

The Language Teacher

ISSN 0289-7938

¥950

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March, 2008 • Volume 32, Number 3

The Japan Association for Language Teaching

全国語学教育学会



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In this month's issue . . .

MARCH IS time for graduations. Many of our students will be going out into the workaday world this month or moving ahead in their educations. For many teachers, it is time to pause and get ready for the year to come. In this issue of *TLT*, we have several creative and thoughtful contributions in *My Share* for those of us preparing for classes in April. We are lucky to have lead articles from two Japanese contributors describing the experiences of language learners outside the EFL context.

In the *Feature* section, *Ritsuko Narita reports on teaching students of Japanese and their use of discourse markers and fluency in second language narratives. In Readers' Forum, Maiko Ogasawara* turns our attention to an area of language education that can only become more important over time—a case study showing the experience of language minority students as they move through the critical early years of education in Japan.

Also, make sure to take a look at two of the columns in the back half of *TLT* this month. *TLT Wired* looks at storyboarding projects. In *Outreach*, learn about teachers from Japan getting involved with educators in Laos.

This month's *TLT* tries to live up to the name with a very broad view of what is important to the variety of language teachers who are our readers. We hope everyone finds something useful and illuminating in this month's publication as they move from the past school year into the next one.

Ted O'Neill

TLT Co-Editor

3月は卒業の時期です。私たちの学生の多くが実社会に出ます。進学して勉強を続ける学生もいます。多くの教師にとって、今月は一休みして来年度に備える時期となります。4月の授業の準備をする皆さんには、*My Share* の創意に溢れ示唆に富む活動例が役に立つことでしょう。また今月号では、EFL 環境以外の学習者の経験に関する日本人研究者からの投稿を2つ掲載することができました。

まず *Feature* 記事では Ritsuko Narita が、日本語学習者のナラティブの中でのディスコース・マーカーの使用と流暢さに関して述べています。そして *Readers' Forum* の Maiko Ogasawara の研究は、時代とともにますます重要になってくる英語教育の領域に、私たちの眼を向けてくれます。これは、在日外国人の生徒が日本で重要な早期教育期を過ごすケース・スタディを扱ったものです。



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本誌後半の2つのコラムにも注目してください。TLT *Wired* には、ビデオのストーリーボードを使ったプロジェクトを掲載しています。Outreach では、ラオスの教師と一緒に働く日本人教師について紹介しています。

今月号は、広い視野を持ったTLTの名にふさわしいものとなっています。この広い視野は、本誌の読者であるさまざまな立場の皆さんにとって大切なものです。新しい年度に変わるこの時期に、今月号のTLTから皆さんの刺激になるものを得ていただければ幸いです。

Ted O'Neill
TLT Co-Editor

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日本語学習者のための ナラティブに関する指導 Pedagogical practice on Japanese narratives for learners of Japanese

Keywords

ナラティブ, 文末ディスコース・マーカー, 接続詞, 話し手, 聞き手

2003年日本の大学における夏期日本語講座中級クラスで、事前インタビューをしたところ、学習者が自分の経験を話す時に「です/ます」体が羅列することしかできないことがわかった。それらは、実際に日本人が自分の経験を話す場合とは違いがある。そこで、Yoshimi (2001)のナラティブの文末ディスコース・マーカー（んです/んですけど/んですね/んですよ）の分析を基に、日本人が実際使用している上記のディスコース・マーカーや接続詞の使い方に焦点を置いた授業活動を行った。授業では日本人によるナラティブの生の会話を視聴させたり、日本人ボランティアの大学生との交流をさせたりして、学生に気づいたことを話し合わせる活動を実施した。事前テストと事後テストを行った結果、頻度の面からは比較的多くのディスコース・マーカーを使用して自分の経験をまとめて話すことができるようになったが、それらを適切に使用するまでにはまだ時間がかかると考えられる。

Ritsuko Narita
Macalester College

This is a report in regards to practical teaching methods of narratives within the Japanese language. Through nine separate interviews with intermediate-level students of Japanese, all of whom went to Japan on the 2003 summer program, it was found that the simple *desu/masu* form was most commonly used by the students, and that they were unlikely to use discourse markers such as *~n desu ne*, *~desu yo*, and *~n desu kedo*.

Yoshimi's (2001) analysis of Japanese narrative states that discourse markers like *~n desu* provide the 'glue' that holds a story together and draws the listener in: *~n desu kedo* sets up background information in order to help the listener understand the story's subsequent content, *~n desu ne* causes the listener to pay attention to the next part of the story through attempting confirmation/agreement, and *~n desu yo* signals to the listener that the previous point is especially important to the story.

The students were given explicit instructions in regards to these markers in an attempt to raise their awareness as to the importance of these kinds of markers within narratives. The instruction consisted of five class periods where the students compared narratives with and without markers and looked at taped-videos of native Japanese speakers engaged in marker use; all of this was supplemented by the students' interaction with Japanese native speakers, home stay families, etc.

The results of this study showed that the students began to use the discourse markers much more frequently in the post-test than in the pre-test even though they were not always able to use them appropriately; sometimes students engaged in overuse of markers or inappropriate intonation. Nevertheless, most students reported an increase in their awareness of discourse marker usage even though it may take more time for them to be able to use them in a fluent manner.

1. はじめに

本稿は、日本の大学の夏期日本語コース中級クラスで行われた話す練習の一環として、日本語学習者にナラティブのディスコース・マーカーや接続詞を習得させるために実践した活動をまとめたものである。コースの始め

に、話す能力を測るためのインタビューを実施したところ、学生の多くが「ました／でした」で答えていた。これらの学生は日本に来たばかりであり、来日前に日本人との交流が少なかった。したがって、日本人が日常生活で使用する日本語に触れていなかったためか、初期の段階で導入される文型のみを使用していた学生が多かった。また、「～んですよ／～んですね／～んですけど」などのナラティブの文末ディスコース・マーカーをあまり使用しておらず、不自然さが感じられた。このように、語彙文法力が高くても、言葉の運用表現が不自然であれば、日本語会話能力のバランスがとれないということにもなりかねない。そこで、日本人が実際に使用しているナラティブの文末ディスコース・マーカーや接続詞の使い方に焦点を置いた活動を実施した。

2. 先行研究

ナラティブという問題を扱うには、様々な要因(話の構造／イントネーションなど)を考慮しなければいけないが、今回行った授業では文末ディスコース・マーカーと接続詞に焦点を置いた。

まず、実際の会話を用いて、日本人のナラティブを考察する。次の用例は、或る日本人(20代女性)が自分の経験を語ったものである。

用例1:

- 1 あ、去年の夏、ハワイに行ったんですね↑。で、そこで、
- 2 スキューバダイビング、スクューバを初めてやったんですね↑。
- 3 母と行ったんですけど。で、最初、海の中で、呼吸する練習した
- 4 んですよ。そしたら、マスク?マスクみたいなのがきつくて、
- 5 呼吸できなかったんです。で、私はギブアップして、でも、
- 6 母は平気でスイスイ泳いでいるんですよ!
- 7 なんか、なさけなくなっちゃって。

先行研究を基に、「～んです」「～んですけど」「～んですね」「～んですよ」が持つ機能に留意しつつ、上記のナラティブを分析してみる。Yoshimi (2001)の研究では、「～んです」は話に結束性をもたせるための接着剤のような役割を果たし、聞き手を話へ引きつける働きがあると述べている。Nakayama and Nakayama-Ichikawa (1997)によると、文末の「～んですけど」は、話の前置き情報を説明する手法として使用されると言われている。つまり、ナラティブの場合、「けど」は逆接を表す接続詞というよりも、ある出来事が起こるための背景の情報を描写しているのである。上の用例でみると、3行目で「～んですけど」が使用されているが、これは、5・6行目の「私はギブアップして、母はスイスイ泳いでいる」という事実の背景を示している。次に、「～んですね」は、次に来る話に聞き手を注目させる機能を持っている。つまり、1・2行目の使用例が示すように、話し手は「～んですね」を使うことによって、聞き手が話をきちんと理解しているかを確認しているのである。第2言語習得においても、峯他(2002)が、このようなナラティブの「～んですね」の習得の困難さを指摘している。「～んですよ」は、話し手が話の中で重要だと思ふことを聞き手に伝える働き

があるとされている(Yoshimi, 2001)。つまり、話し手が自分の感情や気持ちを表現するときに使用されるのである。上の用例では、「～んですよ」を使うことによって、話し手は海の中で呼吸できなかったにもかかわらず、話し手の母は平気で泳いでいたということに対する驚きの気持ちが示されているのである。

次に、接続詞であるが、今回の取り組みでは「で／それで」「そしたら」に焦点を置いた。Wehr (2003)の研究では、「で／それで」は一つのエピソードから次のエピソードへ移行する働きを持っていると述べている。「で／それで」によって、聞き手は、話し手が次のエピソードに移ることが理解できるのである。グループ・ジャマシイ(2001)によると、「そしたら」は「そうしたら」のくだけた言い方であり、新しい発見などを述べることに使われることが多いとされている。つまり、前の文で起きたことを受けて、事実の発見や話し手が期待しなかったことなどが続く場合に使用されるのである。

以下、これらの文末ディスコース・マーカーや接続詞の機能の分析を基に、中級クラスで実践した活動を報告する。

3. 授業内容

3.1 参加者

夏期日本語講座中級のコースに参加した9名の学生を対象とした。参加した学生は、男性5名・女性4名で、平均年齢は22.4歳、母語は英語・中国語などである。

3.2 活動の概要と目的

今回の活動の概要は表1に示す通りである。この活動を導入する前に、事前テストとして、学生をペアにし、1人5分間で自分の経験(おもしろかった話／恥ずかしかった話／怖かった話など)の話をさせた。また、事後テストは、中間口頭テストの一部として、1人5分間で別の経験の話をさせた。事前調査と中間口頭テストの間には、約3週間の期間を置いた。

表1. 授業活動の流れ

指導の流れ	内容
事前調査 (5分間)	事前テスト
第1回目 (50分間)	ナラティブにおける文末ディスコース・マーカーの使い方 (4.1を参照)
第2回目 (50分間)	ナラティブにおける接続詞の使い方 (4.2を参照)
第3回目～5回目 (50分間 X3)	自然な日本語で自分の経験を話すための練習1～3 (4.3～4.5を参照)
中間口頭テスト (5分間)	事後テスト

4. 授業の流れと観察

4.1 第1回目:ナラティブにおける文末ディスコース・マーカ―の使い方

まず最初に、日本人のナラティブに関しての学習者の意識化を図るために、2つのビデオ・クリップを視聴させた。その一つは、日本語を母語としない話者が面白かった経験を「ました／でした」などの文型を使って話している会話であり、もう一つは日本人が同じような経験をナラティブの文末ディスコース・マーカ―「～んですね／～んですけど／～んですよ」を用いて話している会話である。実際の活動としては、それらの2つの会話を転写したものを渡し、学生にその2つのビデオのナラティブにどのような違いがあるか、また、日本人のナラティブにはどのようなディスコース・マーカ―が見られるかを話し合わせた。次に、文末ディスコース・マーカ―の機能を導入するために、用例1のようなナラティブの会話を使用した。例えば、「～んですけど」の場合は、逆接のみならず、話の前置き情報を示す機能を持っていることを、実際の会話を用いて明示的に指導した。学生には、その日の宿題として、日本人がどのように自分の経験を話しているかに注目し、テレビやホームステイ先の家族の話し方を観察するように指示を与えた。これらの活動に対する反応として、一部の学生から、「日本人と話している時、このような表現を聞いたことがあるが、今までどのように使用したらよいのかが分からなかった」というコメントが得られた。

4.2 第2回目:ナラティブにおける接続詞の使い方

この日はナラティブに使われる接続詞「(それ)で／そしたら」などを導入した。また、学習者の年齢に近い女子大学生2人が楽しかった経験について話す会話をビデオに撮り、学生に視聴させた。その会話を転写したものも提示した。そのビデオの会話の中では、話の展開を示す「(それ)で」がよく使用されていた。新しい発見の機能を果たす「そしたら」なども使用されていた。このように、実際の会話を用いて、ナラティブにおける接続詞の使用法に注目させ、そのビデオの中の文末ディスコース・マーカ―の使用についても、どのような意味があるかについて話し合わせた。「～んですね」は男性も使うのかという質問が出るなど、学生たちは自分達が気づいたことについて活発に意見を発表していた。

4.3 第3回目:自然な日本語で自分の経験を話すための練習1

前2回の授業で学習したことを基に、今回は実際にナラティブの文末ディスコース・マーカ―や接続詞を使って、学生に自分たちの経験の話をさせる活動に移った。まず、復習も兼ねて、「ました」「でした」と書いてある話を用意し、それを文末ディスコース・マーカ―や接続詞を用いて話すという活動を実施した(資料参照)。

その後、「時差ぼけ」「カルチャーショック」などのテーマで話をさせてみたところ、「～んですね」「～ですよ」「～んですけど」などのディスコース・マーカ―を使おうとしている試みが見られた。しかし、文末イントネーションの面では、まだ日本人の使用するイントネーションになっていないため、不自然さが残った²⁾。例えば、「新宿に行ったんですね」のイントネーションが日本人ほど上がっていないため、不自然に聞こえたので、その前の「す」のピッチが下がることに気づかせ、繰り返し練習させた。学生によっては、ただ単に「～んですね」を連発する傾向にあったので、他の文末ディスコース・マーカ―「～ですよ／～んですけど」を再度復習させた。

4.4 第4回目:自然な日本語で自分の経験を話すための練習2

第4回目の授業では、日本人ボランティアを招いて、自分たちの楽しかった経験を話すタスクを実行した。まず、日本人の学生に、実際の彼らの楽しかった経験を話してもらい、そのナラティブに注目させた。その後で、学生に自分達の楽しかった経験の話をさせた。学生の中には、今までに学習した文型を使おうとしていた学生もいたが、日本人の言うことを理解することや理解されるように話すことに精一杯で、既習した文型にまで頭が回らない者もいたようであった。

4.5 第5回目:自然な日本語で自分の経験を話すための練習3

第5回目の授業では、ある事柄を依頼するために、既習のディスコース・マーカ―や接続詞を使用して、その理由や状況を説明するタスクを加えた活動を実施した。この活動では、多くの学生が、「～んですね／よ／けど」を使用して、依頼のための前置きをきちんと説明することができていた。例えば、「車を借りる」という依頼に対して、車が必要な理由、車が使えない理由(例:車が故障したんですね↑／両親を空港まで迎えに行かなくちゃいけないんですね)などを説明する際に、適切な文末ディスコース・マーカ―を使用していた³⁾。

5. 結果と考察

5.1 ナラティブの文末ディスコース・マーカ―の頻度と適切な使用数

表2は事前テストと事後テストにおける「～んですね／よ／けど」の頻度をまとめたものである。テスト時間は事前／事後テストとも、1人5分間であったが、同じ時間内で頻度を計るのは信頼度が低いので(ポーズ、言い淀みのため)、同じT単位³⁾の数で、ディスコース・マーカ―の頻度を測ることにした。例えば、「水曜日にそのレストランに行ったら、休みだったんですね」を2 T単位として数えた。一番少ないT単位数は36であったので、36 T単位数に設定した。T単位の範囲は36から82で、各学習者のナラティブ部分を対象とした。

また、文末ディスコース・マーカ―が適切に使用されているかという点に関しては、言語学を専攻している日本人と筆者の判断に依拠した。評定者間信頼度は $r = .88$ に達した。同意が得られなかったものは、2人で話し合って解決した。不適切な使用の例を挙げると、イントネーションの不自然さなどがある。また、1標本t検定(paired t-test)の結果、「～んですね」($t = 4.08, df = 8, p < .05$)、「～ですよ」($t = 3.16, df = 8, p < .05$)、「～んですけど」($t = 3.05, p < .05$)の習得には有意差が確認されたが、「～んです」($t = .23, df = 8, ns$)の習得には有意差は認められなかった。

