

# Team teaching from administrators' perspectives

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## Reference data:

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The purpose of this study is to ascertain how team teaching (TT) relationships are commonly portrayed by administrators. This information is useful to explore the sociopolitical dynamics of the JET Program and their influence on TT relationships. The interview data were collected from administrators at MEXT, CLAIR (the coordinator of the JET Program), city and prefectural boards of education, and Professor Minoru Wada, the initial planner of TT in the JET Program. Furthermore, TT seminars were observed and government-issued TT documents were analyzed. Results revealed the administrators' different views on TT relationships. MEXT, the organizer of the education policy, assumed that TT relationships were affected mostly by personal problems, while CLAIR and the local Boards of Education as its coordinators acknowledged there are some real difficulties involved. The clear role-sharing of MEXT and CLAIR leads to a different view that the educational aspects of TT and the practical issues of the JET Program are two separate issues.

本論の目的は、ティームティーチング (TT) の教師間関係が教育行政官にどのように受け止められているかを調査するものであり、JET Program、及びTTの教師間関係に与える影響の社会的・政治的側面を探るのに有益であると考えられる。文部科学省、CLAIR (JET Programの調整団体)、市教委、県教委、JET ProgramのTT設立計画者である和田稔氏を含む教育行政者への個別インタビューに加え、TTのセミナー観察、並びに政府発行のTT関連の書類を分析した。

その結果、TT関係への異なる見解が示され、特に、教育政策の組織者としての文科省は、TT関係は多くの場合個人的な問題に影響されたものであるとする一方、CLAIRや市教委、県教委などのJET Programの調整組織はその困難を認識していた。つまり、文科省とCLAIRの責任範囲が二分されていることが、TTの教育面とJET Programの実行面での問題は別の問題であるという認識に導いたと考えられる。

**T**EAM TEACHING (TT) under the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Program has become one of the major characteristics of EFL education in secondary schools in Japan since its establishment in 1987. Furthermore, since 2002, TT has been implemented in elementary school education, which clearly shows that the Japanese government acknowledges the importance of TT.

However, TT between an assistant English teacher (AET) and a Japanese teacher of English (JTE) may bring about tremendous difficulties and conflicts, mainly because of the team teachers' relationships (McConnell, 2000; Mahoney, 2004). Presumably, different kinds of power exist between the two parties in terms of professional status (teacher-in-charge versus assistant),



linguistic proficiency (non-native versus native speaker), and cultural background (insider versus outsider).

The purpose of this study is to investigate administrators' perspectives and interests in TT and AET-JTE relationships. These findings will contribute to improvements in TT, which ultimately influences EFL education in Japan.

### **The JET Program**

The JET Program started as a cultural exchange program (CLAIR, 2003) under the internationalization, or *Kokusaika* (Kubota, 1998) policy of the national government, not simply as a language program whose purpose was to improve foreign language education (McConnell, 2000). That is, it was originally established due to political reasons. McConnell (2000) explains that the JET Program, a \$500 million "top-down" (p.1) project, was established as a "gift" (p.1) to the United States in the mid-1980s, when Japan needed to deal with economic conflicts between the two countries. Lincicome (1993, p. 127) notes that Japan's *Kokusaika* was "an action against the criticism of Japan's economic self-centeredness and cultural insularity." Thus, internationalization emerged as a political means of enhancing an understanding of Japan and softening economic criticism against it. Seen in this light, the Japanese government established the JET Program as a means of realizing *Kokusaika* to enhance the world's understanding of Japan.

As an adjunct to Japan's internationalization, emphasizing the necessity of communicative skills in English was regarded as an important task (Wada, 1994). To implement this, EFL educational policy changed from form-focused instruction consisting mainly of translating English texts into Japanese (*yakudoku*) to Communicative Language Teaching, or CLT (Gorsuch, 1999), which while advocated by MEXT, may not be fully realized in actual classrooms. This change in policy was supported by the

JET Program, in which a native speaker (NS) of English team-teaches with a JTE in order to promote CLT in EFL classes in Japan (Samimy & Kobayashi, 2004).

### **The organization of the JET Program**

Although AETs actually work for and are paid by a local board of education, two major government bodies organize this program (McConnell, 2000): the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR). MEXT is in charge of providing guidance to local boards of education and schools regarding TT; CLAIR, one of the main organizers and coordinators of the JET Program, deals with participant placement, post-arrival orientations, training, counseling, JET publications, and other related matters (JET Program homepage, 2010). Like MEXT, CLAIR plays an important role in the JET Program.

