Japanese Secondary School Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Regarding Communicative Language Teaching: An Exploratory Survey

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Since 1989, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) has attempted to promote higher achievement in English communicative skills among secondary school students by urging teachers to use communicative activities. MEXT has also undertaken to achieve this goal by executing a 5-year Action Plan. This exploratory study investigates Japanese teachers' beliefs and practices regarding communicative language teaching (CLT) in their classrooms through a survey of 21 secondary school teachers. The results show that in order to employ CLT in their classrooms, teachers feel that a change in classroom conditions is a prerequisite. The results also show that CLT is beginning to be employed at the local level. In order to delineate ways to help this small local change lead to real English education reform in Japan, a comprehensive investigation of the beliefs of a larger number of language teachers is necessary.

1989年より、文部科学省（当時文部省）は、中学生・高校生の英語によるコミュニケーション能力を高めようと、外国語科授業でのコミュニケーション活動の採用を促してきた。さらに同省は、2003年から５年間の「英語が使える日本人」の育成のための行動計画の実施により、その方針の具体的な実現をねらっている。本探索的研究では、中学及び高等学校の英語教員２１人にアンケートを実施し、コミュニカティヴ・アプローチ（CLT）を授業に採用することについてどのような信条を持ち、どのように実践しているかについて調査した。その結果、被験者の多くはCLTを採用するために教室の教育環境を変えてほしいと願っていることが判明した。また、CLTは一部の学校で利用され始めていることがわかった。この傾向をさらに確かなものにするためにも、より多くの英語教員を対象にした包括的調査が必要である。

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Kagan (1992) claimed that most of a teacher's professional knowledge can be regarded as beliefs. But what shapes teacher beliefs and practices? Researchers have been focusing on this question since they started regarding teachers as active decision-makers in the 1980s (Freeman, 2002). Borg (2003) reviewed 64 studies and reported that teacher cognition, defined (p. 81) as "the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching–what teachers know, believe, and think," plays a central role in teachers' lives and that contextual factors influence both teacher cognition and practice. Other research suggests that teachers' beliefs might have the strongest influence on classroom practices (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1994). In this paper teacher knowledge will be used interchangeably with teacher beliefs.

In the field of ESL/EFL, this question led me to a narrower inquiry. What shapes teachers' beliefs concerning novel teaching methods: government policy, high-stakes examinations, previous teaching and learning experience, or contextual factors? In recent years, this question has been investigated in relationship to Japanese English teachers' perceptions and practices in communicative language teaching (CLT) (e.g., Gorsuch, 2000, 2001; Sakui, 2004).

Since 1989, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT).[1] has attempted to promote higher achievement in English communication skills among secondary school students by urging teachers to incorporate CLT into their lessons. The 1989 version of *The Course of Study* (implemented in 1993) introduced new oral communication courses,[2] and the 1999 version (implemented in 2003) called for the development of "practical communication abilities" as a main goal of foreign language education (MEXT, 1989, 1999). In 2003, MEXT produced an Action Plan with the goal of cultivating English communication abilities in Japanese people (MEXT, 2003).

This study, conducted after the start of the Action Plan, aims to continue the line of research begun by Gorsuch (2000). A survey of Japanese secondary school teachers was conducted to ascertain their beliefs regarding CLT. Results from this pilot questionnaire appear to support Gorsuch's argument that school and classroom conditions have an impact on teacher perceptions concerning CLT.

In the following sections, I will briefly discuss CLT in EFL contexts and review the history of Japanese English education and MEXT policy. Then, I will outline the research on Japanese teacher beliefs and practices regarding CLT.

CLT in EFL Situations

Communicative language teaching is defined as an approach to foreign or second language teaching which aims to develop communicative competence (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992). CLT was designed to be applied to ESL situations, especially in Britain, North America, and Australasia, where English teachers support a skill-based, discovery-oriented, collaborative approach to education (Holliday, 1994) and where classroom language learning usually takes place in small classes through group and pair work. In contrast, in Japan, classroom conditions differ from those in ESL contexts. Features common to the Japanese context include large classes, a tradition of nonnative teacher-centered lessons, limited communicative needs among students, and minimal foreign language input outside the classroom. Under such conditions, it may be ineffective to try to use CLT in the same way as it is employed in ESL situations.

Given the potential incompatibility of CLT to the Japanese context, it may be helpful to review the historical background of English education and recent policy innovations in Japan.

