism, but also about the gap between what the Muslims are like and how the world and "we" regard Islam today. Questions 1 and 2 indicate that the great majority of Japanese people are greatly concerned about terrorism after 9.11. It is significant that more people said that learning about Islamic culture may be a good way to stop terrorism than to take non-humanitarian action (repression of supporting nations such as cutting provisions

and imposing economic sanctions) or yielding to terrorists' demands. This could mean that there are some people who want to know about Islamic culture and the philosophy of its people before judging them.

Teaching writing with content

The importance of content in teaching English writing has been widely acknowledged among teachers and researchers (Roen, 1989). From the perspective of developing students' linguistic skills, giving content to English language classes is certainly a factor needed to engage students in writing tasks.

The process approach

The process approach is a common technique used in teaching English writing. Since the 1970s, the process approach has greatly contributed to the evolution in writing instruction in the field of English as Second Language (ESL). In the earlier years, there was very little intervention by the teacher. Then, in the formative years, it endured negative views and was regarded to be very prescriptive in that it did not allow students to express their individualism (Hyland, 2003, pp. 17-18). Today, however, most process models are viewed to involve students' use of procedural knowledge and many other kinds of strategies including schematizing and re-visioning and editing (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2005, pp. 275-276).

Some researchers describe process approaches as product-based, lacking aspects of providing input or stimulus (Badger & White, 2000, p. 154) and meanings (Hyland, 2003, p. 18). Shih (1986) pointed out that the quality of students' written

work is greatly influenced by their knowledge of the subject matter, "... when students know little about a topic, their writing is more likely to fail" (p. 625). The shortfalls of the process approach should be remedied by giving content to writing tasks.

Content-based instruction

Content-based instruction (CBI) is the integration of teaching a particular content with the purposes of language skill teaching (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989, pp. 1-3). Many CBI researches have advocated its effectiveness in English language classrooms. It emphasizes learning *about something* rather than learning *about language* (Davies, 2003). Since the 1980s, CBI has been used in a variety of language learning contexts and its popularity and wider applicability has dramatically increased in the past ten years. Krashen (1995) asserted that CBI should focus on authentic and meaningful input rather than grammar; students would learn about the subject matter and improvement of language skills would occur *along with* the subject matter (p. 170). Also, critical factors for students' successful language learning such as motivation, positive attributions, and interest can be enhanced by CBI (Grabe & Stoller, 1997, p. 7). Thus, when carried out appropriately, CBI is an appealing curricular approach to language instruction and it offers ideal conditions for language learning (pp. 13-14).

It is usually said that there are two types in CBI: One is the *theme-based* model and the other is the *adjunct model*. The theme-based model is to have students engage in variety of activities related to the content area so that they become more familiar with the content and the meaning of the topic,

without too much emphasis on language matters. The adjunct model emphasizes the importance of the subject matter more, and aims at enhancing students' literacy, oral development, and thinking skills (Shang, 2006). Accordingly, CBI provides the teacher a choice between these two models to conduct in language class. The theme-based model would be suitable if the students were ready to learn about the subject matter in English and the class focused on deepening students' knowledge about that content area using the skills that they had already acquired. On the other hand, the adjunct model would be more appropriate if the class was more language/skills-building-oriented. Through learning about the content area, students would learn more practical use of language and other skills.

Model classes

A series of classroom writing tasks dealing with Islam were employed in junior high school and university. The classroom activities were designed to involve the development of writing skills for English language teaching purposes and the promotion of understanding Islam for Global Educational purposes, and included three features of the process approach by Roen (1989, p. 205): (1) choose an interesting, authentic topic that can engage in students; (2) introduce useful writing strategies through various processes that encourages students' independent use; (3) provide feedback to solve students' problems and raise motivation. The tasks were divided into five steps (Appendix 2). Firstly, the teacher started with the introduction of the simple structure focusing on (1) the main idea(s) and (2) supporting details. Secondly, the importance of keeping

coherence was explained and some logical indicators, simple adverbial subordinators, such as because, if, when/where, were introduced. Thirdly conjunctive adverbials such as also, first/second/third, but/therefore were introduced. Fourthly, students made an outline for paragraph writing on that topic, and then wrote a short essay. Lastly, students worked in pairs, read each other's essays and gave some comments and suggestions to each other, and then rewrote their own parts based on the peer feedback.