All in all, three ministries are involved in this program. While MEXT utilizes JETs in English education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recruits the participants abroad, and the former Ministry of Home Affairs (currently Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication) allocates JETs all over Japan (McConnell, 2000).

### **The reality of TT and its relationships**

The power imbalances between JTEs and AETs appear to be caused by the different capabilities of the two parties. As for target language competence, JTEs' inferiority complex, caused by low proficiency in oral English, is pointed out as an issue (Kamhi-Stein, 1999; McConnell, 2000; Tajino & Walker, 1998), and this occasionally results in their belief in the native speaker fallacy (Phillipson, 1992). However, concerning the amount of teaching experience, JTEs usually have longer teaching experi-



ence both overall and in their home culture, while most AETs are recent college graduates with little or no experience in teaching EFL (Tajino & Tajino, 2000), or even teaching in general. This also means that JTEs, who share the same mother tongue and culture with their students, have more thorough knowledge concerning the local language, culture, society, education, learners, and school life than AETs. In addition, it has been pointed out that AETs, being relatively short-term teaching assistants, lack political power in their teaching contexts (Mahoney, 2004; McConnell, 2000). Yet despite the problems with the program as outlined above, administrator perspectives on these issues are relatively underrepresented, thus this research investigates how JET Program administrators view the program and its potential difficulties and challenges. The next section will explain the data collection methodology, followed by the results of the research and then a discussion of their implications.

## Method

Information was collected through interviews with administrators, a primary source in this study, as well as fieldwork activities, including interviewing other stakeholders, and document analysis.

### Interviews with administrators

Administrators in MEXT, CLAIR, prefectural and city boards of education, and Professor Minoru Wada (initial planner of TT in the JET Program) were interviewed from January to March 2004. In the interviews with MEXT officials, a Japanese official and a foreign advisor called the Monbusho ALT Advisor were interviewed together in the MEXT government office for about one hour and a half. The interview with the Japanese official was conducted in Japanese, while the foreign advisor was interviewed in English. The interview of the Japanese CLAIR official

was conducted for about 40 minutes. The interviewee at CLAIR is a former prefectural government official, who was transferred to CLAIR two years ago. He explained that more than 50% of CLAIR officials are originally prefectural government officials from various prefectures in Japan and they only stay in CLAIR as temporary staff for a few years.

Furthermore, two English teacher consultants (*shidosyuji*), a female elementary school teacher for a city board of education (CBE) and a male JTE at high school for a prefectural board of education (PBE), were interviewed. *Shidosyuji* are mainly responsible for advising teachers in their district regarding their subject areas and to act as a vital liaison between the board of education and the schools (McConnell, 2000). Therefore, it is expected *shidosyuji* have deeper and wider perspectives on TT and teachers' relationships due to their experiences as teachers and administrators. The interview with the female consultant for the CBE took place in February 2004 for one hour and a half and the other consultant for the PBE was interviewed in March 2004 for about one hour at his office.

Finally, an interview was conducted with Professor Wada, a top specialist who has much experience and knowledge about TT in the JET Program. McConnell (2000) describes him as "the ministry's point man," (p. 44), who served as a senior curriculum specialist in the high school education section in the Ministry of Education. The interview lasted for about two hours and was conducted in March 2004 in his office at the university where he worked.

Six administrators in total were interviewed for this study. The interviews covered many areas and included general open-ended questions such as questions about teaching environment, pedagogy, cross-cultural issues, and other issues that affect TT and teachers' relationships in order to collect more contextual information and discover the complex realities underlying their perceptions of TT. All the interviews were taped and transcribed



for data analysis, and then translated it into English by the author.

### Seminar observation

In November 2003, a two-day TT seminar called “The ALTs’ Mid-Year Seminar” sponsored by a PBE in the Kanto district was observed. Among 24 workshops, I observed four on the topic of effective TT. The data consisted of written field notes.

### Document analysis

Two government-issued TT documents were analyzed: (1) *Resource Materials & Teaching Handbook 2000* (CLAIR, 2000) and (2) *JET Programme: Looking Forward to the Future after 15 years* (CLAIR, 2002). The first handbook (hereafter *Handbook 2000*) has six sections, and the main section, “ALT information,” covers 150 pages and offers various kinds of information about JETs’ life inside and outside schools. The topics include Japanese school and school life, Japanese customs and values, basic teaching theories of TESOL, and TT, and issue regarding relationships with JTEs.