Historical Background of English Education in Japan

MEXT Policy

After the Second World War, a new education system started in Japan; *The Course of Study* was first published in 1947. Since then, it has been revised seven times. In 1955, the third version of *The Course of Study* started to have legally binding force in prescribing the content of textbooks. Secondary school textbooks have been strictly checked and authorized by MEXT since then. As teachers must use authorized textbooks, syllabus design is constrained by *The Course of Stud*y (Imura, 2003).

In the 1980s, aiming at internationalization, the Ministry initiated English education reform. One of the policies adopted in 1987 was the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program which invited young college graduates from overseas to participate in foreign language education throughout Japan as assistant language teachers (ALTs). They were called AETs—Assistant English teachers—when the JET program started. MEXT then revised *The Course of Study* again in 1989 and 1999, and implemented the 5-year Action Plan in 2003. This latest Action Plan advocated training 60,000 Japanese English teachers intensively and hiring 11,500 additional ALTs.

In spite of these initiatives taken by MEXT, various factors such as the use of the traditional grammar-translation method, *yakudoku*, and high-stakes entrance examinations have hindered the reform of Japanese English education.

Yakudoku and Examination English

English education in Japan has been dominated by the *yakudoku* method (Gorsuch, 1998; Suzuki, 1999). The main classroom activity in this method is word-by-word translation of written English into Japanese. The teacher gives grammatical explanations in Japanese; students have few chances to vocalize English except when they practice reading by repeating after the teacher.

Yakudoku has been a favored teaching method used to help students pass university entrance examinations which have mainly evaluated reading skills and grammatical knowledge. Many high school teachers believe they cannot ignore university entrance examinations and thus teach using this method (Gorsuch, 1998). Meanwhile, critics of this approach claim that *Juken Eigo* (examination English) requires high school students to learn decontextualized language and peripheral grammar (Law, 1994).

Teacher Beliefs about the Use of CLT

Gorsuch's Model

Research on classroom practices prior to 2003, the year when the most recent revision of *The Course of Study* became mandatory, appears to suggest that CLT was not being widely used. Brown (1995) claimed that very little oral English was used during English lessons. Gorsuch (1998) reported that 70 to 80% of the Japanese high school teachers she surveyed used *yakudoku* in their English classes. More recently, Taguchi (2005) found that high school teachers' concern about entrance examinations tended to lead them toward traditional methods such as choral repetition in oral communication courses.

In order to explore factors that influenced teachers' approval of CLT, Gorsuch (2000) employed a structural equation model based on empirical data from Japanese high school teachers, and examined the influence of school and classroom conditions on their approval of CLT activities in English I and English II. She identified four latent variables inferred from items on a questionnaire. These were a) a *school latent variable* de-

rived from questions on the local syllabus, teacher preservice license programs, colleagues, and principals; b) a *classroom latent variable* relating to class size, student expectations, student English abilities, and teacher's English-speaking ability; c) an *exam latent variable* reflected in questions on *The Course of Study,* university entrance exams, and parental expectations; and d) a *CLT approval latent variable* based on attitudes towards communicative activities.

Gorsuch's results showed that there were strong to moderate relationships between the exam latent variable and the school and classroom latent variables. The school and classroom variables had positive, though moderate to weak, effects on teachers' approval of CLT. However, there was a weak negative relationship between the exam and CLT approval variables. Thus, these findings support the long-standing view of the strong effects of university entrance examinations on secondary school education in Japan. However, they do not show that teachers' attitudes toward the examinations directly influence their approval of CLT activities.

In her analysis, Gorsuch suggested that if university entrance examinations were to include questions that tested students' communicative ability, teachers would think that individual school conditions (e.g., school curriculum) could change (for a discussion of the effect entrance examinations have on school curriculum see also Browne & Wada, 1998). Changes in school conditions might in turn moderately influence the approval of CLT among teachers who work at those institutions. Gorsuch suggested that Japanese teachers might resist CLT in the classroom because they believe in strong teacher control and memorization/translation in foreign language learning. She argued that without reforming school and classroom conditions, CLT may not become widely employed in Japan even if university entrance examinations change.

Gorsuch also wrote that "the influence of students' expectations concerning teachers' instruction is potentially powerful" (2000, p. 685). She argued that high school students expect to prepare for entrance exams in English courses and that they might not see the value of communicative instruction. It might be difficult for teachers to effectively use CLT without student cooperation.

Thus, contextual factors such as the *yakudoku* method, university entrance examinations, and learners' beliefs have all had negative effects on the use of CLT activities by English teachers in Japanese classrooms. However, a question remains as to whether teacher classroom practices have been changing given MEXT's active support of CLT methods.