Islamic culture as the content

For preparation, we assigned students initial writing and final writing pieces for data analysis to later examine the effects of the classes.

We divided the classes into five steps (Appendix 3) to teach the content of Islamic culture and its principles. For Step 1, students wrote about their images about Islamic culture (initial writing). Then, the basic features of Islam and its culture were introduced and each student was assigned to read one topic on Islamic culture. For Step 2, students watched a DVD clip from the Disney movie *Aladdin* to find out elements of Islamic culture in the movie. This was used to make a smooth introduction of the topic. Since the initial writing disclosed students' little knowledge and unfriendly images about Islam, a Disney movie was chosen to help students visualize some surface features of Islamic culture, as well as create familiar feelings about Islamic culture among them. We used some clips that showed Muslim women wearing the veil called *yashmak* and men wearing the cap called a *turban*, for example. Then, while-watching questions were made to inspire students' curiosity

such as asking not only *what* they were wearing but also *why* they were wearing. For Step 3, students read about some of the teachings of Islam religion in English such as about the *Qur'an*, the "five pillars of Islam," and religious traditions such as *Ramadan* and *Eid-ul-Fitr*. For Step 4, the basic concept of stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and scapegoating were introduced, and students wrote example sentences to describe these attitudes. Then, students watched a DVD clip from Season 6 of the television series "24" to find aspects of stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and scapegoating in the episode. After that, they discussed first how many Muslims are forced to bear these discriminative views today because of their religion, and then the positive and negative images they had about Islamic culture. For Step 5, they tried to imagine objectively what images foreign people had about Japanese culture and Japanese people. Then, they discussed their reactions to those foreign images. Finally, each student wrote again about Islamic culture and its followers (final writing).

Findings

In this section, we analyze the effect of this study, firstly by examining improvements in students' writing skills. In evaluation, we focused on students' improvement in text length and amount of subordination, and compared how these factors increased in their final writing. As for the effect of integrating English language teaching and global education, we examined the effect of content-based instruction using Islamic culture on the development of students writing ability and global awareness.

Writing skills

Text length—number of words and sentences

Among eight students who submitted their reaction papers, all the participants increased their vocabulary skills in terms of the number of words and sentences used. The average number of words was 88.6 and the average number of sentences was 7.2 in their final reaction paper (see Appendix 4). In their initial writing about Islamic culture, all students showed poor improvement from their previous work—final writing on Tibet. Prior to this initial writing, all students wrote a reaction paper on Tibetan culture and people. Even though most students used more than 40 words in the Tibet paper, no one could use more than 22 words in their initial writing on Islam. However, after the content-based teaching on Islam, all students showed improvement in vocabulary in their final reaction papers (See Appendixes 5 & 6).

Structure and coherence—use of subordinating conjunctions

First, we focused on the use of subordinating conjunctions. Although each student's coherence of text is accomplished in many ways, S6, S7 and S8 formed their structures very coherently using “logical connectors” such as *although*, *because*, *if*, and *even if* (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 519).

For example, out of the eight students, five (S1, S2, S3, S4 and S5) managed to write their papers using the signposts and some of the transition word strategies such as *first*, *second*, *in conclusion*” and so on. However, these seemed to have had more difficulty with forming their opinions

compared to other students (S6, S7, and S8) who succeeded in using more complex words such as *although*, *because*, *if*, *even if* were added to their originality. This suggests that it was obvious as one approach cannot work for every student.

