Occupational Power and NS–NNS/Novice–Expert Relationships in Preservice Team Teaching

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a preservice team-teaching (TT) course involving seven Japanese students and three international students while undertaking collaborative tasks of Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) English textbook analysis and TT microteaching. The author's participant observations, the students' reflective notes, and individual interviews were scrutinized based on the theoretical assumption of native–nonnative and novice–expert dichotomies compared to regular TT cases. Results show that although the Japanese students' English competence affected TT role sharing, a power struggle was rarely seen after the instructor's intervention which aimed to diminish the "native speaker fallacy" (Phillipson, 1992). The international students' Japanese learning experiences also helped create positive TT relationships by decreasing linguistic power inequalities. Furthermore, the participants' lack of occupational and pedagogical power as novice teachers helped avoid relational conflicts, supporting Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of legitimate peripheral participation, which implies that occupational power (teacher pride) significantly influences power-sharing in TT.

本論は、中・高英語教員免許を取得予定の教育学部所属の日本人学生7名と英語ネイティブスピーカーの交換留学生3名を対象とし、文科省の英語検定教科書分析、及び、ティームティーチング（TT）の模擬授業を含む、教員養成段階でのTT講座の教育的効果を調査するものである。通常のTTのケースと比較分析するため、ネイティブ（NS）・ノンネイティブ（NNS）と初心者・熟達者の二つの二分法的仮説をもとに、参加観察、履修学生の振り返りレポート、及び、被験者10名への個別インタビューを実施した。その結果、日本人学生の英語力がTTの役割分担に影響を及ぼすものの、担当教員による「NS誤信」を軽減するための教育的介入により、TTにおける両者の権力闘争はほとんど散見されず、留学生の日本語学習経験が好ましいTT関係を構築し、NSとNNSの目標言語力の不均衡を是正していたことが判明した。さらに、両者とも正式な教員としての職業力や指導力を有していないため、TTにおける人間関係の衝突が回避され、このことは、Lave & Wenger（1991）の正統的周辺参加の概念を立証し、さらには、TTにおける力配分に職業力（教員としてのプライド）が大きく影響を及ぼすことが示唆された。

Team Teaching (TT) between a Japanese Teacher of English (JTE) and a native English-speaking assistant language teacher (ALT) is a challenging pedagogical approach due to differences in status (teacher-in-charge versus assistant), linguistic proficiency (i.e., nonnative speaker (NNS) versus native speaker (NS)), and cultural background (cultural native versus cultural nonnative). The fact that novice JTEs face difficulties dealing with TT classes has led MEXT (2014) to strongly suggest providing practical preservice TT training through microteaching in university teacher training programs.

In the case of TT involving Japanese preservice teachers and NS exchange students, I hypothesized that TT relationships are influenced mainly by NS–NNS power inequality because both parties have no formal career experience. This is in contrast to other TT cases in EFL education in Japan where various types of power, including NS–NNS target language power, local cultural power, and novice–expert occupational power create TT complications (Miyazato, 2006). That is, JTEs usually have many years of teaching experience in their home culture, while ALTs are likely to be recent college graduates with little or no experience teaching EFL (Tajino & Tajino, 2000), or even of teaching itself. Moreover, the exchange students' experience of learning Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) and their interest in Japanese culture will also increase their local cultural power.

Therefore, as part of an educational intervention designed to decrease NS–NNS power imbalance by teaching critical approaches to native speakership in EFL, I theorized that the participants in this small study could reduce the NS–NNS power inequality to comfortable levels more effectively than in regular TT cases. By comparing TT relationships in a preservice university training program to regular TT cases from a theoretical assumption of novice–expert relationships (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and NS–

NNS dichotomies, I aimed to investigate the causes of complexities in interpersonal relationships between NS and NNS English teachers. Based on the findings, I also identify possible characteristics of successful TT with a view to its improvement, and suggest specific features for preservice TT training as part of teacher education.

Literature Review

ALTs and JTEs: Target Language Power vs. Local Cultural and Occupational Power

Conflicts and difficulties are prevalent in TT even when the two teachers are from the same culture (Eisen & Tisdell, 2000; Shannon & Meath-Lang, 1992). Relinquishing their status as the sole authority in the classroom to engage in TT can be difficult for teachers. Autonomy is such an essential factor that Deci and Ryan (1985) identified it as one of the basic needs that brings about intrinsically motivated teacher behavior.