Teacher Beliefs and Practices

Recent research findings suggest growing approval of CLT use. Gorsuch (2001) reported that Japanese high school teachers mildly approved of CLT activities, although there were still obstacles to implementing CLT activities in their classrooms. Taguchi (2002) found that even though high school teachers were still using exam-oriented teaching methodologies, they want to teach communicative skills. Both studies suggest that while there is inconsistency between the teachers' beliefs and practices, teachers' perceptions regarding the use of CLT may be gradually changing.

There is a need to delve into what might be influencing teachers' beliefs and practices. Fang (1996) claimed that contextual factors including classroom conditions can have a powerful impact on teachers and affect their classroom practice. Gorsuch's model (2000) also showed that school and classroom conditions influence teachers' perceptions regarding the use of CLT. Listening to teachers' voices can help us better understand the relationships between these contextual factors and teachers' perceptions. This study investigates Japanese secondary school teachers' beliefs regarding the use of CLT in their classrooms and what conditions, if any, they want to change in order to better facilitate CLT activities. The following research questions were posited:

1. What are Japanese secondary school teachers' beliefs and practices regarding CLT?
2. What contextual factors, if any, do Japanese secondary school teachers think should be changed in order to utilize CLT in Japanese secondary schools?

Method

Materials and Procedures

The questionnaire (see Appendix) used in this study was based on information gathered through interviews with three middle school teachers, and notes on teaching and learning gained from the researcher's recent experience teaching in high school. Questions, written in Japanese, were categorized as related to either the first or the second research question, then assigned as 15 closed-response and 3 open-response questions following the questionnaire format recommended by Brown (2001). A 6-point Likert scale was used following Lyberg, Biemer, Collins, Ieeuw, Dippo, Schwarz, and Dennis (1997) who suggest an optimal scale length

of between 5 and 7 points. The questionnaire was revised twice after receiving advice from active teaching professionals.

The questionnaire had four main sections. The first section (Questions 1 to 5) was designed to ascertain Japanese secondary school teachers' beliefs and knowledge about CLT. The second section (Questions 6 to 10) elicited information about how teachers use CLT activities. The third section (Questions 11 to 14) was designed to explore what difficulties teachers faced in using CLT activities. The last section (Questions 15 to 17) tracked the influence of entrance examinations on the teachers' perception of skills necessary for English. Questions 1 to 10 and Questions 11 to 17 correspond to the first and second research questions respectively.

The internal consistency estimate of reliability for the Likert-scale questions (Questions 15 to 17) was calculated, and Cronbach's Alpha was estimated at .78.

Participants

The sample of teachers used in this study was a sample of convenience. The researcher sent a Japanese version of the questionnaire to 30 teachers in October 2003; 21 were returned by December, a response rate of 70 percent.

Of the 21 participants, 5 were the researcher's former colleagues; 3 were the researcher's classmates in a TESOL doctoral program; and 6 were members of a teachers' association. These teachers introduced 7 additional participants.

Among the 8 male and 13 female participants, 6 were teaching in public middle schools, 11 in high schools (8 private and 3 public), and 4 in both. Five had taught for 1 to 5 years, 4 for 6 to 10 years, and 12 for more than 10 years. Twelve had experience abroad (6 for 1 to 6 months and 6 for more than 6 months). All 21 teachers worked in Tokyo.

Limitations of the Method

This study is a pilot study, so the number of participants was not large. In addition, the perceptions of the participants, many of whom were actively pursuing professional development, might not reflect those of the general population. Moreover, the participants work in Tokyo and may be more aware of CLT and MEXT guidelines than those living away from the center of political power. Thus, results of this study are not generalizable. In future studies, teachers' perceptions about CLT should be

more comprehensively investigated using a stratified random sample of teachers from every prefecture.

Results

Teachers' Beliefs About and Knowledge of CLT

Questions 1 to 5 concern Japanese teachers' beliefs and knowledge about CLT. In response to Question 1, 19 of the 21 participants indicated that they had heard of or studied CLT. However, responses to Question 2 show that they mainly learned by themselves, not from workshops held by local boards of education. Table 1 shows that the teachers learned about CLT mainly from books and journals, or seminars and lectures. Only two teachers reported learning about CLT from *The Course of Study*.