Secondly, we examined the average number of sentence embedding and subordinate clauses in the whole final reaction paper. Referring to S6's final-writing, he used a subordinate clause with simple adverbial subordinators and two embedded sentences with relative objects, although there are some grammatical mistakes:

I did not know anything about Islam and Muslims when I started English lessons, but now I know many things about them through the English lessons. I understand to a lot of people have wrong thoughts about foreigner. For example, we think all Muslims are dangerous because a lot of terrorists believe to Islam, but I understand to almost all of the Muslims are not dangerous. Maybe the foreigners think the Japanese people is tourists, small, always eat sushi. But they have wrong thoughts about us.

He used subordinate clauses in his opinions twice—“I did not know anything about Islam and Muslims when I started English lessons” and “I understand [to] almost all of the Muslims are not dangerous” (read “to” as “that”).

Also, he used simple adverbial subordinators such as *because* and *but* to mention his reasons. Overall, the average of the number of subordinate clauses was 3.5 in each reaction paper, which shows that students improved compared to the lack of subordinate clauses in their initial writing (see Appendix 4).

Global awareness

Some students such as S1, S2, S3, S4, and S5 wrote about Islamic culture, but these students didn't improve further than that and talked only about the surface features of Islam such as their dietary habits and Ramadan. They showed no trace of further consideration of any the issues related to Islam such as terrorism and world peace.

Meanwhile, other students (S6, S7, and S8) strongly asserted the importance of understating different culture and opinions. For example, S6 wrote "...people should learn about foreigners. If we do that, the world become better." S7 wrote "If everyone can understand each culture and religions, the world of war will disappear. So, everyone of the world will happy and peace." To look at their initial writing pieces on Islam, it is obvious that none of them wrote more than a couple of sentences, even though they had already learned about writing strategies and done an acceptable quality of written work (Appendix 5). This may lead to the fact that students learned some writing skills, but their lack of understanding Islamic culture made it difficult for them to write an acceptable amount of writing. Consequently, it is possible to say that various activities dealing with Islamic culture and current issues as class content should have assisted the improvement of their final writing. Also, their writing was influenced by the given reading materials and as such they were repeating phrases and vocabulary that were found therein; there was a large amount of repetition of vocabulary and phrases from the given reading text or from the initial given reading textbooks.

Also, there is a global educational effect of content-based instruction on students' global awareness and students to form their opinions and critically think about the issue. S2 wrote "I'd like to know more about Islam," and S4 wrote "Having some knowledge about other culture is good." Both wrote in English. However, the other three students showed a deeper and greater awareness and concern about world issues. S6 wrote "People should know about foreigners. If we do that, the world would become better," as a conclusion. For supporting sentences, he mentions that people tend to have a stereotyped way of seeing and thinking of foreigners, but it is wrong. S6 emphasized that we have wrong thoughts towards foreigners, "For example, we think all Muslims are dangerous because a lot of terrorists believe in Islam, but I understand that almost all the Muslims are not dangerous." S7 used some words and phrases such as "peace," "happy," "wars in the world disappear." She concludes that "If everyone can understand each culture and religions, wars in the world disappear." S8 states "I think that understanding each other is the most important" as his main theme. First, he says that "We think that Muslims are dangerous, but they have nice points such as strong souls and sympathetic mind, which are different Japanese people." He describes why wars happen as "we have a pride and it is harder than a diamond" and he questions people "which is more important, pride or life?" In the end, he concludes that "We should have to throw away our pride and understand each other. It is love and peace. I think that making a peaceful world is our work and life, so we have to make a peaceful world." These comments were not found in their initial writings, so it can be said that their understanding of Islamic culture increased and their attitude toward Islam and terrorists have been slightly

modified. Moreover, the effect of looking at ourselves as outsiders was observable. S6 and S8 wrote that to look at ourselves objectively is useful to promote empathy.