表2が示すように、事前テストと比較すると、事後テストの方は、かなりその使用度が伸びている。特に「～んですね」における伸びが著しい。しかしながら、イントネーションの違いなどがあり、まだ適切に使えているとは言い難い。また、比較的初級の段階で導入される「～んですけど」は多少増加しているものの、まだあまり使用していないことがわかる。これは、「～んですけど」の役割である次のエピソードを説明するための情報背景を表す時にも、「～んですね」を使用しているからである。「～ですよ」に関しては、使用している学生としていない学生の間に差があるように思われる。

表2. 文末ディスコース・マーカの頻度 (適切な使用数/総数, カッコ内は%)

参加者	んです		んですよ		んですね		んですけど	
	事前	事後	事前	事後	事前	事後	事前	事後
A男(E)	1/1 (100)	0 (0)	1/1 (100)	5/5 (100)	0 (0)	5/7 (71)	0 (0)	2/2 (100)
B男(E)	1/1 (100)	3/5 (60)	0 (0)	8/8 (100)	0 (0)	4/6 (90)	0 (0)	1/1 (100)
C女(EC)	1/2 (50)	1/1 (100)	0 (0)	2/2 (100)	0 (0)	9/10 (90)	1/1 (100)	3/3 (100)
D女(E)	1/1 (100)	1/1 (100)	0 (0)	5/5 (100)	1/1 (100)	4/6 (66)	0 (0)	2/2 (100)
E女(E)	2/2 (100)	1/1 (100)	0 (0)	3/3 (100)	0 (0)	9/10 (90)	0 (0)	2/2 (100)
F女(T)	1/2 (50)	1/1 (100)	0 (0)	4/4 (100)	0 (0)	3/3 (100)	1/1 (100)	2/2 (100)
G男(E)	1/1 (100)	4/5 (80)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0/2 (0)	0 (0)	2/2 (100)
H男(E)	0 (0)	1/1 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2/2 (100)	0 (0)	3/3 (100)
I男(E)	1/1 (100)	1/1 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	7/8 (88)	1/1 (100)	1/2 (50)
合計	9/11	12/15	1/1	27/27	1/1	43/54	3/3	18/19
%の平均	77.78	82.22	11.11	66.67	11.11	77.22	33.33	94.44

注: E=英語, C=中国語, T=台湾語

5.2 個人データ分析⁴

ここでは、学生がどのように日本語のナラティブを習得したかを考察するために、実際に事前テストと事後テストのデータを比較してみる。

発話1a: 学生B／事前テスト⁵

- 1B: あの、日本に家族がいます。その家族は、あの、私の本当の
- 2: 家族じゃないんですが、あの、四年前、あの、初めて会った
- 3: ことがあって、
- 4A: はい。
- 5B: あの、そのときから、なかよくなりました。
- 6A: ああ、いいですね。
- 7B: あの、最初には、あの、お父さんはひきおと申します。
- 8: あの、彼は今、普通の仕事は、ほうげん、ほうけん(ほけん)
- 9: 会社に働いています。

10A: あ、そうですか。

- 11B: 趣味はミュージシャンです。だから、彼の洋服は、
- 12 ちょっと変だと思いました。

発話1b: 学生B／事後テスト

- 1B: 2年前、僕は日本にきたんですね↑。
／で、シアトルと東京は
- 2A: /うん。
- 3B: じゅう、よん時間ぐらいちがうからあ、
／xxxxxxxはじめたとき、
- 4A: /うーん。本当におせ、うん。
- 5B: 時差ぼけがあつたんですよ。
- 6A: ああ、そうですか。
- 7B: 朝に、早く起きて、
／()昼に眠くなって、かつたんです。
- 8A: /うん
- 9B: 調子、ええ、体の調子が悪かつたんですね↓。
／あの、その

- 10A: /大変ですね。
 11B: 時、私は留学して、
 / (.) 毎日通うために電車に乗ったんです。
 12A: /うん。 うん。
 13B: あ、でえ、朝にいつも眠くなかったんですが、
 / 昼に眠く、
 14A: /うん。
 15B: 眠くなりました
 / ね↑。(.) あのお、電車に乗る時、
 16A: /ああ、そうですか。
 17B: /あ、いつも空席がなかったんですから、
 18A: /うん。 うん。
 19B: 立たなければならなかったんです
 / よ。
 20A: /うん、大変ですね。
 21B: あ、ある日、私は本当に眠かったんです。
 / でも、
 22A: /うん。
 23B: 空席がなかった立った、立ったんですよ。
 / でも日本人は
 24A: /うん。
 25B: 電車に、いつも寝るんですよね。
 / だから、私は眠くなってえ、
 26A: /うん。そうですね。
 27B: 眠ったんです / よ。
 28A: /うん。
 29B: 立っていた時、はあ、(.) だから、あ、うん、その時、
 30 中央線に乗って、
 31A: うん。
 32B: 揺れていたんですね↓。
 / (笑い) で、わ、わ、僕は寝ていた時、
 33A: /うん(笑い)。
 34B: 大きく揺れて揺れて、
 / 揺れたんですよ / あのお、そしたら、
 35A: /うん。 / (笑い)
 36B: 私は立っていた時、
 / 電車の中に、 / 床にたお、
 37A: /うん。 / うん。
 38B: たおれたんですよ。
 39A: ええ、本当ですか。(笑い)
 40B: 私は起きた時、
 / 他のみんなはわれて、笑われて、
 41: /うん。
 42B: 笑われたん / ですよ。
 43A: / (笑い)
 44B: あ、本当にはずかしかったんですねえ↓。

事前テストでは、学生Bは聞き手に対して「ます／です」体を主に使っている。終助詞が殆ど見られない上に、聞き

手を話に引き付けるような感じはなく、説明のような口調になっている。

事後テストでは、イントネーションは多少不自然ではあるが、様々なディスコース・マーカースが使えるようになっていくことが観察できる。事前テストに比べて、聞き手の反応も増加している。これは終助詞の働きによるものであろう。Tanaka(2000)が述べているように、終助詞「ね」は、聞き手が話し手の話に参加するように、話し手の次のターンで聞き手の反応を促す働きを持っている。発話1bが示すように、終助詞の後に聞き手の反応が自然に挿入されている。しかしながら、9・32・44行目に見られるように、「～んですね」のイントネーションが下降しており、不自然さが感じられる。15行目では、「ました」に戻りつつも、終助詞「ね」を使おうとしている様子が窺えるが、「～んですね」とは違い、かえって不自然になってしまっている。また、17行目では、「～んです」の使い過ぎが見られる。

接続詞の用法という観点からみると、1・13・32行目にあるように、学生Bは前の文と後ろの文をつなぐ働きを持つ接続詞「で」を正しく使うことができていく。また、34行目では、「そしたら」を適切に使用している。つまり、電車に揺られているという前の文で起こったことを受けて、電車の床に倒れてしまったという学生Bが期待しなかったことが起きたということをうまく表現している。

以上のように、終助詞「ね」のイントネーションが下降してしまうという現象が見受けられるものの、ディスコース・マーカースや話のエピソードを結ぶ接続詞を使うことによって、被験者が聞き手を自分の話に引き込んで結束性を持つ話にしようとしていることが窺える。

6. まとめと今後の課題

本稿では、日本語学習者を対象として、ナラティブのディスコース・マーカースを習得するための初期段階の教育活動について述べてきたが、ここで、効果があつた点と改善すべき点について報告することにする。

まず、効果があつた点は、実際の日本人のナラティブを紹介することにより、学習者がネイティブらしい話し方に注意を払うようになったことである。第2言語習得理論において、Schmidt (1993)は、「言語を自分のものとして習得するには気づきがその第一歩である」と述べている。本研究では、ディスコース・マーカースがある文とない文を比較することにより、学生がメタ知識としてディスコース・マーカースの大切さに気づいた。日本国内という恵まれた環境を最大限に利用し、ホームステイ先の家族の話し方やテレビなどのメディアを通して、より自然な話し方に留意するよう指導したことも、学生への意識化を強化する上で役立ったと思われる。

一方、改善点としては、日本人のナラティブの特徴について、学生の意識をさらに高めるために、観察ノートのような宿題を出してもよかったのではないかとことが挙げられる。また、ナラティブにおける個人差も考慮すべき点であり、話し手の性別や年齢、聞き手がだれであるか、発話の行われる場所といったコンテクストを考慮に入れた教材を用意することも大切である。結論として、以上で述べた改善点を考慮した教材作成や、様々な場面での実際のナラティブの特徴に気づかせるような活動を取り入れて行くべきであろう。

謝辞: 本稿執筆にあたって、有益で具体的な示唆を下された査読者の方、校正の為に尽力してくださった望月美宇

氏と編集者の皆さんに感謝申し上げます。無論、本稿の誤りや理解不足はすべて筆者の責任である。

【注】

- 1 実際, Narita (2003) では, 日本語学習者は日本語母語話者に比べ, 文末の「ね」のイントネーションが下がる傾向があることが観察されている。
- 2 この件に関して, 査読者から「～んです」の初期段階の指導が関連しているのではないかという指摘があった。確かに, 「～んです」に関しての学習過程を総合的に見て, 初期段階でどのような状況や例で導入されているのか, 後の段階で, ナラティブの文末ディスコース・マーカーとして導入することができるのかなど, 「～んです」の習得過程を教師側が共通の認識を持つことは有意義であるかもしれない。
- 3 Crookes (1990) による T 単位は「付属または埋め込まれた従属節を含む主節」と定義されている。また, 日本語での T 単位を初めて応用したハリントン¹は, 日本語の T 単位を 'nuclear sentence' としている。最小のものの例としては, ①動詞終止形 ②形容詞終止形 ③名詞+だ, という3つのタイプを示している (Harrington 1983:52)。
- 4 データの記号は以下の通りである。
/: 発話の重なりあい (.): 短いポーズ xxx: 聞き取り不可能の発話
↑: 上昇イントネーション ↓: 下降イントネーション
- 5 相手の A は B のクラスメートであり, 事前事後テストとも同じペアで話をさせた。これは, 表 1 にあるように, サマー・コースでの中間口頭テストの一部となっているため, 相手がクラスメートとなった。相手側の学習者 A も適当な相づちができていたかどうかなど, 聞き手としての評価がされていた。

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【資料】

驚いた話

(「」の中を空欄しておいて, 適当な表現を言わせる。)

- 話し手: この間, スーパーに買い物に行きました→「行ったんですね↑」
- 聞き手: はい。／ああ。
- 話し手: 「で」, 買い物終わったので, レジで待っていました。→「待っていたんですけど」
- 聞き手: はい。
- 話し手: 「そしたら」, 後ろで, 日本人らしいカップルが待っている間, キスしていました。→「キスしていたんですよ!」
- 聞き手: へえ。ふうん。
- 話し手: 人前でよくやるなあと思いました。→「思ってたんですけど」
- 聞き手: そうですね。
- 話し手: 「そしたら」それは私の大学の友だちでした。→「だったんですよ!」
- 聞き手: ええ?
- 話し手: 本当にびっくりしたんですよ。

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Language minority students coping with school life in Japan

Keywords

family language, school language, language minorities, academic performance

There are increasing numbers of language minority students in Japan whose parents come from other countries. Even when these students appear to be fluent in Japanese, their academic performance tends to be lower than their Japanese peers. Difficulties arise not only from limitations in Japanese, but also from limitations in students' family language. Moreover, these issues are societal and must be dealt with at the school and community level. This report outlines the situation nationwide and then looks at the support system for language minority students in Kochi City. Particular interest lies in comparing the approach taken in Kochi City, where the number of language minority students and amount of resources dedicated towards them is limited, with nationwide trends.

日本の学校に通う在日外国人の子どもの数は、増加の一途をたどっている。一見流暢な日本語を話す外国人児童生徒でも、日本人児童生徒より学力が低い傾向にある。彼らの学力不振は、日本語能力の不足が原因となっているだけでなく、家庭で使用する母語の能力とも関係がある。これは社会問題であり、学校や地域が取り組むべき問題である。本論ではまず全国的な状況を概観し、高知県高知市で行った聞き取り調査をもとに、高知市における外国人児童生徒に対する支援システムを紹介する。特に、外国人児童生徒数が少なく、教育機関や指導者にも限りのある高知市の取り組みと、全国的取り組みとの比較に焦点をあてる。

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THE NUMBER of children whose first language (L1) is not Japanese has been increasing at schools in Japan. In and around 1975 a large number of political refugees arrived from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Then, China returnees who were left behind during WWII started coming back, and in the early 80s, a wave of South American migrant workers arrived (Ishii, 1998). As their children entered the school system in Japan, a growing need for language support emerged. As of 2005, as many as 20,692 students needed Japanese language assistance (MEXT, 2006). This study first outlines the current situation and indicates the need for support in both Japanese and in students' family languages. Then, field research in Kochi City is reported. Children whose L1 is not Japanese are referred to as *language minority students* or LMS(s) in this study.

Academic performance and education for language minority students

In the past, LMSs were often assimilated into Japanese culture. They had to learn Japanese without any consideration of their L1 (Sato, 2003, pp. 140-141). Recently, however, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has recognized the important role of L1 in students' academic and emotional adjustment (MEXT, 2003). Some schools in Aichi, Shizuoka, and Gunma, where many Brazilian students are enrolled, offer classes in Portuguese and Portuguese lessons (Sato, 2003, p. 197). In spite of these positive developments, some LMSs stop attending school; one of the reasons is that they have difficulty academically (Sato, 2003, p. 155).

Even Japanese-born LMSs who speak fluent Japanese experience difficulty, with 60% of such students scoring far below average around the time they enter high school (as cited in Anzai et al., 2006). LMSs do not benefit from the education system as much as other Japanese children do.

Language minority students' academic performance and L1

According to Statistics Canada (2001), in Canada, LMSs in grade 1 score 20% lower in math and reading skills and almost 30% lower in writing skills than other students. At the age of 10 or 11, however, they catch up with other students. Similarly, academic achievement of Asian immigrant children in the UK is not lower after a certain period of time after arrival (as cited in Oguchi, 1993).

When an LMS does not perform well, some may assume that it is due to lack of exposure to Japanese at home. However, many elementary and junior high school teachers believe that in the process of developing L1 at home, children also acquire concepts that facilitate Japanese acquisition and subject learning (Sato, 2003, pp. 198-202). Cummins (1984) argues that there is an underlying cognitive and academic proficiency which is common in L1 and L2. Cummins suggests that "experience with either language can promote development of the proficiency underlying both languages, given adequate motivation and exposure to both either in school or in the wider environment" (p. 143). Therefore, exposure to L1 in appropriate quantity and quality should contribute to academic achievement (Sato, 2003, pp. 198-202).

Language minority students' L1 use at home

The problem that LMSs face aside from the Japanese language, is that few parents have the time or resources to provide the necessary L1 input. Most of these parents work under unstable conditions (Ishii, 1998). Even migrant workers from South America who strongly hope that their children maintain their culture and L1, can not really take time to teach their children how to read or write at home because they are tired from long hours of demanding labor (Shimizu & Shimizu, 2001, pp. 207-209).

Another difficulty facing LMSs is that some of them have a negative attitude toward learn-

ing their L1. Vietnamese children in Japan, for instance, tend to regard the Vietnamese language as a useless *uncool* language. Some eventually stop listening to their parents or even lose respect for them. These negative images arise because in Japanese schools and society Vietnamese culture is not recognized or respected (Kawakami, 2001, pp. 261-264). In other countries too, children tend to be ashamed of their parents' language and culture when that language and culture has a negative image in society (Nakajima, 2007, pp. 184-187). Nakajima (2007, pp. 52-55) emphasizes the importance of L1 for family bonding and recommends that parents raise children using L1 so that they can fully express themselves with confidence.