*JET Programme: Looking Towards the Future after 15 Years* (hereafter *Looking Towards the Future*) is a CLAIR publication compiled for the 15th anniversary of the JET Program in 2002. In addition to including the opinions and impressions of the JET program by JET participants and JTEs, the present situation and future prospects of the JET Program are discussed by government officials.

### Results

In this section, the results are categorized into three major parts: issues of TT relationships, need for NS teachers, and lack of attention to JTEs’ concerns. Code symbols followed by the dates

of the interviews in the excerpts stand for the participants in this study or their affiliations: M for MEXT, CB for the city board of education and W for Professor Wada.

### Issues of TT relationships

The complexity of TT relationships derived from the different capabilities of AETs and JTEs was apparent in this study. However, the central government official interviewed in this study perceived TT relationships as of peripheral concern.

### JTEs’ low English communicative abilities and inferiority complex

The teacher consultant of a PBE and Professor Wada pointed out the JTEs’ English language deficiency. JTEs’ low English-speaking abilities are also clearly pointed out in *Handbook 2000*, “Many JTLs feel embarrassed about their speaking ability in the very languages that they teach. Most had little chance, if any, to speak with an ALT while they were students” (CLAIR, 2000, p. 48).

Professor Wada further described the Japanese inferiority complex in relation to foreigners:

Another cause is the inferiority complex, which Japanese people in general have towards foreign languages and people. Actually, I know from my experience that parents’ admiration of foreigners is much stronger. Probably, this cannot ever be solved. (W, 3/4/04)

Thus, JTEs’ English language deficiency is acknowledged and it seems that JTEs’ and society’s inferiority complex towards NSs heavily influences TT relationships.



### *AETs' difficulties in understanding Japanese culture*

Most obviously, AETs encounter a different classroom culture and different types of disciplinary problems. According to *Handbook 2000* (CLAIR, 2000), for instance, Japanese culture has not necessarily promoted individualism and students tend to confer with classmates when answering questions. Japanese students' shyness and silence are also perceived as the result of Japanese classroom culture. In addition, mild treatment of students' lack of discipline, such as sleeping in class, is also explained by reference to Japan's egalitarian approach to education.

Furthermore, AETs need to deal with cross-cultural problems between them and their teaching partners. For example, the handouts presented by the CLAIR official during the interview introduced common cultural misunderstandings which might occur in Japanese educational settings. The description included JTEs' preference for teacher-centered teaching vs. AETs' preference for student-centered instruction; Japanese teachers' infringing upon AETs' privacy; and different senses of professionalism between JTEs and AETs. *Handbook 2000* also recommended to AETs punctuality, conservative attire, and motivation to learn Japanese language and culture.

In spite of the efforts to introduce Japanese societal and educational culture to AETs, the teacher consultant at the CBE explained that AETs have many complaints and a great deal of frustration. In order to deal with the problems, the teacher consultant at the PBE explained that the board of education provides a seminar for JTEs concerning AETs' working conditions and effective ways of using AETs in class. For AETs, there is a counseling system with an on-duty foreign counselor in the international exchange division of the prefectural government office. In addition to this prefecture-sponsored counseling, the CLAIR official stated that a counseling service called "JET Line" is available for AETs, with eight CLAIR officials who are former AETs are on duty there.

Thus, the CLAIR official and the local boards of education acknowledged that AETs have tremendous difficulties in adapting to their positions, which results in the offering of various types of official assistance. They also acknowledged there are issues regarding teachers' relationships which are dealt with through counseling and training.

### *MEXT's low interest in TT and TT relationships*

Nonetheless, the Japanese MEXT official did not put much weight on TT relationships, stating, "That is an individual matter depending on each pair and we cannot do anything about it." He said that the causes of the problems in teacher relationships are language barriers and cultural differences, and then he presented a contradictory idea that teacher relationships are affected mostly by personal problems. His contradictory comments imply TT relationships are complex. He also insisted that there were no major problems concerning TT relationships because the government has anticipated any such problems by establishing systems and organizations to deal with them.