Discussion

Through this study, we found some weakness when focusing on skills building and some positive effects of CBI in English writing classes. As already shown in the findings section, most students showed almost no progress from their Tibet paper in their initial writing, which was a setback (see Appendix 6). Then, after studying basic features of Islam and trying critical thinking tasks, students' writing lengthened stating some clear ideas about not only Islam but Japan and, further more, world peace. This may allow us to affirm the legitimacy of providing content for their writing tasks. In short, the result supported an important role of content for in teaching writing as a key in enhancing students' writing ability.

Another important thing to remember in dealing with global issues is the importance of introducing different perspectives. The tasks that examined positive and negative points of Islamic culture and its principles made the students realize what people's lack of knowledge and/or misunderstanding of a foreign culture can cause. As S5 and S6 wrote, some students found that it is necessary to have a basic understanding about Islam, and a lack of knowledge causes misunderstanding and stereotypes. Moreover, the task of comparing Islamic and Japanese cultures and foreign perspectives on both cultures encouraged them in critically thinking about Japanese culture, and understanding what it is like to be unknown or be misunderstood their own culture,

which made some students realize the common aspects of Islamic and Japanese cultures and helped them growing empathy for Muslims, such as S6 compared prevailing prejudice about Islam as most of them are dangerous and that about Japanese as most of us are small and always eat sushi. He asserted that these are wrong ideas and learning about different cultures should help the world become better. Also, S8 wrote an incisive comment on a negative feature of Japanese people to always hide our weak point and find others' weak points, concluding that this kind of attitude would possibly cause war.

As for shortcomings of this study, the teacher should be reminded of students' applicability of writing skills to other subjects. Although the effectiveness of CBI in teaching writing skills has been observable and students' final writing was far better than their initial writing (compare Appendixes 5 and 6), the improved writing ability manifested in their previous writing practice on Tibetan culture (Appendix 7) was not demonstrated in their next writing on Islam (Appendixes 5 and 7). Thus, it is necessary for the teacher to regularly prompt students' critical thinking in regular writing activities. The teacher should also carefully design the classroom tasks and choose materials and topics when dealing with global issues, especially when conducting the class with support from popular culture (e.g., music, movies, TV programs, the Internet); the teacher must keep in mind that showing various opinions through media materials, or popular culture, can easily induce students to follow the way the media intend to conduct the audience. Therefore, that the opinions shown are those of the maker should be explained to students before and after using the material.

Conclusion

The result suggested that teaching writing skills is not enough to genuinely develop students' writing ability. As shown earlier, participants who seemed to have improved writing ability previously did not show this skill in their next writing task, the initial writing on Islam. Rather, it was understanding of the content that seemed to greatly influence their performance in writing through the step-by-step approach from easy-to-understand matters (basic features of Islamic culture) to more complicated issues (prejudice toward Muslims). The result of this study demonstrated the legitimacy of giving content to writing tasks. It also suggested the importance of providing opportunities to critically think about different cultures and religions of the world, such as Islam, in English language classes, which had a positive effect on students' understanding of different opinions and values.

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Appendix 1

Internet survey on Japanese peoples' perspectives on terrorism problems after 9.11 by Herstory Co., Ltd.

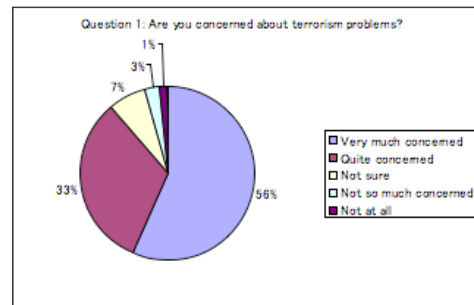


Figure 2. Survey result by Herstory Co., Ltd. (1)