Language minority students' L1 at schools and in society

In Japan, Japanese is the politically, economically, and culturally dominant language. In order for LMSs to keep their L1 in such a monolingual environment, schools and society must be supportive. In Canada, for example, the government helps various ethnic groups to maintain their heritage language. Likewise in Australia, the LOTE program (language other than English) offers all Australian students minority language classes at school. (Nakajima, 2007, p. 189).

In Japan, unfortunately, bilingualism is still considered a luxury that LMSs cannot afford. Japanese schools focus on "ensuring basic academic skills and educational credentials for the students so that they will achieve a minimum level of economic independence and security in the future" (Kanno, 2006, p. 11), which is of course necessary. However, school and society should also regard students' bilingual and bicultural background as an advantage for their future. LMSs should, and can, be educated to be culturally broad-minded bilingual international leaders for Japan's future.

Field Research in Kochi City

This paper presents qualitative field research conducted in Kochi City from July of 2004 through January 2005. The author interviewed teachers involved in education for LMSs from kindergarten through junior high school as well as personnel from the Kochi board of education. The author also spoke with LMSs and other involved members of the community at two local events held for LMSs and their parents in Kochi City.

Background and research focus

Kochi prefecture has a relatively small number of LMSs, placing 29th out of 47 prefectures. There are 75 LMSs and 58 out of those 75 are from Chinese families (MEXT, 2004). Most of them live in Kochi City. This research investigates whether or not Kochi City, having fewer LMSs, has responded to broader trends in the field and adopted similar ways of dealing with LMSs as areas with higher numbers.

The system for language minority students in Kochi City

There are 5 elementary schools and one junior high school that have full-time JSL (Japanese as a second language) teachers. They can assist LMSs regardless of their length of their stay in Japan, even for Japanese-born LMSs. The board of education also has four additional JSL teachers who are available to visit other schools on request. Of those four teachers, one is a Japanese-English bilingual and another is a Chinese-Japanese bilingual from China.

The system at Elementary School U.

Elementary School U. has been a leading school since 1995 because they have always had the highest number of Chinese LMSs (15 to 20 students). In 2004, they had two JSL teachers, one of whom spoke Chinese. Most Chinese LMSs were born in Japan or have lived in Japan for a long time. In spite of their fluent Japanese in everyday conversation, some have not developed enough Japanese ability to understand subject matter and they usually study to improve their understanding in class in an after-school program.

This after-school program has also been providing a Chinese lesson once a week for over ten years. Some students have difficulty communicating with their parents in Chinese and others resist speaking their family language. The teachers hope that those students continue their interest in China and think of China as a special place for their families, as well as maintain their Chinese abilities, though most of them reportedly forget as they grow older. Chinese is also taught in grade 3 and 4 and used everyday in school. All signs, announcements, and programs for school events are provided in Japanese and Chinese. Japanese students are also required to use Chinese for announcements, making posters, and so on. This way, hopefully Japanese and Chinese students alike will appreciate the advantages that

bilingualism brings rather than viewing it as a stigma. This also enables LMSs' parents to get involved, and it improves understanding among Japanese parents.

The system at Junior High School U.

Most Elementary School U. graduates go to Junior High School U. From 1995 to 2002, there was a designated JSL teacher, but since 2003, a regular subject teacher has been assigned to support LMSs in addition to her regular duties. In 2004, a social studies teacher who spoke Chinese was in charge. At junior high school, the after-school program gets much smaller because motivating students to come gets more difficult. Japanese-born LMSs who appear to have no problem with Japanese do not realize that they can perform much better with a little help. They have adjusted to Japanese school life, so they would rather do something else after school than study in the segregated after-school program. Chinese is not taught in the after-school program, but is an elective subject for all students.

Though the designated teacher is not trained in JSL, as a junior high school teacher, she can give LMSs reliable advice for their school work or choice of high school. Moreover, as an integrated member of the school faculty, she is in a better position than a designated JSL teacher to elicit understanding and cooperation from other teachers and students. For instance, she organized a school assembly to introduce the background of LMSs' families, most of whom are China returnees, and the necessity of support. A guest lecturer was also brought in.

The board of education has also taken several steps to assist LMSs for their future. Extra classes are provided at the board of education by tutors once a week. Additionally, interpreters can be provided to mediate between teachers and parents when discussing students' future. Report cards can also be translated. However, these services are only provided in English and Chinese.

Bilingual education for language minority students in Kochi City

Systematic instruction to maintain LMSs' L1 is offered only to Chinese LMSs at Elementary School U. Other schools are able to request the assistance of two bilingual JSL teachers from the board of education but they are not able to offer regular language lessons and few students maintain their family language. Not maintaining L1 causes

various problems when parents do not speak Japanese. Later in life, when making decisions concerning things like employment and marriage, LMSs have sought advice from their former JSL teachers before their parents. This gap between children and parents is unfortunate.

In order to fill the gap, various bilingual services for LMSs' parents are offered. As introduced earlier, translation and interpretation into Chinese and English is available upon request. In addition, a bilingual meeting was held for Chinese parents regarding high schools, entrance examinations, or tuitions. The meeting was also recorded for busy parents who were absent. They advertised this event widely even at elementary schools because it is important for parents to know the Japanese education system to provide valuable advice to their children. They should also plan ahead financially. The problem is that LMSs' parents who do not speak Chinese or English cannot benefit from these initiatives. The board of education has been trying to make a database of local bilingual people of other minority languages so that translation can be provided where required.

The relationship between Japanese students and language minority students

In an interview with the researcher, the JSL teachers described LMSs' behavior around other Japanese students. Some, who are always active in the after-school program, are withdrawn in class with other Japanese students. Sato (1999, p. 85) emphasizes the importance of after-school programs as a place for LMSs to express themselves. After-school programs surely play an important role as a place for LMSs to express themselves but the program should help them adjust to their regular classes rather than just providing an escape.

In one case, a South American student was very cheerful, popular, and proud of her culture for the first few months after arrival. At some point though, she began to receive negative feedback and increasingly started to suppress her activity, feeling that she should not stand out too much. She seemed to have a hard time balancing her internal personality with external pressures.

LMSs have the potential to take an active role as leaders at school. For example, the author attended an annual event for LMSs organized and carried out by four older Chinese students. Many of the students were already friends but they welcomed new LMSs who they had not met before, and all participants became close very quickly.

Two students from South America showed a traditional dance from their country and one of them also gave a presentation about her country. At this event, LMSs were able to make important contributions that were not appreciated by their Japanese peers in class. Many LMSs seem to possess leadership skills that should be appreciated in their regular class also.

Conclusion and implications

In Kochi, despite the small population of LMSs, bilingual education and support is provided. However the problems are that firstly, support is provided almost exclusively in Chinese or English so other LMSs do not have the same access. Secondly, while Elementary School U has a well-developed support system, students at other schools have very limited access to JSL teachers, let alone L1 support.

Chinese students have a well-established community which includes older and more experienced students and graduates. Some of the Chinese support staff members come from this background. Lack of role models makes school life and decision making more difficult for LMSs in Japan (Shimizu & Shimizu, 2001, pp. 58-59). In Kochi, however, older Chinese students can act as role models for all LMSs and offer valuable advice. Most of them are well adjusted to Japanese school and society, so they can act as a bridge between other LMSs and Japanese people.

Additionally, the difficulties that LMSs face are not solvable in isolation. The issues are not simply linguistic, between JSL teachers and LMSs, but cultural, involving the whole school and community. The approach taken by Junior High School U, designating a regular school teacher to be in charge of support, is preferable. This way, the issues are more likely to be addressed at the school level, than atomized between LMSs and JSL teachers.

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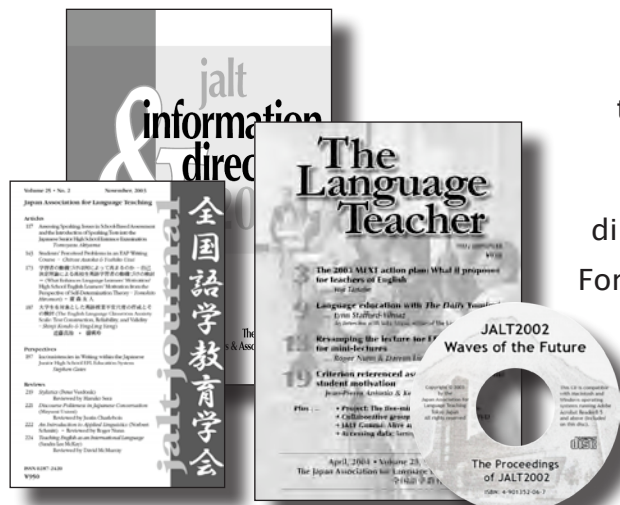
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IN THE first of four activities this month, Andrew Brady provides an interactive, collaborative, and fun writing task. Next, Ben Shearon shows how circumlocution can be used to train communication skills. Following that, Michael Kistler introduces an activity that helps students write more easily and with more variety. Finally, Barry Hall offers up a creativity-boosting conversation exercise making use of picture-based dialogs.

An interactive and creative writing activity

Andrew Brady

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Quick Guide

Key words: Interactive writing, collaborative learning

Learner English level: Intermediate or above

Learner maturity level: High school and up

Preparation time: None

Activity time: 90 minutes

Materials: None

My students often say they want to talk to a lot of people and make friends in my writing class. In the following activity, students get to have fun, work with their peers, be creative, and have lots of peer learning opportunities. This activity, based on a fairly well-known writing exercise created by British Council trainer Nik Peachey (2006), can be used as a single 90-minute lesson, or as part of a series of lessons on stories and creative writing.

Procedure

Step 1: Put the students into groups of four or five sitting around a table.

Step 2: Tell the students that they are going to practice writing stories, and that first they need to think of a main character.

Step 3: Ask the students to make a list of the following points:

- The character's name
- Four words that describe the character's appearance
- Three words to describe the personality
- The character's hobby
- Something or someone the character loves
- Something or someone the character hates
- Something the character is scared of
- Encourage students to draw a picture if they want to

Step 4: On the board, write the first sentence of the story. Start with something like, "It was a beautiful spring morning", or "it was a cold, dark winter night." Students write the sentence in their notebooks.

Step 5: Next, write "...was" on the board. The students complete the sentence with their character's name, and then add one or two more sentences.

Step 6: After a period of time, have the students pass their notebooks to the person on their left. Each student must now read their classmates' writing and continue the story by adding two or three more sentences.

Step 7: Repeat step 6 two or three more times until each students has between 10 and 15 sentences. I encourage everyone to write quickly at this stage (15 minutes total).

Step 8: Have each group read aloud all their stories and take about 10 minutes to choose the best one.

Step 9: Once the students have chosen the best story in their group, tell them that you want to find the best story in the whole class. In a set period of time (about 15 minutes), have each group rewrite their best story on paper you provide. Make sure they include a title, detailed story description, and a good ending. Finally, have the students proofread and check for spelling and grammar mistakes.

Step 10: After the time limit expires, have the groups swap papers. Their task is now to read another group's story, write a comment, and give it a score out of 10. Pass the papers around until each group reads all of the stories.

Step 11: The groups get back their original story, read the comments, and add up their total score. Find the winner and end the class on a round of applause.

Conclusion

This class has worked extremely well as part of a university writing course. I like to do it in the 3rd or 4th week of a course. It really helps to create a lively, positive atmosphere and better interaction among students. It provides some really good conditions for collaboration and peer teaching as well as being a great, unthreatening introduction to peer review. Classes tend to be very lively and a lot of fun. One crucial aspect of this is classroom management, especially in getting the groups to finish at the same time. Using a stopwatch and providing countdown warnings ("one more minute") are good ways of accomplishing this.

Reference

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Training communication skills: Circumlocution

Ben Shearon

Miyagi Prefectural Board of Education

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Quick Guide

Key words: Circumlocution, communication strategies, oral communication, games

Learner English level: All

Learner maturity level: All

Preparation time: Approximately 30 minutes per activity

Class time: 15-30 minutes per session, several sessions recommended

Materials: Cue cards, timers, scrap paper

I have recently begun using activities based on popular board games such as *Pictionary* and *Taboo* to help students practice circumlocution communication strategies. This came about after trying a Pictionary-style drawing game with 2nd-year university students and realizing that the ones who were best at getting their meaning across through drawings also happened to be the best at communicating in English. This led to the hypothesis that playing games to develop students' circumlocution strategies will make them more effective communicators in English.

Three activities that can be used for circumlocution training are introduced below (*Picture Guessing*, *Don't Say It*, and *Don't Say It Plus*). These activities are more effective if the purpose of and reasoning behind them is explained to students beforehand. A closing session with students talking briefly about their reactions, progress, and difficulties is also a productive thing to do.

Procedure

Step 1: Brainstorm and create a list of words for the activity.

Step 2: Print the list of cues onto small cue cards

(see Appendix). Alternatively print several of them onto A4 paper and cut them up.

Step 3: Explain to students that they will be working on their communication skills during the activity. Explain circumlocution and its importance to language learners. Provide examples of how to explain an unknown word using familiar language.

Step 4: Put students into groups of four to eight students (five or six is ideal).

Step 5: Provide each group with a set of cue cards (for the *Picture Guessing* activity, each group will also need a timer and some scrap paper).

Step 6: Explain the rules of the game. Students play in sequence: each player draws a cue card and must communicate the meaning of the card to the others by drawing pictures (*Picture Guessing*) or speaking English (*Don't Say It, Don't Say It Plus*). For *picture guessing*, it can be helpful to have a time limit for each word, in which case students use a timer. In the case of *Don't Say It*, students should not say the cue word. When playing *Don't Say It Plus*, students should not say the cue word or the other key words listed on the card. The other students try to guess the cue word, and the student who successfully does so receives the card.

Step 7: Do a demonstration, either drawing on the board (for *Picture Guessing*) or explaining in English (for *Don't Say It* or *Don't Say It Plus*).

Step 8: As students begin playing, walk around and make sure that groups understand how to play and are on task.

Step 9: Stop the game after a predetermined length of time (I recommend between 15 and 30

minutes). Students count how many cards they have to find the winner.

Step 10: Conduct a quick debrief and review the objectives of the activity (to develop circumlocution communication skills) and ask for student feedback on their impressions.

Notes

Some students find these activities very challenging, so it can be helpful for the teacher to demonstrate several examples for the class before starting.

The three activities develop the same circumlocution skills and awareness, so it can be useful to use them several times and monitor whether students find them easier as time goes on.

As these activities are done in groups, it is important for you to monitor that students are on task: reminders to work in English are occasionally required.

Conclusion

My students originally found the activities challenging, but with practice they were able to communicate concepts much more easily in both picture and spoken form. At the beginning, several students froze and abandoned the task, possibly due to a lack of confidence or communication skills. After several practice sessions, this was no longer observed. Students who were the least able at the start made the biggest gains.

Appendix: Cue cards

tree

Cue card for *picture guessing* and *don't say it*

tree

tree, forest, leaf

Cue card for *don't say it plus*

Paraphrasing short texts in the EFL classroom

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Quick Guide

Key words: Paraphrasing, vocabulary, parts of speech, synonym, collocation

Learner English level: High beginner and above

Learner maturity level: University

Preparation time: 5-10 minutes

Activity time: 45 minutes+

Materials: Handouts

The following activity is intended primarily to help students write more easily and with increased variety. As secondary objectives, students will be able to increase their vocabulary, recognize parts of speech, and better identify synonyms. Although this activity is intended for a low-intermediate group, it can be done across all levels and tailored to fit individual student needs. Paraphrasing can be used as a first step toward easier and more fluid written communication, providing students with a means to systematically increase vocabulary, analyze the meaning of words, examine collocation, and recognize the function of individual words in a sentence. Most importantly, students should be reminded that paraphrasing allows them to vary their writing and express themselves differently without actually changing the meaning of the material being used. The key for this particular activity is that students are provided with a step-by-step framework that is initially facilitated by you. Subsequently, students can replicate the steps as they work on their own outside of class.