Team teaching that involves an ALT and a JTE introduces different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, thus requires even more complex power sharing to be successful. In particular, NS–NNS target language power inequality is assumed to be the central issue among the complexities of TT relationships (McConnell, 2000; Miyazato, 2006; Murai, 2004). This results in a sense of NS superiority, or the "native speaker fallacy," the widely accepted idea that NSs are automatically the best teachers of the language (Phillipson,1992). The native fallacy is a global problem involving the balance of power between center and periphery speakers of English (Kachru, 1986).

In contrast, some researchers have demonstrated the advantages of NNS teachers. Medgyes (1994) pointed out that NNS EFL teachers teach learning strategies more effectively, provide learners with more information about the English language, anticipate language difficulties better, and are empathetic toward learners' needs and problems in large part because they share the learners' mother tongue.

Furthermore, Lave and Wenger (1991) referred to complications in work relationships by emphasizing the relations and power struggles between newcomers and experts in the context of a changing shared practice. They argued that tension and competition between a novice and an expert are intensified by the increasing participation of newcomers, which implies the replacement of the older generation. Their theory about the relationships of novice and expert in a social practice can be applied to analyze TT relationships between JTEs and ALTs from the perspective of occupational power.

In the TT case of JTEs and ALTs, their amount of teaching experience often differs radically. While JTEs have typically longer teaching experience, ALTs in general have little or no experience teaching (Tajino & Tajino, 2000). In addition, JTEs have more thorough knowledge than ALTs concerning the local language, culture, education system, learner characteristics, and school life. In summary, ALTs are viewed as superior to JTEs in the target language, while JTEs experts in the local culture.

Collaborative Learning Between International and Local Students

Collaborative learning is being gradually implemented in present-day classrooms, as seen in Kojima et al.'s (2015) report that 47% of the university students in the study had intercultural learning experiences in class. However, university preservice TT training programs that utilize microteaching with an NS counterpart remain rare, even though some researchers have reported experiments in this direction. Yoneda's (2015) study about conducting a TT practicum in an elementary school involving Japanese and American university students emphasized that the on-site training experiences improved the Japanese students' awareness of a lack of required knowledge and English communicative skills. Watanabe (2020) also conducted TT microteaching for preservice teachers involving international students, who were invited as guest partners acting as ALTs. She referred to the merits of enhancing on-campus intercultural interactions and friendship formation occurring naturally from collaborative learning. Okuba (2017) also incorporated TT training component with a former ALT as an invited collaborator who acted as ALT and showed that hands-on TT practice for preservice teachers is indispensable. This supports the results of a Tokyo Gakugei University (2014) study that 80% of professional teachers in their study recognized the necessity of on-the-job TT training, which suggests that preservice TT training has been underutilized. Under such circumstances, it is expected that preservice TT training with an NS counterpart will significantly impact future JTEs and greatly contribute to preservice teacher training.

In this study, I aimed to investigate the effectiveness of a preservice TT course and the possible causes of complexities in interpersonal relationships between NS and NNS English teachers, focusing on power sharing by comparing preservice and regular TT cases. For the aforementioned purposes, the following research questions were posed:

RQ1. Does the power structure of TT relationships in this study differ from that between a JTE and an ALT in regular TT, and if so, how?

RQ2. Did the educational intervention aiming to diminish native speakership in preservice teacher training affect TT power-sharing in this study?

Method

Background

A collaborative learning course named "Special Lecture – Team teaching: Theory and Practice" was offered online due to the COVID pandemic in the 2020 spring semester. The course purpose was to provide prospective teachers with TT opportunities as part of preservice teacher training. The students were Japanese and international students interested in becoming English teachers. The course was taught in English at a private university in northern Kanto. See Appendix A for the course description.

Participants

The participants were seven Japanese students majoring in English education and three international exchange students from the U.S. enrolled at the university. The pairs or groups were formed randomly for the first collaborative activity on textbook analysis and then participants were paired with a different partner for TT microteaching presentations to offer various intercultural and collaborative learning opportunities. See Appendix B for participant details.