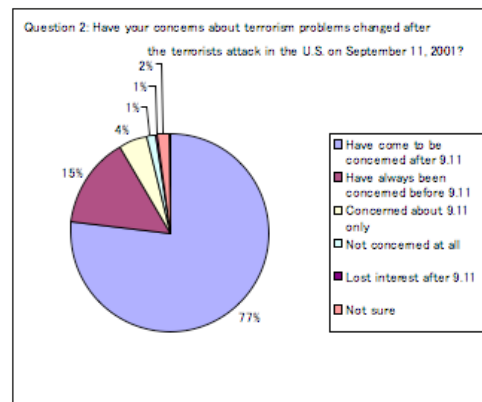


Figure 3. Survey result by Herstory Co., Ltd. (2)

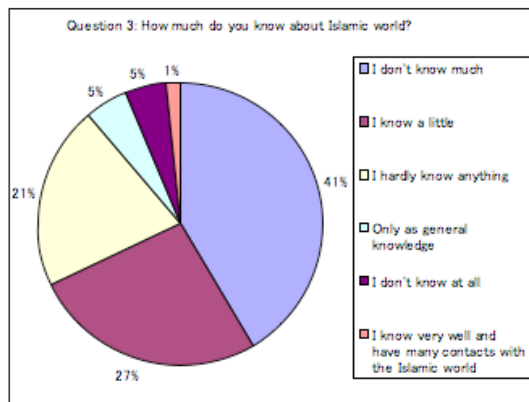


Figure 4. Survey result by Herstory Co., Ltd. (3)

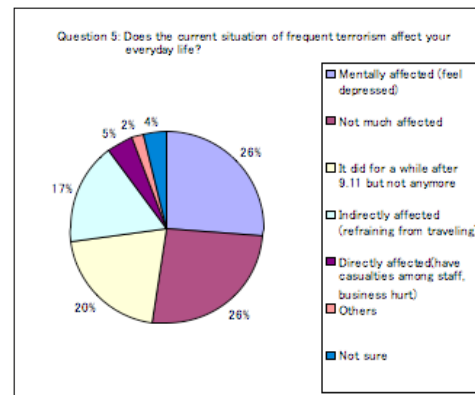


Figure 6. Survey result by Herstory Co., Ltd. (5)

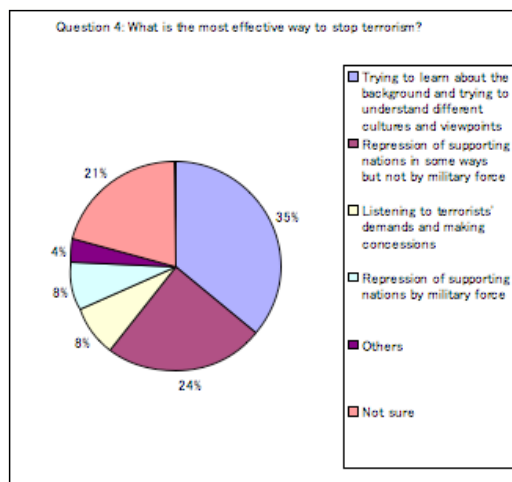


Figure 5. Survey result by Herstory Co., Ltd. (4)

Appendix 2

Five steps for experimental lessons (writing)

Step 1	The introduction of a simple structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main idea(s) • Supporting details
Step 2	Coherence (1): logical connectors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple adverbial subordinators – after, because, if, when/ where
Step 3	Coherence (2): logical connectors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conjunctive adverbials – also, first/second/third, but/ however, in conclusion
Step 4	Paragraph writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming • Outlining
Step 5	Peer feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First paragraph writing • Peer feedback • Rewriting

Appendix 3

Five steps for experimental lessons (content-based teaching)