Preparation

Step 1: Choose or create a text to be paraphrased (see Appendix A for a sample).

Step 2: Make copies of the necessary handouts for students (see Appendices B-E for samples).

Procedure

Step 1: Students read a short text twice (such as the one in Appendix A) and turn their papers over. **Step 2:** Students talk with a partner about what they can remember from the text. If working alone, they can make notes about what they remember.

Step 3: Identify certain words or phrases for the students to find and underline in the text (see Appendix A).

Step 4: The students consider the context of the words by noting the key words that come before and after the underlined words (see Appendix B). It is important here to stress that knowing the meaning of each word is not necessary; students should try to do this as intuitively as possible.

Step 5: Using the same words, students next identify each word's part of speech (see Appendix C). If they are unable to do this from the context, they may consult a dictionary.

Step 6: Students next try to think of synonyms for each of these words (see Appendix D).

Step 7: Students then write their own version of the original paragraph using the new information from each of the steps (see Appendix E). If possible, they should write the new version without looking at the original text.

Step 8: (optional): Students do the activity again outside of class for additional practice.

Conclusion

Due to the inherent difficulties in producing written work in a second language, this activity gives students an opportunity to write successfully within a structure that is easy for them to understand. Students are also in a position to realize that relatively minor changes in vocabulary and word choice are enough to change a piece of writing significantly without altering its original meaning. In addition to improvements in their confidence and writing abilities, students will also benefit from exposure to language elements such as synonyms and parts of speech. Depending on their level, they will be able to experiment with various word combinations and expand their vocabulary at the same time.

Appendix A: Text and word identification sample handout

1. Read this passage from "Farewell, My Lovely" by Raymond Chandler:

I brought out my nearly-full bottle of whiskey and put it on the arm of my chair. Her eyes fixed immediately on the bottle in a greedy stare. I was right - a little whiskey was going to help me again here. She got up, went out to the kitchen and came back with two dirty glasses. I poured her enough whiskey to make her fly. She took it hungrily and put it down her throat like medicine. I poured her another. Her eyes were brighter already.

2. Find these words and phrases in the text and underline them:

- brought out
- fixed
- greedy
- got up
- enough
- hungrily
- like medicine
- arm
- immediately
- stare
- poured
- make her fly
- her throat
- brighter

Appendix B: Sample context handout

What are the key words that come before and after the underlined words?

Appendix C: Parts of speech sample handout

What parts of speech are the underlined words? Please write the correct part of speech next to each of the words.

Appendix D: Synonym creation sample handout

Find synonyms or words with similar meanings for the underlined words. Please write these next to the following words.

Appendix E: Rewriting sample handout

Now rewrite the paragraph, using different words instead of the underlined words in the text.

Picture-based dialogues

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Quick Guide

Key words: Picture, dialogue, cartoon, conversation, role-playing

Learner English level: Intermediate and up

Learner maturity: Junior high school and up

Activity time: 30-60 minutes

Materials: Photocopied cartoons or other illustrations

Skits and/or roleplaying are widely used in ESL teaching, but students often have trouble getting started or coming up with original ideas. The following activity is intended as a creativity-boosting conversation exercise. The plan involves students creating and performing their own dialogues based on pictures you provide (see the Appendix for an example).

Procedure

Step 1: Photocopy some cartoons and remove the captions. *The New Yorker* magazine is a good source, as their cartoons often show people in ordinary situations with one odd or bizarre detail—an excellent boost to creativity.

Step 2: Divide students into pairs or groups of three, depending on the number of characters in the cartoon.

Step 3: Pass out copies of the cartoons, a different one to each pair or group, and describe the assignment as follows: Depending on how long you want the conversations to be, allow students anywhere from 20 to 30 minutes to prepare. Encourage students to spend some of their time practicing and getting comfortable with the dialogue, not just writing.

Step 4: When the students have finished preparing, ask the first pair or group to come forward and act out their conversation.

Step 5: After the students make their presentations, comment briefly on some of the good points and mention any areas that could be improved upon. Since accuracy is not the main focus of this exercise, only point out serious grammatical errors.

Conclusion

I have observed that the conversations produced are generally simple, natural, original, and often very entertaining. The students have been working with each other for 20-30 minutes and have had time to get comfortable with each other and the dialogues. Not looking at a written script also contributes to naturalness and spontaneity. A variation is to use magazine photos or other images of two or three people in dramatic situations instead of cartoons. In any case, it gives the students a good jumping-off point for developing their creativity.

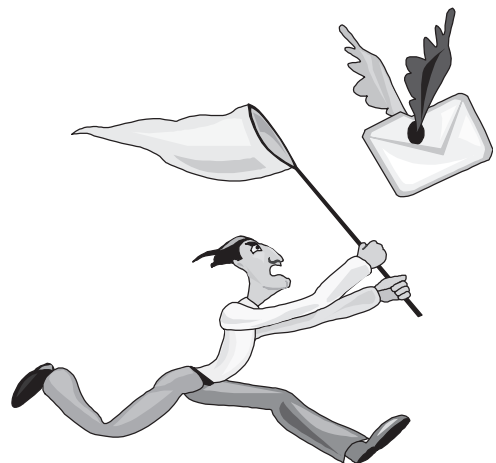
Appendix: Sample dialog created from a captionless cartoon

Two university students were given a captionless cartoon from *The New Yorker*, depicting two men talking at a bar. One of the men has a tail.

- Student 1: Hi, Max, how's it going?
- Student 2: Pretty good. And you? Is your cold better?
- Student 1: Much better, thanks.
- Student 2: That's good.
- Student 1: Hey, Max, um...
- Student 2: What is it?
- Student 1: I'm sorry, but I couldn't help noticing your, um, tail.
- Student 2: Oh, yeah. Is it very obvious?
- Student 1: No, not at all. But I couldn't help noticing it.
- Student 2: I know...I have to do something about it.
- Student 1: Do something? Like what?
- Student 2: I think I need to buy different pants.
- Student 1: Where did you get it?
- Student 2: It was there when I woke up this morning.
- Student 1: Wow. That must have been a surprise.
- Student 2: My wife was very surprised.

- Student 1: I bet!
- Student 2: She said she kind of liked it, though.
- Student 1: Really? She likes it?
- Student 2: She thinks it's sexy and it makes me look younger. What do you think?
- Student 1: Um...I guess it's not really my style.
- Student 2: Really? Would you prefer a shorter one?
- Student 1: Definitely, I'd prefer a much shorter one.
- Student 2: Maybe I should have it shortened.
- Student 1: No, this one really suits you. The length is perfect.
- Student 2: Do you really think so?
- Student 1: Yes, honestly. It's very fashionable.
- Student 2: Thanks!
- Student 1: Oh, look at the time! Sorry, I have to meet my brother at the train station!
- Student 2: OK, see you.
- Student 1: See you.

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THIS MONTH'S column begins with a review of *Foundations Reading Library*, a series of graded readers designed to increase confidence through improving vocabulary and reading fluency, by Fiona MacGregor. Quint Oga-Baldwin then provides a thorough evaluation of *Fifty-Fifty: Third Edition, Book 1*, a basic English skills textbook with an emphasis on developing general purpose speaking and listening abilities.

Foundations Reading Library

[Rob Waring and Maurice Jamall. Boston: Thomson ELT, 2007. Library Set: Levels 1-7 (42 books), pp. 16-32. ¥23,100. ISBN: 978-9-0000-0767-7.]

Reviewed by Fiona MacGregor,
Josai International University

The benefits of extensive reading have been widely promoted in the pages of this publication as a highly effective method not just to increase vocabulary and reading fluency, but also to enable students to acquire the depth of knowledge necessary to gain confidence in using the language (Waring, 2006). As a result, more and more teachers are introducing reading programs into their classes. However, what do you do when you have students whose English is so weak that they find even the typical starter level readers of the major ELT publishers (with 200-250 headwords) too difficult? Rob Waring and Maurice

Jamall have provided the answer. The novels in the first three levels of their seven-level *Foundations Reading Library* series use only 75, 100, and 150 headwords respectively, and range in length from 500 to 910 words. These can provide reading material accessible even to those most lacking in confidence to tackle a whole book in English. Levels 4 to 7 use from 200 to 350 headwords, increasing gradually in length from 1,270 to 2,500 words. Currently, there are six titles at each level.

These books are aimed at younger learners, and the characters in the novels are high school students who live in a small American town. This did not appear to prevent my university students from enjoying them. Many of the plots revolve around ethical problems, like cheating, disobeying parents, or bullying, that all teenagers can relate to, while others are adventure stories common to juvenile literature and still enjoyable for older readers. I have used them successfully with 1st and 2nd-year non-English majors who enjoyed the stories and never expressed any sense of being talked down to.



A Before You Read page at the start of each book introduces key vocabulary as well as the main characters, through pictures. The vocabulary is recycled in other readers to maximize exposure to the new words, while some of the same characters appear in every book. For those who prefer to use class readers, the series is supported by Activity Books and Lesson Planners. The 48-page *Activity Book* for Level 1 has a chapter devoted to each of its six titles, comprising two pages each for vocabulary and grammar practice, as well as supplementary readings and phonics, and ending with a progress test, thus providing comprehensive support for those beginning to learn to read in English. Audio tapes and CDs are available for each level with readings of all the books, which should appeal to auditory learners.

Nuttall (1996, p. 131) provides the acronym SAVE as a criteria for choosing materials for an extensive reading program, with S standing for

short, A for *appealing*, V for *varied*, and E for *easy*. I would say the *Foundations Reading Library* scores three out of four, lacking only variety, being all fiction, and having only six titles per level. However, this is still a new series and these factors may be addressed later. As shown above, they fulfill the requirements of length and simplicity and, with colored illustrations on every page and a generally high production standard (including glossy paper and a very legible typeface), they certainly qualify as appealing.

In conclusion, I think this series provides an excellent source of supplementary material for an extensive reading program, particularly for classes with some very weak, unconfident students. The novels should appeal to those who relish adventure stories or themes close to their own life experiences. I would not suggest using them exclusively since some learners prefer biographies of people they admire. The books can be purchased individually, in sets by level, or as an entire library of all 42 titles. At the end of the semester, I surveyed my students for their opinions of the books. General comments were overwhelmingly favorable, with words such as *interesting*, *fun*, *easy to understand*, occurring frequently, while the illustrations were considered *intelligible*, *beautiful*, and *eloquent*. I also asked if they thought reading the books had helped to improve their English. Perhaps the most rewarding comment, indicating she had understood the rationale behind extensive reading was: *Yes, I do. It's helped me to read fast.*

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Fifty-Fifty: Third Edition (Book I)

[Warren Wilson and Roger Barnard. Pearson-Longman, 2006. pp. vii + 118. ¥2,180. ISBN: 9620056655.]

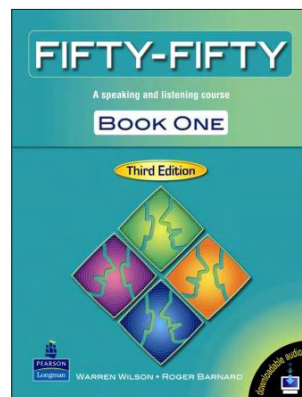
**Reviewed by Quint Oga-Baldwin,
Fukuoka Jogakuin University/
Kyushu Sangyo University**

This newest edition of *Fifty-Fifty* offers some minor changes from previous editions, as well as an attempt to add a more digital presence to the world of second language textbooks. The book covers a broad range of basic English skills and situations necessary to developing university and adult students' **general purpose speaking and listening** abilities. It is not specifically tailored as an EFL text for the Japanese setting, having no Japanese explanations, Japanese speakers, or specific situations that Japanese would commonly use (i.e., **specific travel English**, **talking about Japanese life**, or traditions), but it also does not focus on any other country specifically. Additionally, the lack of Japanese support may be vexing for some students. However, the book does provide a starting point for developing English proficiency for academic and standardized testing, with many of the skills found inside.

The biggest change seems to be the addition of an online listening section available through the website (<www.fifty-fifty-series.com>) that can be used for self-study. This is certainly an improvement over other textbooks, many of which do not offer listening self-study or simply recycle the same listening. Students are now able to download the entirety of the listening and save it on MP3 players or mobile phones,

which makes it arguably more accessible than the more traditional CDs. This **added practice** is essential for students, whose only listening practice generally occurs in class. Less technologically savvy students may need extra time and help with getting set up to do the homework, so it may be wise to schedule time in the computer lab in order to help them prepare.

The listening sections suffer from many of the problems that plague most commercial textbooks on the market. The conversations are sometimes stiff and do not offer a lot of real practice using connected speech. As connected speech has been cited as a key component in developing listening and speaking skills, (Brown and Kondo-Brown, 2006) the lack thereof is something of a strike against this text. While the listening does occasionally lack natural rhythm, intonation, and reductions, the speed of presentation is quite natural. The speakers are generally North Ameri-



can speakers, though there are also some foreign speakers with marked accents. The situations used are often clear due to visual support in the text, though they are sometimes rather absurd, which can contribute to student misunderstanding. An example of this is the use of the "Old West cowboy town" (p. 39) in the listening section of the directions unit, which uses nonstandard accents and some low-frequency vocabulary words, and does not seem to activate schema in the way the authors would have liked. Other listening sections suffer from similar problems.

One point worth noting in the teacher's manual is the inclusion of vocabulary cards that can easily be copied, cut out, and used in classroom activities. This begins to address one of the problems noted in many commercial ESL or EFL textbooks that vocabulary is often not covered (Folse, 2004), though the book does not provide any sort of glossary, monolingual or otherwise. Since knowing enough vocabulary is one of the biggest challenges to student communication, any kind of vocabulary-building support that texts can provide is indeed a welcome addition. While the cards do not build particular depth of knowledge, they can help students to build the vocabulary and confidence necessary to complete the speaking tasks in the books.

The content of this book does not differ greatly from any of the other popular texts being used in Japanese classrooms today. Teachers accustomed to a topic-based syllabus covering student needs, (e.g., **discussing routines, giving and understanding directions, eating in restaurants, and talking about plans**), **will find quite a lot of familiar territory**. While it may be argued that these topics are ESL in nature, this general proficiency is central to improving TOEIC scores, which seem to be increasingly in use as the basis for Japanese university English programs. The previously mentioned vocabulary cards can help students to either build or recall their basic vocabulary for the requisite tasks, as well as helping to improve fluency. Each chapter proceeds from receptive to productive use of language, which is certainly helpful for building student confidence. The speaking activities are by and large information gap activities with very clear guidelines, which do indeed help to push students to produce. The use of personalized topics in the homework section at the end of each chapter can also help with mixed classes to allow less proficient and less confident students to perform and improve. Additionally, the review

chapters are regular enough that students likely will not have forgotten the content when it comes time to go back over the material.

For book one, the level seems to be appropriate for beginner students with a reasonable motivation and a knowledge of over 400 words in the general service list (West, 1953). Much lower than this and students seem to get lost quite easily. As in previous editions, the book occasionally uses humor that relies on somewhat outlandish situations, which can add an unnecessary layer of difficulty for weaker students. The focus on form sections are generally on the last page of each chapter, which can make pre-teaching more of a burden with flipping back and forth. This could easily have been remedied by putting the language focus at the beginning rather than the end of the chapter, and teachers may want to consider starting each unit by pre-teaching these sections.