Table 1. Where (Or from What) the Teachers Heard/Learned about CLT (N = 21)

Sources and places	No. of mentions
Books or journals	12
TESOL seminars/lectures	10
University	7
Teacher's manual	5
Workshop held by a teachers' association	4
The Course of Study	2
Workshop held by the Board of Education	0

The teachers' responses to Questions 3 and 4 showed that they had a relatively clear understanding of CLT. As shown in Table 2, they thought it was most important for students in CLT classrooms "to communicate effectively" and "to enjoy communicating" in L2. Moreover, the teachers selected being a "material provider," "co-communicator," "communication model," and "facilitator" as their main roles in CLT classrooms (Table 3). Only a few chose native-like pronunciation or native-like accuracy as a crucial factor.

Table 2. What the Teachers Think is Important for Students in CLT Classrooms (N = 21)

Important factors for students	No. of mentions
To communicate effectively in L2	13
To enjoy communicating in L2	11
To collaborate with each other	8
To talk to a native speaker	4
Never to use L1	4
To acquire native-like fluency	1
To acquire native-like accuracy	0
To acquire native-like pronunciation	0

Table 3. What the Teachers Think is Required of Teachers in CLT Classrooms (N = 21)

Roles of teachers	No. of mentions
To provide material	15
To be a co-communicator	14
To be a communication model	13
To be a facilitator	10
To have native-like fluency	4
To have native-like pronunciation	2
To be a native speaker	2
To have native-like accuracy	1

Although the teachers did not refer to Canale and Swain's (1980) four areas of communicative competence (grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence), one can infer from their answers to Question 5 that they have a solid understanding of communicative competence. Eleven defined communicative competence as the ability to understand others' messages and to convey one's message to others. Seven referred to the ability to express one's thoughts/ideas. Two held a different perspective from the others with one connecting communica-

tive competence to identity and the other to the establishment of human relationships.

Use of Communicative Activities in the Classroom

Because one of the aims of the JET program is to promote interaction in English between Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) and ALTs (Wada & Cominos, 1994), communicative activities may be more likely to be used in team-taught classes. Questions 6 to 10 address issues related to ALTs and team teaching.

In all schools at which the participants in this study worked, native English speakers were employed as ALTs. In the teachers' responses to Question 6, the frequency with which native speaker teachers visited the schools varied considerably with five participants reporting visits of once a month or less, one reporting visits by ALTs every other week, and 14 schools once a week or more.[3]

Table 4. Frequency of Group/Pair Activities (N = 17)

Frequency	No. of mentions	
	With ALTs	Without ALTs
Never	2	2
Hardly ever	0	2
Sometimes	2	5
Often	4	2
Usually	5	4
Always	4	2

Seventeen teachers who team taught with an ALT responded to Question 8. Table 4 shows that 13 of these 17 Japanese teachers often, usually, or always used group or pair activities with ALTs, while 8 teachers frequently used such activities without ALTs. As for Question 9, a variety of activities were provided either with or without ALTs. By examining these results carefully, it was found that the frequency of the use of communicative activities *with* ALTs was a little higher. Role plays and discussion were more likely to be employed by Japanese teachers when they taught *with* ALTs (Table 5).

Table 5. Range of Communicative Activities (N = 21)

Activity	No. of mentions	
	With ALTs	Without ALTs
Game (Bingo, board game, etc.)	14	13
Information gap, ranking, listing, etc.	13	11
Role play	10	4
Discussion (group/whole class)	8	5
Debate	1	1
Speech	1	0
Quiz	0	1
Play	0	1

In response to Question 10, 14 of 21 teachers reported that their students' favorite activity was a game.

Problems and Difficulties in Implementing CLT

Questions 11 to 14 concern problems and difficulties the Japanese teachers thought they had when they employed CLT. In response to Question 11, 10 of 21 indicated that CLT was used effectively in their schools. Surprisingly, among the 11 who did not think that they were using CLT effectively, only 2 selected entrance examinations as the main reason from the list of answers for Question 12 (Table 6).

Question 13 revealed that 18 of 21 respondents wanted to provide their students with more communicative activities. Two wrote that communicative activities would be useful after students had learned grammar and vocabulary. One teacher did not respond to the question. As to why they want to use more communicative activities, seven teachers wrote that communication in the L2 was the main objective of learning a foreign language. Three teachers, feeling that they had given too few chances to date to use English, hoped to give their students more opportunities.

Table 7 presents the responses to Question 14: What do you think should be changed first in order for you to apply CLT more effectively in your lessons? Both Table 6 and Table 7 show that the teachers considered the "number of class hours" and "class size" serious problems.