In fact, Professor Wada revealed the lack of MEXT's leadership on TT in recent years by explaining the initial standpoint of the Ministry of Education toward the JET Program:

Since the JET Program was established with various purposes and intentions, perspectives on the program differ depending on who sees it. Some say that the JET Program is a cultural exchange program, which started with the political and diplomatic intention of reducing criticism about Japan's economic surplus in the 1980s. From the perspective of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the JET Program is to promote internationalization, especially in rural areas. Both are not wrong, but from my perspective, the main purpose of this program is to reform English education. There was a strong demand to increase the



number of NSs in English classrooms from many boards of education members, JTEs, and the Education Agency at that time. So I perceive that the JET Program was started to satisfy their needs. At least, the Ministry of Education had a perspective that the JET Program is for English education reform. (W. 3/4/04)

He went on to further criticize MEXT's position regarding TT:

The government has not taken active leadership to improve TT. MEXT has not presented any model TT styles or guidelines, but has left everything to teachers on the principle that they are the ones in the classroom and should use trial-and-error methods to establish the best way. I think they should at least present their fundamental directions whether teachers will follow them or not. I wish MEXT or the boards of education would take a more active role in examining how TT should be conducted. I think the number of TT seminars sponsored by the government is decreasing....Overall, I'm afraid TT has been ignored. (W. 3/4/04)

Furthermore, Professor Wada showed his concern about reductions in TT classes, which implies MEXT's lack of motivation and interest in using AETs for Japan's English education reform. In sum, MEXT is the organizer of this education policy and CLAIR is its coordinator. The working domain of CLAIR is restricted to dealing with AETs and the JET Program itself, not with educational policies, which is supported by the fact that the CLAIR interviewee was an administrative official of the prefectural government transferred to CLAIR and had never been involved in education or international exchange previous to this assignment. The clear difference in roles between these two central government organizations points to their views that the educational aspects of TT and practical issues of the JET Program are separate.

## Need for NS teachers

Although the number of JETs has declined in the past few years mainly because of financial restrictions, central and local governments see NS teachers as a motivation for Japanese students' English learning. This results in improving AETs' working environment in the JET Program and hiring non-JETs as well.

## Popularity of AETs

Along with the strong emphasis on CLT, the Japanese MEXT official stated that the government will increase the number of NS English teachers in Japanese schools from anywhere between 300 to 1,000 in the next 10 years or so. By doing so, he said that students' motivation for learning English will increase because there will be more opportunities to encounter NSs' English and their cultures.

*Looking Towards the Future* reported that 85.4% of the students (N=29,142) regarded TT classes as "fun" or "relatively fun" and there was an increase of about 20% in the number of students who took the *Eiken* test (STEP English proficiency test) in junior and senior high schools (N=259) (CLAIR, 2002, p. 66-69). The government report concluded that TT contributed to not only the students' increased appreciation of and motivation for foreign languages, but also the improvement of JTEs' communicative English skills. According to the report, about 60% of JTEs at junior and senior high schools acknowledged improvements in their English abilities from working with AETs. If the response of "relatively helpful" is included, more than 95% of JTEs acknowledge AETs' positive effect on their English abilities. As a result, the CBE teacher consultant interviewed explained that the city had increased the number of AETs:

Our city had only two AETs until 2000, despite the fact that there are 11 junior high schools in total here. Many cities and towns in our prefecture have already estab-





lished the system of having one AET per school, so we made a request to the city government last year to increase the number of AETs. Right now, we have four Caucasian AETs in junior high schools: an Australian female, a British male, an Australian male, and an American male. Starting from next academic year, we'll have three more AETs so the total number of AETs will increase to seven. (CB, 2/27/04)

The teacher consultant insisted the growing numbers of AETs reflects the importance of TT in present-day secondary education in Japan. Thus, the increased demand for NS teachers makes clear the recognition of the importance of AETs in Japanese EFL settings.

### *Improving AETs' working conditions*

Consequently, AETs' working and hiring conditions have been improved to attract more JET participants. For example, the Japanese MEXT official reported that MEXT has established a new system of extending ALTs' 3-year contracts to 5 years if they are well-qualified. Furthermore, he mentioned three new hiring systems where NSs without Japanese teaching certificates can be hired as teachers, not assistants.

Indeed, improving AETs' working conditions was suggested in the commission comprised of academic experts and government officials in *Looking toward the Future*. The commission suggests expanding participants' opportunities for learning Japanese and TESOL and enriching the support network for AETs. The committee also recommends some changes in the present prerequisites for JET participants such as raising the age limit from 35 to 40, loosening limitations on the length of stay in Japan (to three years), loosening the conditions for re-application, and extending the three-year contract to five years in order to recruit high-quality participants.