The teacher's manual can offer welcome support to first time and experienced instructors alike by suggesting ideas for extension and ways to build on the activities in the book. The supplemental materials help to make activities more transparent for the students, and the listening homework section is a welcome addition. Overall, the new edition works well as a main textbook for a speaking and listening class for college students, though with minimal differences from other commercial texts on the market, it does not distinguish itself enough to give it any strong recommendation.

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...with Scott Gardner

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A list of textbooks and resource books for language teachers available for review in *TLT* and *JALT Journal*.

RECENTLY RECEIVED ONLINE

An index of books available for review can be found at:

<jalt-publications.org/tlt/reviews/>

* = first notice; ! = final notice. Final notice items will be removed March 31. For queries, please write to the appropriate email address below.

Books for Students (reviewed in *TLT*)

Contact: Scott Gardner

<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

* *Cover to Cover: Reading Comprehension and Fluency* 1. Day, R., & Yamanaka, J. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. [Incl. CDs, teacher's book].

* *Different Histories*. Mack, J., Iwamasa, S., et al. Tokyo: Kinseido, 2008. [Multi-skills text on American history; incl. CD, Japanese teacher's manual].

Dynamic Presentations: Skills and Strategies for Public Speaking. Hood, M. Tokyo: Kiriara Shoten, 2007. [Incl. DVD].

For Your Information 1: Reading and Vocabulary Skills (2nd ed.). Blanchard, K., & Root, C. White Plains, NY: Pearson Longman, 2007. [Incl. teacher's manual].

Helbling Readers (The Spring Cup, Red Water, The Garden Party and Sixpence, The Happy Prince and the Nightingale and the Rose, Daisy Miller). Cleary, M. (Series Ed.). Crawley, UK: Helbling Languages, 2007. [Five beginning and intermediate reader titles, classics and original, each with CD].

! *Oxford English for Careers: Nursing 1*. Grice, T. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. [Incl. teacher's resource book, CD, website assistance].

! *Smart Choice 1*. Wilson, K., et al. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. [Four skills text; incl. student CD-ROM, workbook, teacher's resource book, teacher's book, class CDs, student & teacher websites].

! *Writing Updates: A Grammar-Based Approach to English Writing*. Kizuka, H., & Northridge, R. Tokyo: Kinseido, 2008. [Intermediate writing text for Japanese students; incl. teacher's guide].

Books for Teachers (reviewed in *JALT Journal*)

Contact: Yuriko Kite

<jj-reviews@jalt-publications.org>

Literature, Metaphor, and the Foreign Language Teacher. Picken, J. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

* *Tasks in Second Language Learning*. Samuda, V., & Bygate, M. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

"Wow, that was such a great lesson, I really want others to try it!"

「すばらしい授業!、これを他の人にも試してもらいたい!」



Every teacher has run a lesson which just "worked." So, why not share it around? The **My Share** Column is seeking material from creative, enthusiastic teachers for possible publication.

全ての教師は授業の実践者です。この貴重な経験をみんなで分かち合おうではありませんか。My Share Columnは創造的で、熱心な教師からの実践方法、マテリアルの投稿をお待ちしています。

For more information, please contact the editor.

詳しくは、ご連絡ください。

<my-share@jalt-publications.org>

THE LANGUAGE TEACHER

WIRED

...with Paul Daniels
& Malcolm Swanson

<tlt-wired@jalt-publications.org>



In this column, we explore the issue of teachers and technology—not just as it relates to CALL solutions, but also to Internet, software, and hardware concerns that all teachers face.

TLT WIRED ONLINE

As well as our feature columns, we would also like to answer reader queries. If you have a question, problem, or idea you'd like discussed in this column, please email us or visit our website at:

<jalt-publications.org/tlt/wired/>



Understanding genre and modalities through video storyboarding: From theory to product

Charles E. Robertson
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Quick Guide

Key Words: Video storyboarding, report writing, composition genre, improving use of modalities, sequencing

Learner English Level: Low intermediate to advanced

Learner Maturity Level: University

Preparation Time: 30 minutes per class, initially

Activity Time: four to five 90-minute lessons

Materials: Video cameras, tripods, colored pens, etc.

EFL instructors often struggle when trying to create approaches and/or lessons that foster more native-like modalities in their students' discourse—both spoken and written. The goal of such efforts is to help students develop a wider repertoire of sentence and verbal modality, to create syntax that indicates the predication of attitude, condition, and/or action. This suggests the more general question: how can instructors create project-based approaches that empower students to understand rhetorical positioning and its affect on this type of language use?

One means of achieving the objectives above is a video storyboarding assignment, which asks students to solve a mystery: *a robbery case* (Greene & Hunter, 2002). Through several preliminary tasks, students must answer questions about what they know to be true after observing *crime scene clues*. Next, students are asked to make inferences based upon what they think happened, forming a sequence of possible events. Finally, students examine the probability (or likelihood) of these various scenarios. At the final stage of the project, the original assignment is extended to include composition theorist James Moffett's notion of *levels of abstraction* (Moffett, 1992) and their connection to discourse genre. This component is achieved when students are asked to reflect on their observations and inferences and are shown how their rhetorical position (as author) shifted with each task—from the literal *recording* of information to actually *theorizing* what they believed to be likely and/or true about *the case*. At the end of this discussion, students are shown how, under Moffett's model, their writing corresponds to various literary genre forms and how an increased use of modalities, in certain discourse genre, is more appropriate than in others.

The final product is a 9 to 15 cell *manga* video, scripted and shot by students. For this graded assignment, they must prepare a script to *report*

their findings as police detectives to explain what they think happened, while creating a video storyboard to accompany their narrative. The video storyboards reinforce the importance of visually and textually sequencing events to create a cohesive logically framed story. Moreover, this assignment emphasizes the use of native-like modalities by requiring students to tell a story utilizing sentences arranged in a form more complex than the simple declarative.

Procedure

Step 1: Students are shown a picture of a *crime scene* rich with detailed clues. Include a few characters and some possible motives for the crime. Review vocabulary items which may be unfamiliar, such as *stethoscope*, *wall safe*, *magnifying glass*, and so on.

Step 2: Students are told they will be working with a partner to solve this crime. Further, inform them that they will be reporting their findings (their inferences) after examining all of the evidence.

Step 3: Students are told to make observations (in pairs) about what they see. Emphasize that they are merely recording what they are seeing; thus, they should use simple, declarative sentences. (There should be about a dozen or so clues in the *crime scene photo* in which to extract an equal number of statements for their *crime report*.)

Step 4: Students are asked to report what they have observed to the class. Emphasize that time has passed since their first visit to the *crime scene*; therefore, their observations are now read in the past tense. (Correct students if they have not properly changed tense.)

Step 5: The instructor explains / reviews the use of *probability words* and their approximate percentage values. (I use the example of the weather forecast, i.e., *It's certain that it will rain tomorrow*, versus, *Tomorrow, there's no chance it will rain*.) Next, examine how certain words and expressions fall under corresponding percentages of chance, i.e., *certain*=100%, *probable*=70%+, *possible*=30-70%, *improbable*=10%, *impossible*=0%.

Step 6: Students are told to answer several simple *why* questions about what they have reported. Students must answer, *Why is there a stethoscope on the floor?* Encourage students to give answers where causal connections are clearly understood. To this end, ask students to answer the above questions in the following manner: *The stethoscope is on the floor because...* (insert reason and/or rationale). Caution: some students may

follow instructions *to the letter* and give reasons for their inferences, which will clearly reflect their particular narrative choices; whereas, other students might form generalized statements for their answers. In this case, this latter group will answer the above *why* questions by explaining, for example, why stethoscopes are *usually* found in crime scenes. Either type of answer is equally useful at this stage of the investigation. (Step 6 is usually done as homework before the second class meeting, giving students time to infer possible scenarios as to why and how certain events unfolded.)

Step 7: To encourage creative thinking in hypothesizing events (and ordering events) surrounding the crime, ask students to respond to several statements about the crime scene with probability words/expressions which must reflect their group's thinking about what *really happened*. *The burglar was in a hurry*. Students have to decide if there is ample evidence to support this statement. Again, they must respond in such a way as to reflect their own narrative decisions; and, at the same time, cite a logical basis for their belief(s), i.e., *It is very unlikely that the burglar was in a hurry because....* Responses will vary with each group. Yet the purpose of this step in the process of examination is two-fold: first, students must focus their thinking—negotiating ideas and probabilities based upon what they know (based on actual evidence)—while imaginatively crafting a storyline; and second, students must critically consider sequencing as a means to forming a logical and cohesive string of events.

Step 8: The instructor asks each group to write a first-draft script in which each partner takes a turn stating their group's conclusions. Each script should give a chronological look at the events leading up to, during, and following the *Tanaka robbery*. In addition, students are asked to sketch a comic frame (on an A-4 size sheet of paper) to accompany each sentence they write. Instructors should stress that the graphic portion of their project is worth only a small percentage of the total final grade; however, students should approach the task with as much creativity as possible and include all the information found in their sentences in their pictures. (Step 8 is usually given as a homework assignment to be completed before the third class meeting.)

Step 9: Have students be prepared to bring their scripts and A-4 sized manga pictures to class for a workshop day. After each group has met with their instructor and has had a chance to have their scripts and pictures reviewed, corrected and

pronunciation checked during a read through, each group is given a half-class period for oral practice. Next, students are given instructions on the operation of video equipment and how to prepare and present their graphics. Finally, students schedule their own 30-minute filming slot for the following class period.

Step 10: (Video recording day) Two groups enter the classroom at their scheduled filming times. One group films and narrates their crime report (for approximately 15 minutes) while the other group assists with the camera operations. If two rooms can be equipped with one camera each during the same 90-minute period, 24 students (or 12 groups) can complete their filming. After all the filming is completed, the instructor can dub all presentations onto one DVD or VHS tape or optionally upload video clips to a web server (See Technical notes section below).

Step 11: On the final day of the project, students are given an active listening assignment where they must watch the video presentations and evaluate each presentation on a score sheet. After the class has evaluated all of the presentations and the top five presentations have been identified, the instructor facilitates a reflective discussion. *What worked well? What were the weak areas? Could you understand the story? Did the sequencing make sense? Was there enough information to link one picture frame to the next? Was the story logical? If you could do your presentation over again, what would you do differently?*

Step 12: (Understanding genre and language use) Under Moffett's *Universe of Discourse* model (1992), outline the rhetorical and syntactic-level shifting that had taken place throughout the course of the project: *recording, reporting, generalizing and theorizing*. Students first *recorded* what was happening at the moment they *entered* the crime scene. Then they *reported* what they observed. Next, some students were able to *generalize* about the situation. And finally, each group *theorized* about the possibility of certain actions and motives. In short, students evidenced the ability to answer the following: *What is happening? What happened? What usually happens? and What might happen if...?* Write sample sentences (taken directly from the students' own work) on the board under each level of abstraction: *There is a stethoscope on the floor. There was a stethoscope on the floor. There was a stethoscope on the floor because burglars usually use them (when breaking into a safe). It is very likely that the burglar left the stethoscope on the floor because he/she heard Mr. Tanaka returning home.*

Reinforce this concept of levels of abstraction with an example of a baseball game. First, ask students to pretend they are sport announcers giving a *live* play-by-play account of the game. Next, ask them to pretend that they are evening reporters on an NHK sports program, reporting what happened earlier in the day. Then, ask the class what usually happens when those two particular teams play against each other. And finally, pose a hypothetical question. *What if team A were to play against a team from the past? Or if team A (a Japanese team) played against a foreign (American Major League) team. What would be the outcome of such a game, and why?* Write the students' responses on the board.

Promote debate of this hypothetical outcome(s); divide the class into those who agree or disagree with a particularly strong statement. Encourage opposition. Then, encourage all students to take a position while expressing their reasons and the level of possibility attached to their opinion: *It is probable that the current Yomiuri Giants would lose to the current San Francisco Giants because Barry Bonds is a stronger hitter than any player on the Yomiuri team.* Next, (putting the often raging debates aside) examine the actual syntax created by the students. Point out that their sentence-level grammar had changed as a natural reaction to both the passing of time and, moreover, their growing rhetorical distance as author to an experience and/or situation. As adults, the students have done this unconsciously in L1; and, if they can see that they have done this, they have taken the first conscious step toward understanding literary genre.

Explain how we can group certain forms of writing events into **levels of abstraction**. For example:

Recording

- Field/lab notes
- Journals
- Interior monologue

Reporting

- Autobiography
- Memoir
- Biography

Generalizing

- Articles of factual generalization
- Essays of idea generalization

Theorizing

- Essays of argumentation theory
- Science, mathematics, philosophy

Finally, students are shown how rhetorical positioning has shaped their discourse (to include usage of certain modalities). As a result of understanding the interplay between genre and language use, students often have a clearer idea of appropriate language structures.

Technical notes

Equipment needed

Three video cameras (per 36 students), three tripods, no external microphones necessary, one VHS or DVD video player for dubbing. (Note: If instructor would like to distribute final videos as video casts for iPods, QuickTime Pro can be used to export video to the compatible mpeg-4 iPod format. The mpeg-4 files can also be uploaded to a web folder for distribution. Since most digital video cameras save video directly to either a DVD or hard drive in standard mpeg-2 format, the files can easily be converted to mpeg-4. Instructors will have to decide if the simplicity of using the VHS format overshadows the advantages of students having on demand access to their projects.

Video camera setup hints

Place camera with tripod on top of tables, with cameras pointing directly down toward storyboard artwork. Use camera zoom button to place the horizontal storyboards perfectly into the video frame. Place each cartoon cell (A4 or B4 size) horizontally and individually on top of a larger sheet of white paper; this will ensure that other cartoon cells will not be visible through the cell that is being recorded. As using the *record* button on a video camera can sometimes create unwanted background noise, use a remote control to start and stop the recording process. When recording, allow ½ second of silence at the beginning and end of each storyboard and approximately 2 seconds of silence after the last frame has been recorded.

Graphic setup hints

Draw all objects with dark lines around them so that they may be seen more clearly. Do not draw any objects on the storyboard within 1.5 centimeters of the edge of the paper as they may get cut

off by the video camera. Storyboard cells drawn with colored markers have the greatest visual impact.

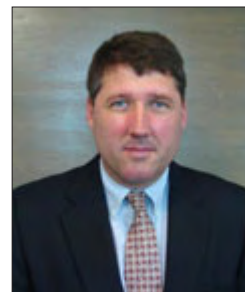
Conclusion

Depending on target students' L2 abilities and learning goals (low-level engineering students versus intermediate-level English literature majors, for example), instructors can choose to emphasize genre on either an efferent and/or aesthetic level. In addition, they can, as Mohan (1986) advocates, connect L2 learning to specific content areas. However, by reflecting on the process of inquiry through Moffett's *Universe of Discourse* theory (1992), students are more often able to conceptualize on a meta-level the task of authoring more clearly; and thus, they are better equipped to understand how modality, for example, helps authors move beyond the simple declaration of a fact. Regardless of emphasis, this project is intrinsically motivating as it encourages students to become more autonomous through its task-based approach and reflective, theoretical discussions.

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Charlie Robertson has been an EFL/ESL instructor in Japan and America for 13 years. His research interests are ESP, project-based learning, content-based teaching, and L2 composition.



...with Joseph Sheehan

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JALT Focus contributors are requested by the column editor to submit articles of up to 750 words written in paragraph format and not in abbreviated or outline form. Announcements for JALT Notices should not exceed 150 words. All submissions should be made by the 15th of the month, one and a half months prior to publication.

JALT FOCUS ONLINE

A listing of notices and news can be found at:
<jalt-publications.org/tlt/focus/>

JALT Calendar

Listings of major upcoming events in the organisation. For more information, visit JALT's website <jalt.org>, or see the SIG and chapter event columns later in this issue.