Table 6. Reasons Why CLT Cannot Be Used in the Classrooms (N = 11)

Problems	No. of mentions
Number of class hours	7
Class size	6
Textbook	5
Curriculum	5
Lack of teachers' English proficiency	4
Evaluation system	4
Lack of materials for communicative activities	3
Entrance examinations	2
Teachers' views	1

Table 7. Conditions to Be Changed in Order to Use CLT in the Classrooms (N = 21)

Problems	No. of mentions
Number of class hours	8
Class size	7
Teacher training	3
Curriculum	3
Textbook	2
Education system	2
Lack of materials for communicative activities	2
Entrance examinations	2
Teachers' views	1
Teachers' English proficiency	1
Cooperation with ALTs	1

Importance of Domain-Specific Skills/Knowledge

Questions 15 to 17 asked about teachers' perceptions of the importance of skills and knowledge. A 6-point Likert scale (0 = not important;

1 = little importance; 2 = slight importance; 3 = somewhat important; 4 = important, and 5 = very important) was used.

Seven one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted. The independent variable was the purpose of English learning (learning in general, learning for passing high school entrance examinations, and learning to pass university entrance examinations). Dependent variables included the teachers' perceptions of the importance of English skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, and yakudoku). A Bonferroni adjustment was made in order to avoid committing a Type I error; thus, $p < .0071$ (.05/7) was used to determine statistical significance. To determine whether the data met the assumptions of ANOVA, the data in each of the 21 cells (3 times 7) were checked for normality. Three dependent variables (reading skills, grammar, and vocabulary) were positively skewed, and thus, logit transformation of the reflected variables was performed.

Three means were found to be significantly different for five dependent variables: perceived importance of listening, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, and yakudoku. The strength of relationship between the purposes and the change in perceived importance, assessed by η^2, was relatively strong: listening 25%, speaking 53%, grammar 31%, vocabulary 25%, and yakudoku 17% (Table 8).

Table 8. Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) for Effects of Learning Purposes on Seven Dependent Variables (N = 21)

	In general		HS exam		Univ. exam		ANOVA		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F (2, 20)	p	η^2
Reading	4.23	1.38	4.67	0.66	4.90	0.30	1.89	.159	0.06
Writing	4.05	0.80	3.65	1.27	3.76	1.30	0.67	.513	0.02
Listening	4.55	0.94	3.52	1.33	3.24	1.30	9.75	.000	0.25
Speaking	4.57	0.60	2.05	1.43	2.15	1.46	33.68	.000	0.53
Grammar	4.10	0.83	4.86	0.48	4.90	0.30	13.45	.000	0.31
Vocabulary	4.48	0.51	4.86	0.36	4.95	0.22	10.00	.000	0.25
Yakudoku	3.05	1.22	3.94	0.90	4.00	0.88	5.92	.004	0.17

Because equal variances among the three groups were not assumed, post hoc comparisons were conducted with Dunnett's C tests. Significant mean differences were found between the perceived importance of learning English in general and for passing high school entrance examinations. Significant mean differences were also found between the perceived importance of learning English in general and for passing university entrance examinations for all the five variables (perceived importance of listening, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, and yakudoku).

The results show that listening and speaking skills were perceived to be more important for learning English in general than for passing high school or university entrance examinations. They also show that grammar, vocabulary knowledge, and *yakudoku* skills were considered more important for passing entrance examinations than for learning English in general.

Discussion

What Are the Japanese Secondary School Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Regarding CLT?

The participants in this study seemed to have relatively solid knowledge of CLT and a good understanding of learners' and teachers' roles in CLT classrooms (Tables 2 and 3). However, at the same time, their responses imply that there were some problems that negatively affect the implementation of CLT.

First, only two teachers answered that they had learned about CLT from *The Course of Study* (Table 1). According to my observations, most secondary school teachers appear indifferent to the guidelines. One of the reasons for this might be that *The Course of Study* is not meant to address specific methods of instruction, but rather to describe the overall purpose of English education at secondary schools. Although it lists language activities and elements that should be taught, it does not show teaching techniques or practices useful in teaching them. *The Course of Study* specifies only what teachers are to teach, not *how* they are to teach (Gorsuch, 2000). It appears that MEXT needs to make the guidelines more practical by addressing methods of instruction, so that information related to reforms can be disseminated more efficiently.