Methodology

I conducted unstructured individual interviews on Zoom in Japanese with the Japanese students and in English with the international students. The interviews covered participants' background information, impressions of the course and TT microteaching, relations with the TT partner(s), benefits and difficulties of TT, and suggestions for future improvements to the course. Interview length ranged from 20 to 50 minutes. All interview data were recorded with the consent of the interviewees, and this study met all institutional requirements. I transcribed all the interviews and translated the Japanese data into English. Then I analyzed the transcriptions, my field notes on the textbook analysis presentations, TT microteaching presentations, and the students' reflective papers detailing their TT experiences by coding them into two categories of NS–NNS and novice–expert dichotomies.

Results

Communication Between Team Teachers

All the participants stressed the importance of communication for conducting TT successfully. Participant J3 emphasized the need to share the same teaching approach and J1 especially recommended openness to build positive TT relationships. Those with less confidence in their English skills, like J4, also stressed the importance of expressing opinions. In fact, E1, who was J4's TT partner, made special efforts to create a friendship. (See Appendix C, excerpt 1). According to J4, E1 took time and trouble to meet him in his hometown in person during the COVID pandemic. J4 confessed his lack of motivation before he personally met E1 outside the class (See Appendix C, excerpt 2). The collaborative learning opportunities between local and international students created further intercultural interactions and presumably contributed to enhancing the Japanese students' intercultural experiences.

NS–NNS Power Sharing

International Students and Local Cultural Power

Several Japanese students appreciated receiving knowledge about the ALTs' politically and culturally weak positions in TT. J1 said:

> If I hadn't known about ALTs' difficulties, I'd have taken the leadership role in TT and used ALTs as my assistants. It's hard for me to explain my ideas and plans to ALTs with my poor English skills, so I'd have shown my teaching plan without discussion and said, "We'll do this, OK?" You know, if you hear their opinions, you'll have to talk about them and incorporate their ideas into your teaching plan. This creates more difficulties for JTEs without English communicative skills.

J1 continued to refer to the necessity of learning about TT in preservice teacher training:

> Now I realize that respecting ALTs' opinions are important to team-teach effectively. Also, if I hadn't known that JTEs shouldn't take passive roles, I wouldn't have been involved in TT actively. Learning about ideal TT beforehand was really beneficial, and I now understand what I should do as a JTE. Without this instruction, how can novice JTEs do TT with an ALT? Novice teachers must feel pressure given unspoken messages like "Go ahead and team teach because you are a professional JTE."

J2 also mentioned that she had never imagined teachers' relational conflicts and ALTs' difficulties, since she only saw TT from students' perspectives. Furthermore, J7 recalled an ALT's loneliness she had noticed in the local school (See Appendix C, excerpt 3). Thus, learning about ALTs' weak position affected the Japanese students' attitude toward their TT partners and resulted in more active involvement in TT.

In contrast to ALTs' tendency to lack local cultural power, the international students in this study had Japanese language skills and a strong interest in Japanese culture, which worked as a cushion in equalizing NS–NNS power imbalances between them and the Japanese students. All the Japanese students highly valued their TT counterparts' experience of studying Japanese. For example, J1 explained that their Japanese language skills helped both sides understand each other: "Knowing that we can use Japanese in the case of an emergency, we feel less anxious and became friends more easily". J1, who had extensive studying experience in the U.S., also emphasized the importance of sympathetic attitudes among TT partners:

> Our counterparts also had difficulty learning Japanese, so I could be open to them about my poor English skills. I know how they feel as a language minority because I have overseas experience. We share the same difficulties. I've seen typical American students who had harsh attitudes toward those who couldn't speak English fluently....I prefer TT with those with sympathetic attitudes toward our English skills.

In addition, with E1 and E2, both from Hawaii, the Japanese students often used a mixture of English and Japanese or partial code-switching, making their communication fun and smooth. It is assumed that E1's and E2's upbringing in Hawaii may have made them feel more comfortable with code-switching between Japanese and English more freely and flexibly to fill any language gaps. Thus, the international students' Japanese skills and interest in the local culture significantly contributed to smooth communication between NS–NNS interlocutors and presented favorable images of them as less threatening figures. Their efforts to learn the local language and assimilate into the local culture were interpreted positively as reducing the psychological distance between the two parties.