- ▶ 25 Apr 2008: Deadline for submissions to present at PAC7 at JALT2008 in Tokyo.
See <conferences.jalt.org/2008> for more information.
- ▶ 31 May – 1 Jun 2008: JALTCALL 2008 "New Frontiers in CALL: Negotiating Diversity" at Nagoya University of Commerce & Business, Nagoya.
- ▶ Jun 2008: Kagoshima TEYL Conference (joint chapter and TC SIG event) at Kagoshima University.
- ▶ 1-3 Nov 2008: PAC 7 at JALT2008 at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center, Tokyo.
See <conferences.jalt.org/2008> for more information.

From JALT National

This month's column, written by Kevin Ryan (JALT National Director of Treasury), looks at how JALT keeps track of its finances through the help of volunteers just like you. On another note, as this is the last *Focus* column that I will edit, I would like to thank all the contributors I have worked with over the last 3 years. I have learned much through my experience as a column editor for *TLT* and encourage all readers out there to contribute whatever talents they may have to our organization. And now on to our feature presentation....

Audit season: No reason to panic

That's right, folks, audit season is upon us. By now, chapter and SIG (ChapSIG) treasurers should be working to get the annual JALT audit prepared. Dealing with money is probably the least understood, least liked part of what ChapSIG officers have to do during the year. It is also the lifeblood of any organization. Since JALT attained official NPO status, the oversight and processes have become more stringent and better outlined. As Director of Treasury, let me explain how it works. And as regular members, here is what you can do to help out.

Why audit?

Any large organization like ours, with a ¥60-million-plus budget per year, needs to make sure that the money collected from members is used to the benefit of those members. The audit is one way to ensure that.

Who does the audit?

Every month, the JALT financial team, made up of ChapSIG treasurers and the treasurer liaisons (Jim Smiley for the chapters, Barry Mateer for the SIGs) work together to get a monthly accounting statement (MAS) ready to send into the JALT central office (JCO). Chie, the bookkeeper at JCO, collects the MAS each month, looks to make sure the books balance, and then notifies the liaisons and the director who has sent them in. In February, the audit committee, headed by Kevin Cleary, kicks into high gear to prepare ChapSIG treasurers with a *dry run*, a practice submission of the year's financial data. The audit committee is composed of 6-10 present and past treasurers who look at these annual reports (all 12 MAS and some final annual tabulations) for each ChapSIG.

Between March 25 and April 10, all the ChapSIG treasurers make a final printed statement with their presidents and coordinators and send it to the auditors.

What do the auditors do?

The auditors help the treasurers by ensuring that the statements are correct. From April 10 to the end of May there is a back-and-forth between treasurers and auditors to clean up errors. Some ChapSIGs get it right the first time, most do not. SIGs usually have relatively simple balance sheets (except for the Pan-SIG conference), while chapters tend to have more complications, as they take in dues for National and have more varied events.

What happens then?

The auditors send in the approved MAS reports to the audit coordinator and he takes a look at them again. He meets with the JALT accountant and the external auditor and presents the reports. The external auditor works with the accountant (both CPAs) to double check the audit committee's work. They also check expenditures at the national level, such as expenses for the JCO. They take 2-3 weeks for approval. We must present that approval to the EBM before the end of June each year (within 90 days of the end of the fiscal year).

What happens if a ChapSIG report (MAS) is not ready?

At the end of June, the audit committee gives conditional approval and freezes the bank account of that ChapSIG. When the ChapSIG treasurer and the other officers get the report corrected and completed, the bank account is unfrozen.

How can I, as a member, help?

If you do something for JALT that involves money, get approval first, and then get clear receipts for any money you spend. Give the receipts to (and collect your reimbursement from) your ChapSIG treasurer that same calendar month (your ChapSIG treasurer may have a different financial month, one that works best is a deadline for receipts on the 25th of each month). And always, if you are interested in helping out, it isn't that hard. Accounting experience NOT necessary. We have simplified the forms and procedures tremendously in the last 2 years. Think about joining the JALT financial team.

How can we get more money?

Each summer, a grant is distributed to the chapters. The JCO collects and sends the SIGs their member dues two-four times a year. Both chapters and SIGs have a development fund with money for special projects. Many chapters have extra money they are not using (almost 10 million in total). If you, as a member, have a good idea, go to your ChapSIG officers with it. If it promotes language learning in Japan, and is well thought out, it has a good chance of getting funded.

Kevin Ryan

JALT Director of Treasury

JALT Notices

JALT Hokkaido Journal

The *JALT Hokkaido Journal* is a refereed online journal that appears once a year. The journal features theoretically grounded research reports and discussion of central issues in foreign language teaching and learning with a focus on Japanese contexts. We especially encourage investigations that apply theory to practice and include original data collected and analyzed by the authors. Those interested in submitting a paper should visit <jalthokkaido.net/> and follow the journal link at the bottom of the page. The deadline for submissions is Jun 30 2008.

JALT national officers elections *CALL for nominations*

JALT needs you! Elections for all national officer positions will be held this year. Nominations will be accepted from April 1, 2008 until May 15, 2008. The call for nominations is will be available on the JALT website from April 1, 2008 and in the April edition of TLT. Please look for the details on the JALT website at <jalt.org/elections>.

Publications positions available

The Language Teacher and JALT Journal

... are looking for people to fill the positions of English language proofreaders and Japanese language proofreaders.

More information

Job descriptions and details on applying for these position are posted on our website <www.jalt-publications.org/positions/>.

...with Damian Rivers

<memprofile@jalt-publications.org>



Member's Profile is a column where members are invited to introduce themselves to *TLT*'s readership in 750 words or less. Research interests, professional affiliations, current projects, and personal professional development are all appropriate content. Please address inquiries to the editor.

IN THIS month's Member's Profile Ben Shearon shares his experiences teaching, developing materials and running a small English school.

MEMBER'S PROFILE

Ben Shearon

I came to Japan in the summer of 2000, arriving in Sendai as a new JET Programme participant.

Like many JETs, I only saw myself staying in Japan for a couple of years and did not plan on a career in education. However, I spent 3 years on JET, almost a year on the Hello World Plan (Sendai City's private ALT program), and now I am in my 4th year in the Prefectural Board of Education as Chief ALT Advisor for Miyagi Prefecture. As an ALT, I worked in junior high schools, elementary schools, and a senior high school. While working in the board of education, I have been involved with ALT training and support, as well as initiatives to improve English teaching practices for teachers and students. My

teacher training so far has consisted of official JET workshops at the national and local levels, lots of reading, and best of all, on-the-job training in both public schools and private *Eikaiwas*. I have also picked up a small private English school that I run with my wife as well as some part-time teaching at local universities. This variety of work keeps things interesting, although occasionally it does all get a bit too much!



I joined JALT in 2003, but didn't attend my first meeting until a couple of years later. Now I am on the Sendai JALT committee and am privy to all the secrets and politicking that go on behind the closed doors of the committee meetings (there's not much, to be honest). Sendai JALT has been an outstanding resource for me in terms of personal and professional development mainly due to the incredible community we have here in Sendai. Our chapter holds monthly meetings usually on the last Sunday of the month at a central location in Sendai. We welcome visitors, new members, and potential presenters: please check our website <jaltsendai.terapad.com> for details if you would like to get involved.

One of the most positive projects I have been involved with at the Miyagi Board of Education has been creating online teaching resources for the ALT community. This requires the soliciting of contributions, editing, and learning how to make rudimentary websites. After a couple of years' hard work, hundreds of activity ideas and lesson plans have been created. These resources have been uploaded to the following locations: The JET Lounge <www.c-english.com/jetlounge> and Teaching Activities <teachingactivities.pbwiki.com>. These sites are free and all content is licensed under the creative commons so that it can be used without restriction. I hope that teachers in Japan and TLT readers will find them useful for their classes.



Helping my wife run a small children's English school has also been a fascinating endeavor. It is completely different from university or public school teaching, as you are not only teaching much smaller classes but also dealing with parents, advertising, curriculum design, and administration. In this regard the ETJ discussion lists (information and sign-up at <www.eltnews.com/ETJ>) have been extremely supportive and a great resource. There is a real spirit of community and sharing that exists among the teachers and owners on these lists, and I would encourage teachers that have not yet signed up to try them out.

My next big project is to organize an event in Sendai in July this year for people involved or interested in the teaching of English in elementary schools. The Ministry of Education (MEXT) has announced that they are planning to introduce English as a subject for 5th and 6th grade elementary students from 2011, which means that it is

important for teachers and schools to start thinking now about how this will work. We are hoping to provide an opportunity for teachers, members of the community, academics, and local administrators to get together and share their knowledge and ideas.

In the future I would like to find a full-time position at a university to allow me to do research alongside my teaching. Continuing to collaborate and work with other teachers is also a priority for me. I find with teaching, as with many things, the more you put in the more you get out, and that colleagues really are the best resource. This is the common thread running through my teaching career in Japan. I have been helped and supported by the teachers around me, and any effort I have put in has been repaid several times over.

Ben can be contacted at <sendaiben@gmail.com>.

...with Joyce Cunningham & Mariko Miyao

<grassroots@jalt-publications.org>



The co-editors warmly invite 750-word reports on events, groups, or resources within JALT in English, Japanese, or a combination of both.



THIS MONTH, Margaret Orleans explains how and why the Best of JALT awards are distributed. Then, William Balsamo talks about another wonderful program, Teachers Helping Teachers.

How to be the best

Every year, when I write to the officers of each of JALT's chapters and SIGs asking for their nominations for the Best of JALT, I get a lot of questions about what the program is, so I appreciate the opportunity to explain in detail here.

What?

The Best of JALT is a little-known, decade-old program to honor outstanding presentations at local meetings. Actually, the decade-old part is just a guess. I've been coordinating the program for about 6 years and I know that as program chair, I urged my chapter to submit nominations for a few years before that.

People get it mixed up with the chapter-sponsored speakers program, in which chapters recommend one speaker (preferably a neophyte) who then bypasses the vetting process for the national conference. I'm afraid that the prize for the Best of JALT is just a humble certificate, handed out by the president at the general meeting scheduled during the national conference.

Why?

I feel the Best of JALT is important because for many members, local meetings are the face of JALT. Outstanding speakers who draw people to those local events should be honored. A search of the Internet showed that at least half a dozen of the recipients felt honored enough to include the award in their vita or biodata. I also know of local program chairs who scan the list of winners when looking for speakers to invite to their chapters.

When?

Another confusing aspect of the Best of JALT is that the awards for one calendar year are handed out near the end of the following year. This happens because the conference falls in October or November, but local meetings are still being held into December. It's easiest to consider programs calendar year by calendar year, rather than from June to June or some other arbitrary cutoff point. The conference is the best venue for announcing the winners. Thus, our President, Steve Brown, handed out the awards for 2006 at the 2007 conference.

The best time for chapters and SIGs to send in nominations is in December or January, while the previous year's events are still fresh in their memories, but no one (other than my own chapter) has done so yet. Names will be accepted up until a month before the conference, but the sooner a winner is chosen, the more likely it is that she or he will be able to accept the award in person. Winners should definitely be notified before early registration for the national conference closes.

How?

Each group's slate of officers, or the entire membership, can vote or reach a consensus through discussion on their nominee for the 2007 calendar year. It's important to poll people who have actually attended the majority of the year's presentations. The president or program chair can then send the name of the winner, title, and date of the presentation, and an email address for the speaker to me <tommysibo@yahoo.com>. I'll send a notice to the winner and prepare the certificate to be awarded at PAC7 at JALT2008 in Tokyo.

Who?

The winners for 2006 were:

- Gunma: David Schneer, *Using cooperative learning in your classroom*
- Iwate: Christine Winskowski and Susan Dugan, "What did you think of the course?" *Understanding students' course evaluations*
- Kagoshima: Jan O'Loughlin, *The power of poetry*
- Kitakyushu: Takashi Inomori, *Electronic dictionary workshop*
- Nagasaki: Richard Hodson, *Make it strange: defamiliarization in the language classroom; and Tomoko Maekawa introducing her text, English Communication in the Classroom*

- Osaka: Greg Sholdt, *Exploring action research methods: Examples from an extensive reading program*
- Shinshu: Sue Fraser-Osada, *Communication through drama*
- Toyohashi: Charles Kowalski, *Storytelling in language teaching*
- West Tokyo: Daniel Stewart, *If I knew then what I know now: Advice on setting up an extensive reading program*

A big *Thank you!* goes out to those speakers for making JALT a better organization, and a heartfelt plea is extended to all chapters and SIGs to send in nominations for the next round of awards at JALT2008. See you there—some of you with certificates in your hands!

Reported by Margaret Orleans
Best of JALT Coordinator

Memorial scholarships for the Teachers Helping Teachers program

This year will mark the 4th year of the *Teachers Helping Teachers* program. Although originally a training program, in our 2nd year we expanded to include the donation of scholarships for teacher development.

In 2006, Teachers Helping Teachers was given a gracious grant of ¥140,000 from JALT to assist with our work in Bangladesh and Vietnam. Initially, the money was to help support operational costs. However, as a group, we decided to donate the money to our host organizations for educational purposes. The money, therefore, was used exclusively for scholarships and divided equally between the hosts.

In 2007, when funds were no longer available from JALT, the Himeji JALT chapter, from which Teachers Helping Teachers originated, donated ¥40,000 to Vietnam to give scholarships to deserving students. Their student council decided on the tuition and chose a needy recipient, a student studying to become a secondary English teacher.

In 2008, Teachers Helping Teachers wants to continue to give scholarships to deserving students whenever and wherever seminars are presented. To further understand the origins, goals,

and focus of our work, visit our website <www.geocities.com/yamataro670/tht.htm>.

Since JALT's surplus fund is no longer accessible and the amount from Himeji JALT is limited, we would like to appeal to the generosity of anyone dedicated to teacher training in the developing world.



Part of this appeal emerges from our mission and vision. As we expand, our mission is not only to give teacher training seminars to teachers in developing countries but also scholarships to students in these countries aspiring to become teachers. One of the greatest needs in developing countries is training teachers to raise the standards of education and to give hope to future generations.

With this in mind, this year we are introducing a special scholarship program to acquire donations and funds for scholarships from individuals, institutions, or publishers to present to our host institutions when conducting seminars abroad. Our goal is to award ¥100,000 in scholarships each time a seminar is presented. Therefore, if we present three seminars a year, we need to raise ¥300,000.

Although ¥300,000 may seem large, we hope to appeal to individuals, chapters, and SIGS for donors who share our vision. Chapters and SIGS might donate in their name, donate as a memorial, or give smaller donations at a more personal level. A donation of ¥10,000 is sufficient to help a student study for half a semester in a developing country. It is important to emphasize that the scholarships will be given in the name of the donor. Teachers Helping Teachers will merely be the messenger and present the scholarships in a formal ceremony at the conclusion of the seminars.

In return, the college or university will send a letter of thanks to the donor of the scholarship as well as the name of the student-recipient. After the course, a report of the student's grades will be sent to the donor of the scholarship.

Although the scholarships may be presented as personal donations, they can also be given as memorials to deceased members of one's family. What a wonderful way to pay tribute to a lost friend or relative!

All donors' names will appear in our THT newsletter, published four times a year, and added to a link at our website listed above.

At present we are working with three institutions: BELTA, (Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association), the Lao American College in Laos, and Hue College of Foreign Studies in Vietnam. Donors can specify to which institution they will give the money.

In August 2008, we will also extend our work into the Philippines with a seminar in Manila at the Saint John Maria Vianney Center Foundation. We are also projecting further seminars in India and China in 2009. As our work expands, we aspire to reach out to young, aspiring teachers in developing countries and believe that our scholarship program will enliven the work we hope to accomplish. With your help, we may realize the exciting possibilities of helping teachers and students who cannot succeed on their own.



Please contact Teachers Helping Teachers for further details if you are interested in donating. All donors will be registered at our homepage website. You may also contact William Balsamo <yamataro670670@yahoo.com> for further information.