Step 1	Class Objective: To introduce basic information about Islamic culture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students brainstormed what they know about Islam and its traditions, and then they wrote about what they know about Islam in general. • Quizzes about Islam and its culture Reading about Islam à Each student read only the assigned part and prepared to give a brief oral report à Oral report to the class on the assigned topic
Step 2	Class Objective: To stimulate students' affinity for Islamic culture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVD clips from Disney movie Aladdin <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Where is this? 2) What is he wearing? 3) Why is he wearing it? 4) What are the women wearing? 5) Why are they wearing it?
Step 3	Class Objective: to develop students' reading comprehension, summarization, and oral presentation skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading about "Ramadan" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> à Comprehension questions
Step 4	Class Objective: To critically analyze our views of Islamic culture and the Muslims and their views of us (Japanese culture and the Japanese). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four negative consequences of not understanding a different culture and its thoughts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> à Stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and scapegoating. • A brief check of these words' definitions • Write statements about each of the four • Watch DVD: "24" Season Six Premiere. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> à Students: Find representative aspects of these concepts and attitudes in the clip or from popular culture. Have a group discussion about positive and negative images of Islam and Muslims.

Step 5	<p>Class Objective: To critically observe one's own attitudes toward an unknown culture (Islam).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussions
	<p>1) Positive and negative images of Islam and Muslims.</p> <p>2) Positive and negative images of Japan and Japanese people.</p> <p>3) How they feel about these views of Japan and Japanese people.</p> <p>à Write a short essay (final writing).</p>

Appendix 4

Vocabulary index

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	Average
Initial	0	19	9	0	16	22	10	3	9.8
Final	44	80	63	50	77	103	129	163	88.6

Table 1. Number of words each participant used in initial and final writing

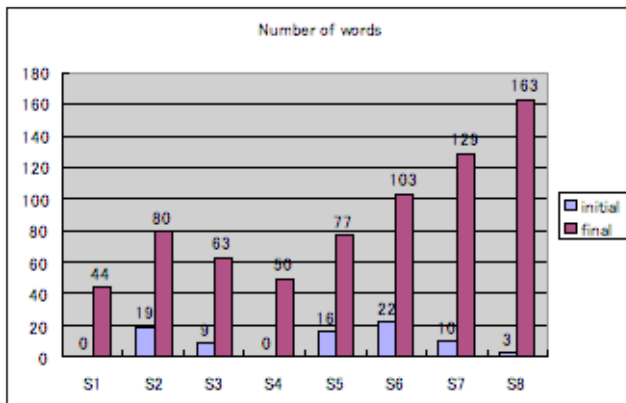


Figure 7. Vocabulary index (1)

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	Average
Initial	0	2	2	0	2	2	2	1	1.3
Final	4	8	6	4	6	7	9	14	7.2

Table 2. Number of sentences each participant used in initial and final writing (text length)

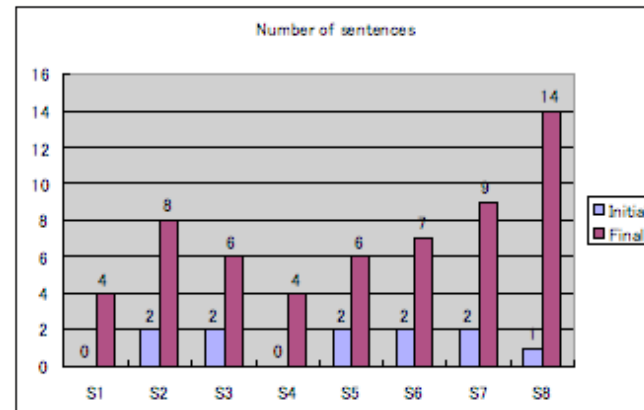


Figure 8. Vocabulary index (2)

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	Average
Initial	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Final	1	1	3	3	3	4	6	7	3.5

Table 3. Number of subordinate clauses each participant used in initial and final writing