Second, none of the participants reported that they had learned about CLT from workshops held by local boards of education (Table 1). According to Browne and Wada (1998), in-service teachers may need to receive more training that exposes them to CLT theories and practices. The in-service training planned by MEXT may be ineffective in helping teachers

learn new subject-specific teaching methodologies. Prefectural boards of education in designated cities do conduct teacher training workshops for novice teachers, teachers with 5 years of experience, and teachers with 10 years of experience. However, the length of those workshops ranges from just one day to a maximum of one week. Moreover, novice teachers and teachers with 10 years of experience also study topics other than teaching methodologies (e.g., class and school management) (Kanatani, 2004).

Furthermore, financial support for in-service training seems inadequate. Since 2003, local boards of education have held intensive in-service teacher training workshops supported by funds (US$ 6 million per year) from the Action Plan budget (MEXT, 2006). But the amount is hardly enough to train 60,000 secondary school teachers. The budget is by far lower than that of the JET Program for hiring ALTs every year (US$ 480 million). In addition, it is not clear whether financial support for in-service training will continue after completion of the Action Plan in 2008.

If the government's intent is to help teachers learn CLT theories and practices, then teacher training workshops should be available for all teachers, be made longer, and include training in methodologies that help promote the development of communicative abilities. It should be proposed to MEXT and local boards of education that numerous different workshops be organized.

Third, ALTs are not required to have any previous teaching experience or training (see Wada & Cominos, 1994). According to teachers' responses, role plays and discussions were more likely to be used by Japanese teachers when they taught with ALTs than alone (Table 5). As Sakui (2004) pointed out, having an ALT makes CLT more salient both for teachers and students. Gorsuch (2002) suggested that we should view the presence of ALTs as "a dynamic, if unevenly available, form of in-service teacher education" (p. 24). As suggested by Gillis-Furutaka (1994), improved pre- and in-service training for ALTs should be given, so ALTs can perform their role in introducing new teaching methods to JTEs.

In short, the participants have relatively solid CLT knowledge, but in order to enable more teachers to learn about CLT, the content of *The Course of Study* and pre- and in-service training needs to be reviewed.

What Contextual Factors Do the Japanese Teachers Think Should Be Changed in Order to Utilize CLT in Japanese Secondary Schools?

The results of this study are compatible with Gorsuch's (2000) model which suggests that teachers' perceptions about the use of CLT activities

may be influenced by changes in school and classroom conditions.

In response to Question 13, teachers in this study reported that they wanted to use more communicative activities in class. However, they believe that listening and speaking skills are less important for passing entrance examinations. They also believe that grammar, vocabulary, and *yakudoku* were more important for passing entrance examinations than for general learning. Teachers' concern over entrance examinations had a strong influence on their perceived importance of English skills and knowledge.

It must also be noted that despite their worries about entrance examinations, only 2 of 21 teachers reported that they felt entrance examinations needed to change before employing CLT in the classroom. In contrast, approximately one third of the teachers reported that educational reforms in classroom conditions (the number of class hours and class size) are a prerequisite for the effective use of CLT methods (Table 7). A teacher emphasis on reforms at the classroom level to promote the use of CLT has also been reported elsewhere. Comparing school and classroom latent variables, Gorsuch (2000) reported that while teachers are sensitive to attitude shifts toward examinations at the institutional level, they may not be inclined to implement related changes in the classroom (p. 701). She noted that teachers might be more resistant to CLT activities at the classroom level than at the school level because of their concern over control in the classroom and over students' learning. As a counter example to Gorsuch, Browne and Wada (1998) reported that the rate of academic high schools choosing listening classes (67%) was higher than that of vocational high schools (25%) due to the recent trend among universities of adding listening comprehension to their entrance examinations. These results were for oral communication courses while Gorsuch's study focused on integrated courses. There seems to be a difference between teachers' perception of oral communication courses and integrated courses. Similarly, some Japanese secondary school teachers in this study reported that they might be able to use CLT if class size and hours changed. They could maintain better control in a small class while students are doing pair/ or group work, and could guarantee adequate learning provided they are given more class hours to spend time on communicative activities.

With regards to class size, two participants reported that in their school a native speaker taught one oral communication lesson per week to approximately 520 students (11 classes of 47-50 students). They pointed out that it was hard to check and assist 24 to 25 pairs in one lesson, that classrooms sometimes became very noisy, and that administering oral

tests to 520 students was almost impossible (on the effects of large classes, see also Holliday, 1994).