Reported by William Balsamo

...with David McMurray

<outreach@jalt-publications.org>



Outreach is a place where teachers from around the world can exchange opinions and ideas about foreign language learning and teaching. It provides outreach to classroom teachers who would not otherwise readily have access to a readership in Japan. The column also seeks to provide a vibrant voice for colleagues who volunteer to improve language learning in areas that do not have teacher associations. Up to 1,000 word reports from teachers anywhere in the world are welcomed. Contributors may also submit articles in the form of interviews with teachers based overseas.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Once referred to as a hot spot in opium production, Lao People's Democratic Republic is now shaping up to be the next regional hot spot in tourism and economic investment with its concomitant opportunities for English and Japanese teachers. The fertile, 4,000 kilometers long Mekong river valley region bordering Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar was identified as the Golden Triangle of illicit drug production by US diplomat Marshall Green in 1971.

A new moniker coined for the Mekong region by Japan's Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura is the *Development Triangle*. The Japanese government intends to invest \$20 million in grants and to invite more than 10,000 students from Laos, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Vietnam to Japan during the next 5 years for cultural and academic exchanges. 2009 has been designated *Mekong-Japan Exchange Year* (Japan expands aid to Mekong, 2008). Culture-seeking tourists can now cruise the scenic river

by houseboat, visit ancient sites like the Wat Phou temple, and enjoy Laotian food in the capital Vientiane. This influx is motivating tour operators, guides, and restaurant staff to learn English and Japanese to increase business opportunities.

Laos PDR, unlike other Asian countries, has not had a long tradition of higher education and teacher training. The tertiary education system consists of National University of Laos, Souphavong University, Champasack University, five teacher-training colleges, and 31 private institutions. About 47,000 students are currently enrolled in these 39 institutes of higher learning. The Lao-American College, founded just 20 years ago, has grown into a **respected private institution**. For studies of English and business it is the first choice from many Laotians according to William Balsamo, a veteran language teacher.

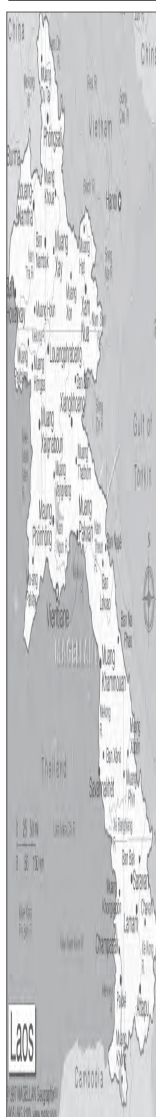
Balsamo and several of his colleagues from Japan have helped local teachers to fill this burgeoning interest in teaching and learning English. This article explains his vision and concept, and introduces a few members from a dynamic team of teachers from Japan and other countries known as Teachers Helping Teachers (THT). THT participants share what they know with language teachers in Laos, Vietnam, and Bangladesh at conferences and teacher trainer seminars.

Binding Friendships in Laos

Galina Bannavong's smile and quick humor engaged our teaching team from Japan from the start. She became our most enthusiastic supporter and attended almost every session of our Teachers Helping Teachers (THT) seminar held in Laos in August 2007. A teacher of business education at the Lao-American College (LAC), she is a teacher of extraordinary talents who speaks Laotian as well as English. She's a Russian citizen by birth, having emigrated from Siberia. She is married to a Laotian and has been living in Laos with her family for over a decade.

Galina is just one of the many inspiring teachers I met in Laos. Another is Ginny, whom I first met in December 2005 at the college when I proposed to her the idea of bringing a group of teachers to LAC to conduct a week-long program of seminars for teacher training. Her response was immediate and positive, "Yes, please come and help us!" She had anticipated such a seminar could take place in 2006, but we needed more time to put the program together to solicit volunteers and work out the finer details.

The college is a miracle in itself. Laos, unlike



other Asia countries, has no long tradition of higher education. The college was established in Vientiane by an American, Ginny Van Osstrand, who came to Laos 20 years ago. From its humble beginnings it has grown into one of the most respected institutions of higher learning in the country, even surpassing the reputation of the National University of Laos. For studies of English and business it is the first choice of the Laotians.

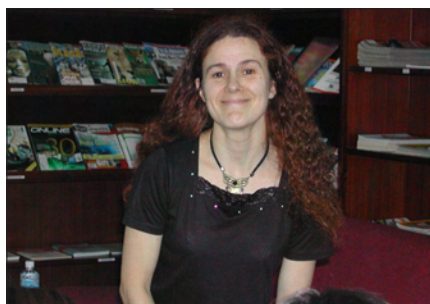
Our THT program is in its 3rd year of operation. We began as a group of six teachers with no specific group identity and made Bangladesh our first goal. Three years later we have expanded to three countries with an involvement of several dozen teachers. During the past 3 years we have presented five seminars to date. It was the first time for our THT team to organize a seminar in Laos and for LAC it was also a groundbreaking experience. The seminar was 15 months in the making and the slow and gradual planning brought to fruition a seminar far more realized than anyone had ever expected. The dates of the inaugural conference in Laos were set for March 15-21, 2007. When the call for papers came out in the fall of 2006 I was overwhelmed by the response. Seventeen teachers who possessed a wide range of experience responded from several countries. Some of the members had been with us in Vietnam in 2006 but nine were new to the group.

THT operates without a budget. We are volunteers and get organized through email and word of mouth. We maintain a rather simple website made with geocities and work directly with the institutions we serve, thus eliminating the middleman. Some people have referred to us as an organization, but this is a misnomer. We are more of an idea, a concept rather than an NGO or nonprofit organization. We are members of a fluid and flexible group who all share a common goal—the willingness to share our years of teaching experience with fellow colleagues in developing countries. To be a member of THT one does not need membership, only commitment. We do not collect dues and no one makes a profit. As a group all participants are on an equal footing, even the organizers. We pay our own airfares, visa fees, and accommodations. In return we receive the generous traditional hospitality of our host institutions and a wonderful sense of sharing and professional fulfillment.

Laos is a wonderful country in which to organize a language teachers' conference. The country is welcoming, the people polite, and the city of Vientiane is charming and inviting with

a laid-back atmosphere unlike any other capital we have ever visited. The city has a small-town atmosphere and the greeting at LAC had the homespun hospitality one finds in small towns rather than large cities. The staff at LAC assigned to help us to host the seminar was young and committed to the program and eager to achieve success. Our presentations were in two rooms; one at the college's main building and the other at the adjacent American Center.

Originally we had intended that the seminar be opened to teachers of English, but the reality proved differently. The majority of those who attended our presentation were actually college students and not all were English majors, some were specializing in business. **Maintaining a professional attitude, however, all presenters quickly redirected their focus and aimed the presentations to students rather than teachers.** The photographs depict Cecilia Silva and Dennis Woolbright.



Silva is a professor of Spanish at Tohoku University who has been a regular member of THT, presenting in Bangladesh, Vietnam, as well as Laos. She is a native of Argentina and clearly understands the problems of learning English as a foreign language. Woolbright presented a workshop entitled *Speech in the ESL Classroom*. The photograph shows him coaching teachers to express themselves in speech classes.

The reception of the students was overwhelming. They were cooperative and eager to learn and participated actively in our presentations.

Although we had anticipated lower proficiency, our group was much impressed with the high level of English competency demonstrated at our sessions. Unlike college students in developed countries, most of the Lao students never had the opportunity of traveling abroad or meeting native-English speakers. Most of those who study English do so with the intention of entering the business world rather than academia. Teachers in Laos are poorly paid and not well furnished with textbooks, tapes, CDs, or other equipment which we take for granted.

LAC is a busy place with an eye to the future and hopes for expansion. Our team was overwhelmed by their hospitality and eagerness to make the seminar a total success. At the end of the seminar a farewell buffet was offered to our group and a very moving and touching *Baci* ceremony held only on special occasions was conducted. In this Buddhist ceremony, strings are tied around the wrists of all those who participate with prayers for health and protection as well as the creation of a bond of friendship. In the photograph of the *Baci* decoration many strings can be seen hanging from the centerpiece, the strings are used to bind together the attendees in friendship at the very end of the conference.

On our final day in Laos, after the wonderful *Baci* ceremony that ceremoniously bound us in friendship, the meaning of the name of our conference *Teachers Helping Teachers* became clear. Galina Bannavong, the participant who had inspired us on arrival, approached me asking if she could join our team on our next tour to Hue, Vietnam. We willingly agreed to make her part of the team and she made three wonderful presentations on Business English in Hue. Her presentations were highly successful and well-attended.

This year our team laid down the ground work for an ongoing relationship with the Lao-American College with future projections for exchange programs and home stays. We look forward to the years to come and the fruition of our collaboration. The 2008 Teachers Helping Teachers seminar runs March 25 to 29. The seminar is preceded by a 3-day intensive workshop of mini-courses from March 20 to 22. The content areas for the mini-courses are literature, curriculum development, creative writing, speech delivery, and American studies.

Reference

Japan expands aid to Mekong region. (2008, January 18). *The Asahi Shimbun*, p. 24.

COLUMN • SIG NEWS

37

...with James Hobbs

<sig-news@jalt-publications.org>



JALT currently has 16 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) available for members to join. This column publishes announcements of SIG events, mini-conferences, publications, or calls for papers and presenters. SIGs wishing to print news or announcements should contact the editor by the 15th of the month, 6 weeks prior to publication.

SIGs at a glance

Key: [🔍] = keywords [📖] = publications [🗣️] = other activities [✉️] = email list [💬] = online forum

Note: For contacts & URLs, please see the Contacts page.

At the recent national officers meeting, two new forming SIGs were announced:

- Extensive Reading SIG (contact: Daniel Stewart <daniel_stewart@mac.com>)
- Study Abroad SIG (contact: Todd Thorpe <toddthorpe@hotmail.com>)

More information on these SIGs will be available in future issues of *TLT*.

Bilingualism

[🔍] bilingualism, biculturalism, international families, child-raising, identity [📖] *Bilingual Japan—4x year* [🗣️] monographs, forums [✉️]

Our group has two broad aims: to support families who regularly communicate in more than one language and to further research on bilingualism in Japanese contexts. See our website <www.bsig.org> for more information.

当研究会は複数言語で生活する家族および日本におけるバイリンガリズム研究の支援を目的としています。どうぞホームページの<www.bsig.org>をご覧ください。

College and University Educators

[🎓] tertiary education, interdisciplinary collaboration, professional development, classroom research, innovative teaching] [📖] *On CUE*—2x year, YouCUE e-newsletter] [🗣️] Annual SIG conference, regional events and workshops]

Call for papers: The CUE 2008 Conference *Language Education in Transition* will be held at Kinki University in Higashi Osaka on 5-6 Jul 2008.

Conference sub-themes include bridges between secondary and tertiary education, curriculum development, evaluation and assessment, syllabus design, and other relevant topics. Submission deadline is 31 Mar 2008 by email. For more information, please visit the CUE SIG website <jalt-cuesig.org>.

Gender Awareness in Language Education

GALE works to build a supportive community of educators and researchers interested in raising awareness and researching how gender plays an integral role in education and professional interaction. We also work with other JALT groups and the wider community to promote pedagogical and professional practices, language teaching materials, and research inclusive of gender and gender-related topics. Co-sponsor of Pan-SIG 2008. Upcoming Gender and Beyond conference in Nagoya, Oct 2008. Visit our website <www.gale-sig.org/> for details.

Global Issues in Language Education

[🎓] global issues, global education, content-based language teaching, international understanding, world citizenship] [📖] *Global Issues in Language Education Newsletter*—4x year] [🗣️] Sponsor of Peace as a Global Language (PGL) conference] [📧] [🗣️]

Are you interested in promoting global awareness and international understanding through your teaching? Then join the Global Issues in Language Education SIG. We produce an exciting quarterly newsletter packed with news, articles, and book reviews; organize presentations for local, national, and international conferences; and network with groups such as UNESCO, Amnesty International, and Educators for Social Responsibility. Join us in teaching for a better world! Our website is <www.jalt.org/global/sig/>. For further information, contact Kip Cates <kcates@fed.tottori-u.ac.jp>.

Junior and Senior High School

[🎓] curriculum, native speaker, JET programme, JTE, ALT, internationalization] [📖] *The School House*—3-4x year] [🗣️] teacher development workshops & seminars, networking, open mics] [📧] [🗣️]

The JSH SIG is operating at a time of considerable change in secondary EFL education. Therefore, we are concerned with language learning theory, teaching materials, and methods. We are also intensely interested in curriculum innovation. The large-scale employment of native speaker instructors is a recent innovation yet to be thoroughly studied or evaluated. JALT members involved with junior or senior high school EFL are cordially invited to join us for dialogue and professional development opportunities.

Learner Development

[🎓] autonomy, learning, reflections, collaboration, development] [📖] *Learning Learning*, 2x year; *LD-Wired*, quarterly electronic newsletter] [🗣️] Forum at the JALT national conference, annual mini-conference/retreat, printed anthology of Japan-based action research projects] [📧] [🗣️]

We are planning a retreat on 15 Jun at Nanzan University in Nagoya for those who want to stay overnight following the JACET/JALT conference Towards a Synergistic Collaboration in English Education. The retreat will offer a chance to talk about autonomy-related issues in a relaxed atmosphere. See *TLT* conference calendar for details of the JACET/JALT event. For information about the retreat, contact Martha Robertson <marrober@indiana.edu> or Jan Taniguchi <jan_taniguchi@yahoo.com>.

Lifelong Language Learning

[🎓] lifelong learning, older adult learners, fulfillment] [📖] *Told You So!*—3x year (online)] [🗣️] Pan-SIG, teaching contest, national & mini-conferences] [📧] [🗣️]

The increasing number of people of retirement age, plus the internationalization of Japanese society, has greatly increased the number of people eager to study English as part of their lifelong learning. The LLL SIG provides resources and information for teachers who teach English to older learners. We run a website, online forum, listserv, and SIG publication (see <www.eigosenmon.com/tolsig/>). For more information or to join the mailing list, contact Amanda Harlow <amand@aqua.livedoor.com> or Eric M. Skier <skier@ps.toyaku.ac.jp>.

成人英語教育研究部会は来る高齢化社会に向けて高齢者を含む成人の英語教育をより充実することを目指し、昨年結成した新しい分科会です。現在、日本では退職や子育て後もこれまでの経験や趣味を生かし積極的に社会に参加したいと望んでいる方が大幅に増えております。中でも外国語学習を始めたい、または継続を考えている多くの学習者に対してわれわれ語学教師が貢献出来る課題は多く、これからの研究や活動が期待されています。LLLでは日本全国の教師が情報交換、勉強会、研究成果の出版を行い共にこの新しい分野を開拓していこうと日々熱心に活動中です。現在オンライン<www.eigosenmon.com/tolsig/>上でもフォーラムやメールリスト、ニュースレター配信を活発に行っております。高齢者の語学教育に携わっていらっしゃる方はもちろん、将来の英語教育動向に関心のある方まで、興味のある方はどなたでも大歓迎です。日本人教師も数多く参加していますのでどうぞお気軽にご入会ください。お問い合わせは Amanda Harlow <amand@aquar.livedoor.com>。または Eric M. Skier <skier@ps.toyaku.ac.jp>までご連絡ください。

Materials Writers

[🗨️ materials development, textbook writing, publishers and publishing, self-publication, technology] [📖 *Between the Keys*—3x year] [🎤 JALT national conference events] [📧] [🗨️]

Materials Writers are proud to host **Miles Craven** as our featured speaker at May's Pan-SIG Conference in Kyoto. Miles will offer a 2-hour workshop on materials creation and be involved in a number of other materials development sessions. In addition, there will be a large number of materials-related presentations. Even if you're not presenting, come along to Kyoto for the 2-day event for some serious fun and professional development.