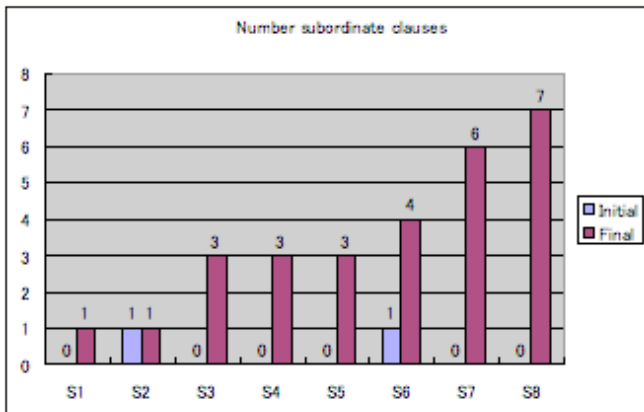


Figure 9. Vocabulary index (3)

Appendix 5

Initial writing from the experimental classes: Islamic culture and people (without correction)

S1	---
S2	I know that people mustn't porks. I know that women have to wear a veil over their head.
S3	I know "terrorism". It is people don't eat beef.
S4	---
S5	I know that people don't eat beef. People have to wear a veil over their head.
S6	I know that a lot of terrorism was happened by islam Shias. Islam mustn't have parl. A lot of people murdered by terrorists.
S7	I know terrorism. Have to wear a veil over their head.
S8	I don't know.....

Appendix 6

Final writing from the experimental classes: Islamic culture and people (without correction)

S1	I'm not interested in Islam before, So I didn't know anything then. But now I know some of them and I am interested in some of them. For example, I know people in Islam mustn't eat a pork who don't like it. But people in Buddhism.....
S2	I was not interested in Islam before, but now I know several things about it because we studied it in English lessons. It was interesting. First, Islam is one of the biggest festivals. The purpose of Ramadan is to think about poor people and to practice self-control. Third, they mustn't eat pork. There are a lot of other things about Islam. I'd like to know more about it.
S3	I don't know anything about Islam before, but now I know several things about it because we studied it in English lessons. I know Muslim is all people believe in Islam. They have some rules. First, they don't eat pork because pork is good for them. Second, they have strong will because they believe in their religions. Third their skins are darker....
S4	I didn't know anything about Islam before, but now I know several things about it because we studied it in English lessons. For example, all people believe in Islam. I think that it is important and needed to understand Islam. As a conclusion, having some knowledge about other cultures is good.
S5	I didn't think and didn't study about Islam before, but now I know several things about it because we studied it in English lessons. First, Muslims don't eat any animals with four legs, so they don't eat pork. Second, men wear turbans on the top of their heads and women have to wear yashmaks. They can't show their faces in public. Third, they are fasting. I think that Islam is difficult religion, but it is the stereotyped. So,

S6	<p>I did not know anything about Islam and Muslims when I started English lessons, but now I know many things about them through the English lessons. I understand to a lot of people have wrong thoughts about foreigner. For example, we think all Muslims are dangerous because a lot of terrorists believe to Islam, but I understand to almost all of the Muslims are not dangerous. Maybe the foreigners think the Japanese people is tourists, small, always eat sushi. But they have wrong thoughts about us. As a conclusion, people should learn about foreigners. If we do that, the world become better.</p>
S7	<p>I can't think about Islam because I don't know everything about Islam. But now I studied it, so I can understand it little. For example, Muslims fasting from dawn to sunset. Another example is that the purpose of Ramadan is to think about poor people and to practice self-control. I think that Islam is more difficult than Buddhism. For example, Faith is in the unity of God, Faith in angels, Faith in prophets, Faith in books of revelation, Faith in after life, faith in destiny / divine decree. It is very difficult for me to understand Islam, but it is very important for us to understand Islam. If everyone can understand each culture and religions, the world of war will disappear. So, everyone of the world will happy and peace.</p>
S8	<p>I think that understanding each other is most important thing in the world. We think that Muslims is dangerous. But they have nice points different Japanese. They have a strong soul and sympathetic mind through the Islam. But the almost Japanese people don't have their. This is our weak point. However, we always hide our weak point and find other people's weak point, but it's the worst things in the world because It maybe happen the war. When we happen the war, a lot of people loses their lives. We understand it. But we can't understand each other. Why? Because we have a pride and it's harder than a diamond., but which is heavier, pride or life? We should have to throw away our pride and understand each other. It is a love and peace. I think that making peace world is our work and life. So we have to make a peace world.</p>