Japanese Students and Target Language Power

The Japanese students in this study recognized their lack of target language skills. J2 revealed her view of JTEs' language skills as the most crucial factor for successful TT. However, almost all the Japanese students reported that they were ready to abandon the native speaker fallacy after taking this course, which supported my own observation of their TT presentations and preparation stages.

On the other hand, the Japanese students with overseas study experiences and higher English skills presented perspectives of JTEs as precious language mediators with a better grasp of Japanese students' study situations. J1 pointed out JTEs' local cultural power:

> I didn't believe in the native speaker fallacy. First of all, I want to speak English myself, and my students will see me as a role model. I also think that regular Japanese students have difficulty understanding authentic NSs' English because of the speed and different pronunciation from the English spoken by JTEs. When they don't understand ALTs' authentic English, they will appreciate JTEs' help.... When I observed junior high school English classes taught by an ALT alone due to the sudden absence of the JTE, the ALT had great difficulty explaining even simple game instructions to his students even though he spoke some Japanese.

J2, who had the highest English proficiency, also presented her view that JTEs and ALTs should be regarded and treated differently due to the apparent NS–NNS dichotomy:

> I think Japanese students can tell that NNS English is fundamentally different from NS English. I may make mistakes in conversation, but ALTs and the Japanese students know that my English is not perfect like ALTs'. So I don't have much anxiety speaking English in TT. People don't expect me to speak English like an NS from the very beginning.

These views on clearer NS–NNS distinctions may indicate that since preservice or novice teachers see themselves as inexperienced career-wise, this creates less professional pressure and results in fewer power struggles in TT settings. In addition, knowledge about TT situations from critical points of view such as the native speaker fallacy positively affected their decisions over imagining and realizing ideal role sharing in TT and ultimately diminished their belief in native speakership.

Novice–novice Relationships

All the Japanese participants felt no pressure to share their preferred teaching plans and expressed their opinions more straightforwardly with the international students because of their lack of teaching experiences. J5 said:

> We are both students and novices in teaching, so we struggled together to create a good lesson. I didn't feel any power imbalance with E1. We joked around and exchanged opinions freely in a friendly mood. It would be different if I worked with an experienced ALT.

Nonetheless, J7 admitted that a power struggle did exist among the students in this course under the English-only learning environments:

> I am majoring in elementary education, so I know about education in general. Other students majoring in English education had English skills and TESOL knowledge.

> NS students have the target language skills but don't know much about educational situations in Japan. So each one has strengths in something. We all had some kind of academic weapon to contribute to the class discussions. That's why I didn't defer or surrender to anyone in this course.

Thus, even before their TT presentations, the students seemed to confront power issues in the language classroom as a site of competition through the ideological lenses of an NS–NNS dichotomy and novice–expert relationships about pedagogical power in teaching EFL. They skillfully negotiated power backstage in the shared community of the TT course. Due to the international students' lack of general knowledge about teaching and applied linguistics, the Japanese students achieved equal power-sharing thanks to their pedagogical power.

Discussion

In addressing the first research question regarding the power structure of TT relationships, the results show that all TT pairs had positive relationships regardless of responsibility-sharing being affected by the Japanese students' English communicative skills. My first interpretation was that the international students were experts in the target language but occupational novices in the local culture because of a lack of experience and knowledge about education in general and TESOL in particular, while the Japanese students were novices in the target language as well as occupational novices because they lacked formal teaching experience. In effect, both parties were occupational novices. Under this interpretation, the international students with NS language power were theoretically more powerful than the Japanese students within the overall power structure. However, the international students did not compete against their Japanese counterparts using their NS language superiority, but respected the Japanese students' status by understanding their difficulties in learning a foreign language and pursuing a common goal of creating a good TT lesson together. Thus, their efforts in bridging the gaps with their Japanese language skills and cultural sensitivity offset—or at least diminished—the power inequalities to a comfortable level. Namely, intentional power equalization by the international students' assimilating attitudes toward the local culture resulted in pseudo-equal role sharing in TT.