However, when I asked the MEXT officials about the JTEs' general desire to consider AETs' teaching experience as one of the major hiring requirements, he defended the present screening system:

Realistically speaking, it is difficult for us to recruit as many AETs who have teaching experience in their home countries as we have now by offering an annual salary of just 3,600,000 yen....The JET Program is a cultural exchange program for young people, so we expect AETs to go back to their home countries and introduce our culture there. Of course, if they have a teaching certificate or its equivalent, that'll be welcome. But there is no reason for us to reject those without it. (M, 3/1/04)

Thus, due to the demand for large numbers of NSs in Japanese schools, the MEXT official regarded the AETs' teaching ability as secondary based on his interpretation of the JET Program as a cultural exchange, not an English education reform. In other words, he, as a government education official, defended the current policy by emphasizing the purpose of the JET Program as a cultural exchange program rather than a foreign language program, which may imply little interest on the part of MEXT in improving TT in Japan.

### *Hiring non-JETs*

In spite of the high recognition of AETs and TT, the CBE teacher consultant revealed the negative side of hiring AETs through the JET Program:

If we hire AETs either through the JET Program or the city government, not only the hiring costs of AETs but also the responsibilities of JTEs and city government officials who take care of the AETs will increase. For instance, financially, we provide AETs from those two sources with



furnished apartments and 30,000 yen per month as a rent allowance. (CB, 2/27/04)

According to the teacher consultant, for instance, AETs from the JET Program cannot drive to school because of the complexity of car registration and maintenance, as well as the danger of accidents, among other issues. Language schools on the other hand lend their AETs cars. She also referred to the nuisance of dealing with paper work for AETs such as making an original English contract based on CLAIR's manual, which is not necessary for non-JETs. She further explained that language schools warn or even fire problematic AETs without school involvement. For these reasons, she reported there is only one AET hired through the JET Program among the four AETs presently in the city and all three of the new AETs to be hired in the next year were to come from language schools.

In contrast, the teacher consultant from PBE, which deals with the senior high school level, only used the JET Program:

First, the JET Program is an established program with an 18-year history. Another reason is *chiho-kohu-zei* (tax money given to local prefectures by the central government). We get the money if we hire AETs through the JET Program. If we hire them on our own, we need to use money from the prefectural budget. (PB, 3/15/04)

Professor Wada warned of the dangers with the current tendency to hire non-JETs:

The biggest advantages are that they can cut down money as well as the time and trouble of taking care of AETs. However, the possible disadvantage of hiring non-JETs is to lose personal contact with students and teachers, since non-JETs' duty is just to teach English, and they get paid by the hour. (W. 3/4/04)

Thus, some teachers and administrators recognized the advantages of hiring non-JETs as outweighing its disadvantages due to budget limitations and additional responsibilities associated with hiring JETs.

### ***Lack of attention to JTEs' concerns***

In contrast to the governments' recognition of the importance of AETs, it seems that JTEs' difficulties such as heavy workload and pressure to improve their English abilities are not acknowledged by the central government.

### ***JTEs' additional workload***

In addition to the above-mentioned JTEs' responsibilities, the CBE teacher consultant commented that JTEs' workloads increase because of the short period of AETs' work contracts. This means that AETs who get used to the life in Japanese schools leave in a few years and JTEs have to deal with new AETs again. The MEXT official defended the issue as follows:

If AETs stay in Japan too long, they get too used to Japanese students' English. We also want many people to come to Japan and experience this program.... Students themselves come and go every three years, so teachers shouldn't have too many problems dealing with new people. (M, 3/1/04)

He also denied that JTEs workloads increase because having to take care of AETs:

I hear that some JTEs and boards of education feel it's troublesome to take care of AETs, such as finding apartments for them, etc. However, this is necessarily related to the increase in the number of non-JETs. The care for AETs is only "kindness," which is optional, but not obligatory.





That's why those issues are not included in their contracts. If some AETs complain about the lack of "kindness" and claim that those benefits should be in their contracts, we may need to tell all the city and municipal governments not to give that kind of help to AETs. (M, 3/1/04)

While the central government as a language policy maker does not take JTEs' situation and TT problems into serious consideration, the local boards of education as its coordinators do recognize JTEs' difficulties and concerns.