In order to solve the problems of large classes and limited instruction time, the Conference of English Education Reform, attended by nine teachers' associations, has called for reform in English education since 1974. Their main proposals included having smaller class sizes (fewer than 20 students in one class) and additional lessons (Conference of English Education Reform, 1992). Consistent with these proposals, many teachers in this study also called for smaller classes and more class time.

Although MEXT has reacted to suggestions from teachers' groups and has tried to improve the situation, MEXT and local educational institutions appear to have difficulty shaping policy suited to the actual state of affairs in Japanese secondary schools. For instance, since 2001, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Board of Education has attempted to decrease the number of students in English class by reducing the class size from 40 to 25 or 26. However, this was done only once a week and it also fell short of attaining the class size (less than 20) recommended by the Conference of English Education Reform. In addition, because the new class members were not from the same homeroom, group or pair work could not be conducted as smoothly as when students know each other well (see Kashimura, 2005). As this example suggests, MEXT and the boards of education need to listen more closely to teachers' voices. Otherwise the reforms they are aiming at may not be effective in creating a classroom environment conducive to CLT.

Li (1998) maintains that teaching methodologies developed in the West, such as CLT, are often difficult to introduce into EFL situations. Holliday (1992) argues that innovation can be effective only if appropriate to the actual conditions of host educational institutions. As such, the Ministry's educational policy, which has promoted the use of CLT in secondary schools, needs to take into consideration the educational context for teaching and learning of English in Japanese schools.

Conclusion

Gorsuch (2000) called for more research to understand teachers' concerns about school and classroom conditions and to find concrete ways to help teachers deal with these concerns when they use CLT activities. The present study contributes to this research agenda by investigating Japanese secondary school teachers' perceptions about using CLT methods following the introduction of the MEXT 1999 *Course of Study* and the

2003 Action Plan. Although this exploratory study cannot be generalized, the results suggest that for teachers to more effectively use CLT in the classroom, changes in educational conditions are necessary. The teachers in this study reported that they needed to have more class hours and smaller classes to employ CLT more effectively.

As Borg (2003) noted, contextual factors influence both teacher cognition and practice. It was found that to a certain extent beliefs and practices regarding CLT might be affected by contextual factors (class hours and class size). If educational conditions are improved, teachers' beliefs and practices may change. About half of the participants wrote that they had already begun to use CLT at the local level. In order for this small step to be the first toward real reform in English education in Japan, we need to listen more carefully to teachers' voices and learn what conditions teachers really want to change.

Notes

1. The Japanese Ministry of Education was combined with the Ministry of Science and Technology in 2002. Since then, it has been called the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. "The Ministry of Education," "the Ministry," and "MEXT" are all used in this paper.
2. The 1989 version of *The Course of Study* did not explicitly state that one of the goals of the course was to develop students' communication abilities. It simply stated that the goal was to "foster the positive attitudes toward communicating in a foreign language" (MEXT, 1989).
3. In 2005, two years after the administration of the questionnaire, the average frequency of ALT visits was 0.7 times a week in junior high schools and 0.6 times a week in high schools (MEXT, 2006).

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Appendix

CLT Questionnaire

I would like to know how Japanese teachers feel about communicative language teaching (CLT). Please answer the following questions.

Background Information: Please circle the item that best describes your background and current teaching situation. (Check all items that apply.)

Sex: Male Female

Present Teaching Position:

Junior high school High school
University Others ( )

Type of school: Public Private National

Areas you teach: Reading Writing Oral communication
Grammar Others ( )

Numbers of years teaching English:

1-5 years 6-10 years Over 10 years

Experience of living abroad:

None 1-6 months 6-12 months
1-3 years Over 3 years

Questions

Please check the items that apply to you. (Check all items that apply in Questions 2, 3, 4, 9, and 10.)

1. Have you ever heard/learned about communicative language teaching (CLT)?
   _____ Yes _____ No. (If no, please skip the questions 2 ~ 4.)