This outcome can, however, be interpreted from a different perspective. As J2 speculated, preservice JTEs view NNS teachers differently from NS teachers. Although the Japanese and international students belonged to the same classroom by sharing time, space, and activities in TT, the team teachers belonged to different communities of practice: the Japanese students to an NNS teachers' community, while the international students to an NS teachers' community. Thus, no power struggles or confrontations in terms of Lave and Wenger's (1991) novice–expert relationships occurred because of their different sense of belonging or identities.

Another interpretation is that the Japanese students' knowledge of the local educational situation and of TESOL in general could be regarded as their pedagogical power. Due to the Japanese students' target language skills, the Japanese students may be seen as language novices, but had a certain level of pedagogical skills, while the international students are English language experts but complete occupational novices. This power structure shows that the power surplus is minimal, which could be one reason for the favorable power sharing between the participants in this study. The dichotomized power structure of language and occupational power cannot explain team teachers' power sharing. Since interpersonal relationships are complex social phenomena, relationships cannot be fully explained by a mechanical analysis of power balance, as other factors such as personality matching and intercultural misunderstandings might be involved in TT power sharing. Nonetheless, the power structure in this study was found to be different from typical TT power sharing between an ALT and a JTE.

In typical classroom TT settings, the power structure between ALT and JTE is theoretically equal, however, some JTEs with near NS English abilities still defer to ALTs due to their belief in the native speaker fallacy. This resulted in their passive involvement in and dissatisfaction with their TT performance, which ultimately brought about the inability to attain occupational accomplishment as well as lower professional pride among JTEs (Miyazato, 2006). Thus, JTEs' identities, influenced by language power inequality between NSs and NNSs, possibly lie behind their peripheral participation in regular TT settings.

In contrast, the power balance between the Japanese and international students in this study did not lead to the Japanese students' passive involvement or dissatisfaction with their TT performance. The Japanese students did not defer to their NS counterparts due to their status as NNS preservice teachers. This is probably due to the fact that there were no major differences between the two parties in occupational power, which is the central skill for teachers to acquire as professionals. Both parties' recognition of themselves as occupational novices as young university students without formal teaching experience contributed to building positive TT relationships. Because neither side was confident about conducting TT, they could show their weaknesses and share their honest

opinions in a nonthreatening manner. Thus, no relational confrontations derived from existing professional pride or interfered in their relationships.

Since pedagogical empowerment with professional development is expected of all teachers, relational frictions and confrontations cannot be completely avoided. As many participants of this study speculated, it is difficult to share power with occupational experts or experienced teachers. Thus, occupational experts need to be aware of the danger of confrontations with novice teachers as they search of professional development and pedagogical empowerment as they gain experience and learn new ideas and teaching approaches.

Moreover, veteran JTEs with occupational power will be exposed to the expectations of students and society to become professional language experts. Thus, to avoid relational conflicts in TT with NS partners and preserve JTEs' professional pride as English teachers, JTEs' identity as NNS EFL teachers is assumed to be firmly formed and validates their passive involvement or peripheral participation in TT supported by their belief in the native speaker fallacy (Phillipson, 1992). In other words, experienced JTEs tend to locate themselves in the NNS EFL teachers' community of practice given their belief in the supremacy of NS English and its speakers, which is pervasive throughout Japan and accepted as legitimate at the society and global levels.

As for answering research question 2, knowledge about ALTs' difficulties and educational guidance over critical approaches to native speakership diminished the power imbalance. If the NS students had exerted their language power over their Japanese counterparts and the Japanese students had accepted this out of a belief in the native speaker fallacy, the Japanese students would have surrendered the leadership in TT and turned the experience into NS student centered TT. Educational directions concerning equal power sharing in TT in preservice EFL teacher training by acknowledging each other's positions may avoid relational conflicts before engaging in TT as professionals, who may experience occupational pressure from team teachers acting as competitors, not collaborators.

Conclusion

This study found that the complexity of TT relationships is created by various factors, including both target language and local cultural power based on the NS–NNS dichotomy as well as occupational power derived from novice–expert relationships. Especially, occupational power significantly influences power sharing in TT, and occupational pride can be a central factor in the relational complexity of TT in addition to the dichotomized NS–NNS power imbalance. When novice teachers empower their pedagogical skills, some unavoidable relational friction may occur with their expert TT partners accompanied by professional pride, since the reality of a community of practice creates tensions and competition, as Lave and Wenger (1991) show. However, I believe that even conflicts ultimately bring about occupational development, following Wenger (1998), who advocated disagreements within communities as "a source of insight" and that "for every case where there is a conflict, you can find a case where individual and social developments enhance each other" (p. 147).