### Pressure on JTEs

The CBE teacher consultant reported an increased demand for changing JTEs' traditional English teaching to CLT and improving their communicative English abilities:

MEXT has forced all JTEs to attend various English seminars in order to improve their communicative English skills and promote CLT....Some JTEs question why only they are forced to attend those seminars on top of their heavy regular duties. (CB, 2/27/04)

She highlighted the JTEs' dilemma further:

JTEs in junior high schools and elementary schools have to follow and complete a certain curriculum, so they cannot be too flexible. However, AETs want to do games and teach culture-related issues, because they perceive themselves to be cultural informants. As a result, TT classes sometimes become just time for fun, not for educational development. (CB, 2/27/04)

The teacher consultant also showed sympathy for JTEs because they must deal with the added pressure of entrance examinations. She said that there is a discrepancy between

societal expectations for communicative competence in English and the reality of entrance examinations, where students' grammar knowledge and reading skills are tested. *Handbook 2000* also reports that JTEs' negative attitudes towards TT are caused by the pressure of having to complete the set curriculum on time to improve their students' ability to pass entrance exams. Nonetheless, the Japanese MEXT official stated he did not recognize any inconsistency between teaching CLT and teaching English for entrance exams. This indicates the lack of the government's recognition of this particular problem within TT.

### Discussion

The results of this study revealed two major issues: (1) The need to balance the increased demand for AETs with proper attention to JTEs' pressures and (2) the impracticality of TT in the face of the current grammar-based entrance examination system.

The increased demand for AETs resulted in various government-initiated improvements regarding increases in numbers and quality of AETs. The age limit and length of employment duration of AETs have been expanded to attract more qualified participants. CLAIR has also reinforced their counseling system and offers support from various sources to provide AETs with a better working environment. In contrast, the government has paid little attention to problems faced by JTEs. The JTEs' workload includes teaching classes, arranging extracurricular activities, organizing school events, doing paper work, and counseling students and parents, among other things. Under their heavy workload, JTEs have experienced increased pressure to improve their English abilities and teaching in accordance with the new CLT based curriculum. Actually, the CBE teacher consultant showed sympathy with JTEs because they alone have these responsibilities and pressures in addition to taking care of AETs both inside and outside school while teachers of other subjects do not have to worry about chaperoning AETs. She as-



sumed one of the reasons some CBE choose to employ non-JETs from language schools was to save JTEs time and trouble.

Thus, in contrast to the high recognition of AET issues and concerns, which brings about improvements in their working environment, JTEs' heavy responsibilities have not been well recognized by the central government. It is important to acknowledge JTEs' significant role as cultural mediators and to assist them in improving their language abilities. Without consideration for JTEs and their problems, TT relationships will be negatively affected.

As for the conflict between CLT and grammar-based university entrance examinations, although the Japanese MEXT official denied any inconsistency between the two, local government administrators have recognized this dilemma. That is, TT classes were often regarded as playtime. In fact, the survey results of students' perceptions of TT in *Looking towards the Future* reported that 85% of the students enjoyed TT, but 40% did not perceive improvements in their English abilities (CLAIR, 2002).

As a matter of fact, university entrance examinations have not put much emphasis on testing students' communicative English abilities. Despite the fact that the Center Test began to include an English listening test from February, 2006, many private universities still do not offer listening tests in their entrance exams. Under the pressure of grammar-based entrance exams, most English classes are conducted in Japanese by JTEs in order to transmit such information effectively. Therefore, AETs are not usually allocated to teach other English classes, only Oral Communication courses. Thus, the importance of the government-directed CLT policy in TT settings is not reflected in the curriculum, which isolates TT from the mainstream secondary school EFL policy in Japan.

## Conclusion

The foregoing data suggest a number of conclusions; the necessity for NS teachers in schools in Japan, the lack of the central government's interest in TT relationships and consequent JTEs' difficulties, and the discrepancy between exam-based teaching and CLT. In light of this, therefore, government recognition of the complexity of TT relationships and the educational environment vis-à-vis TT is necessary. If the government really considers TT as an impetus to promoting CLT in EFL education in Japan, they should first address the inconsistency of CLT and the present entrance examinations system. Moreover, TT relationships affect both teachers' anxiety levels and motivation levels—and, in turn, students' achievement. Therefore, educators' attention should be focused on the teachers as well as the learners. Unfortunately, the MEXT government official interviewed for the present study showed little interest in TT relationships. At the local government level, however, the importance of having positive TT relationships for successful TT, and the difficulties involved, are obvious. Since the government appears to be committed to advocating TT for the foreseeable future, close examination of this language policy with more attention and active involvement in TT relationships will be necessary.

## Bio data

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