Appendix 7

Final writing from the previous topic: Tibetan culture and people (without correction)

S1	<p>My opinions. Tibetan people believes in Buddhism. First, Tibetans man giving up their ego. So they have high pride. Second, they only believe the Buddhism. But else countries people believe other culture. For example, most of English people believe different religions. Third.....</p>
S2	<p>This is a very difficult issue. I think that Tibet should not belong to China. I heard Chinese people have discrimination towards Tibet. For example, Chinese standard time is East in China so Tibetan people's sun rise is different. That's poor. Therefore, I don't think that Tibet should belong to China to enjoy their life.</p>
S3	<p>I prefer Japanese culture. I saw the movie "Seven Years in Tibet". I was able to know Tibetan culture. First, Tibetan believe in Buddhism. Buddhism uses Holy Book "Sutras". I think people believe in very strictly. We Japanese people also believe in Buddhism, but we don't care our religion so much. Second, Buddhism have Holy day such as "Buddha's birthday" we don't have such as Holy days. Third, Buddhism's monks must wear orange robes. I think Japanese monks wear Hakama robes. Therefore, there are many difference between Tibetan culture and Japanese culture although Both of us believe in the same religion, Buddhism.</p>
S4	<p>Tibet should not belong to China. I think Tibet should not belong to China. First, this world should be peaceful. Second, I think there are many global issues that we have to think about. And we have to work together to solve them. Third, if Tibet and China fight against each other, many people would feel very sad. Therefore, Tibet and China should understand and respect each other. T</p>

S5	I don't know about this issue so well. This issue is very difficult for me. But I don't think that Tibet should belong to China. Some people say Tibet shouldn't belong to China, but I don't understand that. I think Tibet should be its own country because Tibet has its own culture and language. So, does Tibet need to be a part of China? Therefore, Tibet should not belong to China. But I really don't know.
S6	China thinks that Tibet is belong to China, but Tibet thinks that Tibet is not belong to China. So, thinking about Tibet and China's issue is very difficult for me. But I think that Tibet should not belong to China. First, China and Tibet culture are different. For example, a Tibetan man is more respected for giving up his ego, but I think that Chinese man is different. Second, I think China is stranger than Tibet, so we respect Chinese opinion only. But, we should respect Tibetan's opinion too. If Tibet becomes independent from China, China won't have a problem. Therefore, I think that Tibet is not belong to China. I think that Tibet can cooperate with China. If Tibet becomes independent from China, peace will come to both Tibet and China.
S7	This is a difficult issue. I think that Tibet should not belong to China. Because Tibet has its own culture. They want to practice their own religion and culture. This is a basic right. China says that Tibet has always been a part of China. If this is true, there is no need for the army to be there. Therefore, I think that Tibet should be independent from China.
S8	I think that Tibet should not belong to China because Tibetan people hasn't had a freedom since 1950. We know that Tibet was attacked by China in 1950. When China attacked Tibet, many Tibetan people were killed by China and they were robbed them of all freedom by China. If Tibet independent to China, I don't think there will be wrong. Because it was good country. Tibet was good country and loved peace. If China didn't attack Tibet, Tibet is still good country now. But China attacked Tibet in 1950, so Tibetan people has a no freedom, no peace. Tibet is bad country now. So we should give freedom and peace for Tibet. Tibet will be worse than it is now. But we give freedom and peace to Tibet, Tibet become good country like before again. So, I think that Tibet should not belong to China.

S9	China's weak point is try solving by fighting. China's good point is try protecting their own country. On the other hand Tibet's weak point is to think only independence from China. Tibet's good point is to try protecting their original culture. It's important for all people to respect others. Fighting is the last thing to do.
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