Even though this study examined TT relationships in preservice teacher training, the results demonstrate the social complexities of various power relations among teachers. Thus, it is highly recommended that ALTs cultivate cultural sensitivity and motivation to learn Japanese. Needless to say, it is vital for JTEs to improve their English abilities to a level at which they feel comfortable and confident working with ALTs. I also hope that developing mutual respect by recognizing each other's strengths and weakness and sharing common goals will diminish the belief in the native speaker fallacy in both parties and disentangle—or at least diminish—the relational complexities and lead to positive TT performances. In this sense, offering preservice TT training to prospective JTEs and ALTs, as well as disseminating more research into NS–NNS issues among EFL professionals in Japan, should prove effective.

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Bio Data

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Appendix A

The course consisted of 14 modules dealing with theoretical features and teaching practice of TT. The first three classes consisted of lectures by the instructor on team teaching in Japan, the characteristics and the present situation regarding elementary and secondary school English education, NS-NNS issues, and cross-cultural misunderstandings between JTEs and ALTs. In Classes 4-6, the students read relevant articles on TT and had class discussions. Classes 7-9 dealt with an analysis of MEXT-authorized English textbooks and the national set of guidelines called the "Course of Study." Japanese and international students paired up or formed groups of three to conduct a collaborative analysis of elementary school textbooks. What followed were 20-minute TT microteaching presentations by TT pairs of a Japanese and NS student. Classes 10 and 11 were used for preparation, and Classes 12-14 for the presentations by three TT pairs in each class.

Appendix B

Background of Japanese Participants

	M/F	Year/Major	English level	H/I/L	Overseas experience	TT partner
J1	F	Sr./English	TOEIC 730	H	7-month study in U.S.	E3
J2	F	Sr./English	TOEIC 830	H	7-month study in U.S.	E1
J3	M	Jr./English	TOEIC 530	I	1-week study in Hawaii?	E3

	M/F	Year/Major	English level	H/I/L	Overseas experience	TT partner
J4	M	Jr./English	TOEIC 380	L	None	E1
J5	M	Jr./English	TOEIC 605	I-H	2-week study in the Philippines, sightseeing in Taiwan	E1
J6	M	Sr./ Elementary	TOEFL 463	I	None	E3
J7	F	Sr./ Elementary	Unknown?	H	Overseas volunteer activities	E2

Note. H = high; I = intermediate; L = low

Background of NS Participants

	M/F	Major	Length of stay	Place of origin, ethnicity	Japanese level	Interest in teaching
E1	M	Japanese	1 year	Hawaii, Filipino American	Intermediate	Strong interest in the JET Program
E2	M	Business	1 year	Hawaii, Mixed	Pre-Intermediate	Not reported
E3	M	Japanese	1 year	Indiana, African American	Advanced	Yes

Note. J = Japanese speakers; E = English speakers

Appendix C

1. His English abilities were the lowest of the three TT partners I had, so I had to take the initiative in the TT with J4. I tried to physically connect with him to conquer the language barrier and to become friends. I enjoyed all my partners. They had a desire to improve their English and get to know each other. Language may not be an influential factor. As long as they connect well, you can still do TT. (E1)
2. Meeting E1 in my life is a miracle and an asset for all my life…With his help and friendship, I didn't give up. I respect him as a person, and he is my first foreign friend. We still keep in touch on SNS even after the course is over. (J4)
3. I've been involved in volunteer work in a local elementary school, and an ALT in the school looked so lonely. No one talked to him, and he didn't communicate all day at all. I thought it was almost like bullying or torture. He was definitely excluded from the Japanese teachers' close-knit circle. He bore the loneliness, so I did what I could and spoke to him. He was so happy, and he came along with me during lunch when I was helping our students in bringing and serving lunch. He wanted someone to talk to. We should know ALTs' weak position and talk to them either in English or in Japanese to psychologically help them. Showing interest in communicating with them will alleviate their unhappy feelings, which Japanese teachers never know about. (J7)