2. Where did you learn about communicative language teaching (CLT)?
   _____ books or journals _____ TESOL seminars/lectures
   _____ teachers' manual _____ *the Course of Study*
   _____ workshop held by the board of education

_____ University
_____ workshop held by a teachers' association
_____ others ( )

3. What do you think is important for students in CLT classrooms?
_____ to talk to a native speaker
_____ to acquire native-like pronunciation
_____ to acquire native-like fluency
_____ to acquire native-like accuracy
_____ to communicate effectively in L2
_____ never to use L1 (Japanese)
_____ to collaborate with each other
_____ to enjoy communicating in L2
_____ others ( )

4. What do you think is required for English teachers in CLT classrooms?
_____ to be a native speaker
_____ to have native-like pronunciation
_____ to have native-like fluency
_____ to have native-like accuracy
_____ to provide material
_____ to be a facilitator
_____ to be a communication model
_____ to be a co-communicator
_____ others ( )

5. What is your understanding of "communicative competence?"
_____
_____

6. Does a native English speaker teach in your school?
_____ Yes _____ No
If yes, how often do they teach?
_____ not regularly _____ once a month
_____ once in a few weeks _____ once a week
_____ twice a week _____ more than three times a week

7. Do you have a team-taught class with an ALT? If yes, in what class?
____ Yes. [ ] _____ No.
(If no, please skip the questions regarding an ALT.)

8. How often do you use group/pair activities in your lesson?
   With an ALT: _____ never _____ hardly ever _____ sometimes
   _____ often _____ usually _____ always
   Without an ALT: ___ never _____ hardly ever _____ sometimes
   _____ often _____ usually _____ always

9. Which of the following activities have you used in your lessons?
   With an ALT: _____ information gap _____ problem solving
   _____ discussion _____ listing/ranking
   _____ role-play _____ games _____ others ( )
   Without an ALT: _____ information gap _____ problem solving
   _____ discussion _____ listing/ranking
   _____ role-play _____ games _____ others ( )

10. Which of the following activities do you think your students prefer?
    _____ information gap _____ problem solving _____ discussion
    _____ listing/ranking _____ role-play _____ games
    _____ others ( )

11. Do you think CLT is employed effectively in your school?
    _____ Yes _____ No

12. If no, which of the following factors do you think is the biggest problem?
    _____ lack of materials for communicative activities
    _____ entrance examinations
    _____ lack of teachers' English proficiency
    _____ curriculum (*The Course of Study*)
    _____ textbook _____ class size
    _____ number of class hours _____ evaluation system
    _____ others ( )

13. Do you want to provide your students with more communicative activities? Why?
    _____ Yes _____ No
    Reasons: _____
    _____

14. What do you think should be changed first in order for you to apply CLT more effectively in your lessons?
    _____
    _____

15. In your opinion, how important are the following areas for your students to learn English? (Circle the number that best describes the degree of importance that you attach to the item on the left.)

Importance	None	Little	Slight	Somewhat	Important	Very Important
Reading	0	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	0	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	0	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	0	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	0	1	2	3	4	5
Vocabulary	0	1	2	3	4	5
Yakudoku	0	1	2	3	4	5

16. In your opinion, how important are the following areas for your students to pass high school entrance examinations?

Importance	None	Little	Slight	Somewhat	Important	Very Important
Reading	0	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	0	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	0	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	0	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	0	1	2	3	4	5
Vocabulary	0	1	2	3	4	5
Yakudoku	0	1	2	3	4	5

17. In your opinion, how important are the following areas for your students to pass university entrance examinations?

Importance	None	Little	Slight	Somewhat	Important	Very Important
Reading	0	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	0	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	0	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	0	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	0	1	2	3	4	5
Vocabulary	0	1	2	3	4	5
Yakudoku	0	1	2	3	4	5

日本語話者大学生の英語学習動機の変化
―国際イベントへのボランティア参加の効果―

Changes in Japanese University Students' Motivation to Learn English: Effects of Volunteering in an International Event

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The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of volunteer assistance at the 2005 Special Olympics World Winter Games (SO) in Nagano on Japanese university students' motivation to learn English. The construct of motivation was investigated within the framework of self-determination theory, which assumes three basic psychological needs: for competence, for relatedness, and for autonomy. According to the degree to which these psychological needs are satisfied, social-contextual factors are considered to facilitate or impede motivation. The theory posits that in terms of the degree of self-determination or autonomy, motivation is categorized as (a) amotivation, (b) extrinsic motivation, and (c) intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is further divided into (a) external regulation, (b) introjected regulation, (c) identified regulation, and (d) integrated regulation; in this order, the degree of self-determination increases. Previous studies on motivation to study English as a second language (L2) within the framework of self-determination theory (Hiromori, 2003a, 2006; Hiromori & Tanaka, 2006) have shown that L2 learners' motivation to study may change and that social-contextual factors facilitative for basic psychological needs may influence changes in motivation.

The research questions posed for this study were: (a) Did participation in the SO as volunteers cause changes in Japanese university students' motivation to study English? and (b) if so, how? We supposed that such participation would provide