Other Language Educators

[🗨️ FLL beyond mother tongue, L3, multilingualism, second foreign language] [📖 *OLE Newsletter*—4-5x year] [🎤 Network with other FL groups, presence at conventions, provide information to companies, support job searches and research]

After a record 30 presentations at JALT2007, OLE welcomes individual presentations for JALT2008 (31 Oct-3 Nov), to be submitted by Fri 25 Apr. Download details from <jalt.org/files/CALL.pdf>. For presentations for the French, German, and Spanish workshops, and for the SIG and the multilingualism forums, contact <reinelt@iec.ehime-u.ac.jp> by Fri 11 Apr. Contributions related to Chinese and Korean as foreign languages are also most welcome. For more information consult the upcoming NL 45, or contact the coordinator.

Pragmatics

[🗨️ appropriate communication, co-construction of meaning, interaction, pragmatic strategies, social context] [📖 *Pragmatic Matters* (語用論事情) —3x year] [🎤 Pan-SIG and JALT conferences, Temple University Applied Linguistics Colloquium, seminars on pragmatics-related topics, other publications] [📧]

The Pragmatics SIG will again be a co-sponsor for the Annual Pan-SIG Conference to be held this year at Doshisha University Shinmachi Campus, Kyoto. This will be the 7th year of this popular conference. Be sure to put 10-11 May 2008 on your agenda. Check <jalt.org/pansig/2008/>.

Professionalism, Administration, and Leadership in Education

The PALE SIG welcomes new members, officers, volunteers, and submissions of articles for our journal or newsletter. To read current and past issues of our journal, visit <www.debito.org/PALE>. Also, anyone may join our listserv <groups.yahoo.com/group/PALE_Group/>. For information on events, visit <www.jalt.org/groups/PALE>.

Teaching Children

[🗨️ children, elementary school, kindergarten, early childhood, play] [📖 *Teachers Learning with Children*, bilingual—4x year] [🎤 JALT Junior at national conference, regional bilingual 1-day conferences] [📧] [🗨️]

The Teaching Children SIG is for all teachers of children. We publish a bilingual newsletter four times a year, with columns by leading teachers in our field. There is a mailing list for teachers of children who want to share teaching ideas or questions <groups.yahoo.com/group/tcsig/>. We are always looking for new people to keep the SIG dynamic. With our bilingual newsletter, we particularly hope to appeal to Japanese teachers. We hope you can join us for one of our upcoming events. For more information, visit <www.tcsig.jalt.org>.

児童教育部会は、子どもに英語(外国語)を教える先生方を対象にした部会です。当部会は、年4回会報を発行しています。会報は英語と日本語で提供しており、この分野で活躍している教師が担当するコラムもあります。また、指導上のアイデアや質問を交換する場として、メーリングリスト<groups.yahoo.com/group/tcsig/>を運営しています。活発な部会を維持していくために常に新会員を募集しています。特に日本人の先生方の参加を歓迎します。部会で開催するイベントに是非ご参加ください。詳細については<www.tcsig.jalt.org>をご覧ください。

...with Aleda Krause

<chap-events@jalt-publications.org>



Each of JALT's 36 active chapters sponsors from 5 to 12 events every year. All JALT members may attend events at any chapter at member rates—usually free. Chapters, don't forget to add your event to the JALT calendar or send the details to the editor by email or t/f: 048-787-3342.



CHAPTER EVENTS ONLINE

You can access all of JALT's events online at:

<www.jalt.org/calendar>.

If you have a QRcode-capable mobile phone, use the image on the left.

IF YOUR local chapter isn't listed, or for further details, go to the online calendar. There may be newly added events and updates.

Gifu—SELHi Project: Enriching EFL through the teaching of pragmatics by **Jérémie Bouchard** (Sapporo Sacred Heart School). The presentation, a combination of lecture and group discussion, will focus on a SELHi (Super English Language High School) initiative involving two English courses: Comprehensive and Interactive. The general argument of this presentation calls for a change in emphasis in the EFL classroom, from English as the sole object of study to English as a tool for effective communication. *Sat 8 Mar, 19:00-21:00; Heartful Square (southeast section of Gifu JR Station), Gifu City; one-day members ¥1000.*

Gifu—Wireless ready: Interactivity, collaboration, and feedback in language learning technologies sponsored by JALTCALL SIG. Join a group of Gifu JALTers to Nagoya for the annual one-day regional conference. This will be a good chance to experience how technology can aid in the teaching of foreign languages. (See Nagoya Chapter for more details.) *Sat 29 Mar, 9:50-17:30; Nagoya University of Commerce and Business (NUCB), Fushimi Campus (Higashimaya Line, Fushimi Station); JALT members ¥2000.*

Kitakyushu—New ideas to change junior high lessons by **Koichi Kawamura**. Since in most public junior high schools no more than three lessons of English are given per week, it has been really difficult for junior high teachers to teach the subject. In this presentation Kawamura will share some of his ideas to change an uninteresting classroom into a lively stadium of fun, interest, and motivation using such activities as super bullet input, self-evaluation, English salon, and chain letters. Participants will be asked to take an active part in his workshop while pretending to be teenagers. *Sat 8 Mar, 19:00-21:00; Kitakyushu International Conference Center (a 5-minute walk from the Kokura train station for shinkansen, JR train); one-day members ¥1000.*

Kobe—From visitor to resident: How you can set down roots in Japan by **Arudou Debito**. Been in Japan for awhile? Planning to stay longer, even indefinitely? You owe it to yourself to know a few things about how to make your life easier over here—from getting the right visa to getting a better job, from dealing with family issues to dealing with employment issues, from living a quiet life to being an agent for social change. *Fri 28 Mar, 18:00-20:00; Kobe International House (Kokusai Kaikan) Gokodori 8-1-6, Chuo-ku, Kobe, t: 078-231-8161; one-day members ¥1000.*

Matsuyama—Varieties of English: Historical forces and sources by **David Kluge**, Kinjo Gakuin University. Learn the origins of the English language, the forces that shaped it, and examine several varieties, including those of England, Scotland, Ireland, America, Australia, South Africa, India, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. Learn the special characteristics and contributions of each variety. This is a multimedia presentation with examples of music of the varieties and movie clips demonstrating most varieties. *Sun 9 Mar, 14:15-16:20; Shinonome High School Kinenkan 4F; one-day members ¥1000.*

Nagasaki—Expendable entertaining educators: Roles of non-Japanese teachers of English by **Thomas Amundrud**, Ritsumeikan University. What are the roles that non-Japanese teachers of English feel they are called to play, both in and outside the classroom? How might these affect how these teachers are treated, as well as in their lives as expatriates in Japan? The presenter will share his research on these topics. Through workshop activities and discussion, the audience will

be encouraged to share their own experiences to develop, complement and question these research findings. *Sat 29 Mar 14:00-16:00; Dejima Koryu Kaikan, 4F; one day members ¥1000.*

Nagoya—Wireless ready: Interactivity, collaboration and feedback in language learning technologies. An IATEFL Learning Technologies SIG event, supported by JALTCALL SIG, JALT Nagoya, and JALT Gifu Chapters. A second one-day event examining wireless and web 2.0 technologies for language education will be held at the Fushimi Graduate School campus of Nagoya University of Commerce and Business Administration. Further details of the event are available from <wirelessready.nucba.ac.jp>. *Sat 29 Mar, 9:50-17:30; members ¥2000, one-day members ¥3,500.*

Okayama—From visitor to resident—How you can set down roots in Japan by **Arudou Debito**. (See Kobe Chapter for details.) *Sunday 30 Mar, 14:00-16:00; Sankaku A Bldg. 2F near Omotecho in Okayama City; one-day members ¥500.*

Osaka—From visitor to resident—How you can set down roots in Japan by **Arudou Debito**. (See Kobe Chapter for details.) This event is co-sponsored by Osaka ETJ. *Sat 29 Mar, 18:00-20:30; The 6F meeting room of the Osaka Ekimae Dai-2 Building's Lifelong Learning Center, t: 06-6345-5000. <www.manabi.city.osaka.jp>; one-day members ¥1000.*

Toyohashi—SELHi Project: Enriching EFL through the teaching of pragmatics by **Jeremie Bouchard (Sapporo Sacred Heart School)**. (See Gifu Chapter for details.) *Sun 9 Mar, 13:30-16:00; Aichi University, Bldg 5 - room 543; one-day members ¥500.*

Yamagata—Lithuania's history, culture and language education by **Liva Baltraite**. The speaker is a Japanese Government Scholarship researcher at Yamagata University. She will share her background and how it relates to her work in Japan. *Sat 1 Mar, 13:30-15:30; Yamagata Kajo Kominkan Sogo Gakushu Center, Shironishi-machi 2-chome, 2-15, Tel. 0236-45-6163; one-day members ¥800.*

COLUMN • CHAPTER REPORTS

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...with Heather Sparrow

<chap-reports@jalt-publications.org>



The Chapter Reports column is a forum for sharing with the *TLT* readership synopses of presentations held at JALT chapters around Japan. For more information on these speakers, please contact the chapter officers in the JALT Contacts section of this issue. For guidelines on contributions, see the Submissions page at the back of each issue.

East Shikoku: December—Practical classroom ideas for teaching Japanese by **Takame Ueki-Sabine**. Ueki-Sabine's presentation, conducted in a reflective way, had the participants taking active roles as she guided them through her dynamic teaching methods discussing approaches and methods for different levels of Japanese teaching from elementary to university level. The participants were local language teachers (Japanese and English) and undergraduate students interested

in foreign language learning and teaching. Many of the techniques presented were transferable to both Japanese and English language teaching. Ueki-Sabine also discussed the JATS (*Japanese Assistant Teaching Scheme*), a 10-month Japanese teaching internship in Australia she coordinates for Tasmanian schools. Questions from the students ensued.

Reported by Takahiro Ioroi

Gunma: September—Students as editors: Using online concordances by **Stephen Jennings**. Jennings introduced three kinds of activities designed to help participants become aware of the notion of collocation. All of the activities introduced are usable in the classroom setting to benefit students in enhancing their understanding of collocations.

Jennings introduced online corpus using the online *Collins Concordance Sampler (CCS)* which gives many example sentences that show the usage of key words in a given search; this tool can be used in many ways in language classes and allows higher level students to edit their own

mistakes since feedback given by the CCS could be a clue for the students to deduce their errors. This problem solving activity will not only contribute to awareness-raising of general language patterns, but also, lead learners to think and edit by themselves, fostering learner independence. Participants had the chance to experiment with this useful tool and it was felt that this tool could also be beneficial for nonnative English teachers as a resource especially in writing classes.

Reported by Natsue Nakayama

Kitakyushu: November—Two Christmas activities by **Margaret Orleans** and **Malcolm Swanson**. Orleans divided the audience into four groups of four or five and led a couple of enjoyable Christmas games designed for the EFL classroom. The activities appeared to involve a lot of preparation, done by Orleans and Swanson.

“Spot the Lie” asked participants to complete statements about how Christmas is celebrated around the world. Players voted on which answer was correct. It would be difficult to play this game without using a lot of English. The imaginative ignorance found in some of the responses was often amusing—as was the credulity of the other players.

Next was “Classroom Feud,” based on the American TV program, *Family Feud* (*Hyakkunin ni Kikimashita* in Japan). After a few fun rounds, Orleans finished by showing some of her students’ artistic responses to the *Survey Project Progress Report* they must complete in preparation for the game, which had been set up on large sheets of paper for display.

These games provide enjoyment and practice in forming and asking questions, being creative, reporting, reading for comprehension, listening, guessing, and responding quickly.

Reported by Dave Pite

Nagoya: December—My share: 1) Games by **Nagano Yoshimi**. Yoshimi demonstrated two language games, “Blockhead” and the “Time Bomb Game.” Both games involve students using language cards and items such as balls or oranges to pass between them during the games. 2) *Listening practice with video* by Rich Porter. Porter uses video and songs for his students’ listening practice. He makes some cloze tests from the video and lyrics and the students listen and fill the blanks. 3) *Making reindeer* by **Minoura Mari**. Mari showed how to make a reindeer face with coloured paper, tracing a mom’s foot and her

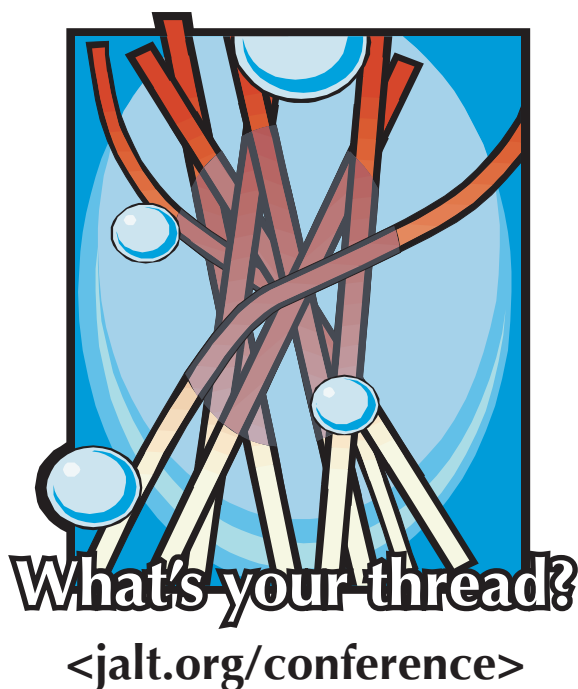
child’s hands. The foot makes the reindeer’s face, and the hands create the reindeer’s antlers.

Reported by Kayoko Kato

Shinshu: November—Project-based learning in ESL by **Arifa Rahman**. Rahman gave an overview of the history of ESL in (what is now) Bangladesh. Starting with the British colonization of India, she showed how the imposition of political boundaries and language led to a backlash effect on English learning there. From the 1990s, however, it was realized that there was a “lost generation” of English learning to redress. Another hurdle to cross was the “pedagogy of the oppressed,” i.e., the authoritarian approach to ESL.

As one means of taking a more communicative approach, Rahman started her project-based learning, based on *Cognitive-Experiential Learning* (Piaget), *Social Learning* (Vygotsky), and *Connectionist-Constructivist Theory* (Sutton, et al.). Students were sent out into the community to do research on a cultural topic (e.g., rickshaw culture) and were asked to write up their results in the form of a simplified research paper. With the teacher as facilitator, learning was self-directed and involved authentic tasks which not only consolidated the four skills, but also engaged and motivated students. Learners came away with a tangible end result, which led to greater confidence and a clear sense of satisfaction.

Reported by Mary Aruga



For changes and additions, please contact the editor
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...with James McCrostie

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To list a position in *The Language Teacher*, please submit online at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs/> or email James McCrostie, Job Information Center Editor, <job-info@jalt-publications.org>. Online submission is preferred. Please place your ad in the body of the email. The notice should be received before the 15th of the month, 2 months before publication, and should contain the

following information: location, name of institution, title of position, whether full- or part-time, qualifications, duties, salary and benefits, application materials, deadline, and contact information. Be sure to refer to *TLT*'s policy on discrimination. Any job advertisement that discriminates on the basis of gender, race, age, or nationality must be modified or will not be included in the JIC column. All advertisements may be edited for length or content.

Job Information Center Online

Recent job listings and links to other job-related websites can be viewed at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs/>

You can go home again

Chris Sippel



If you are considering a return to your home country, the pain of finding a teaching job can be greatly diminished if you remember where you are looking. While job hunting in the United States, I found that many Japanese cultural traits had seeped into my persona and that they

actually hindered me from landing a job.

My cultural transformation manifested itself the most in the early stages of the job search. My Japanese-learned sensibilities left me reluctant to pick up the phone and directly contact local language programs. I spent most of my job searching energy responding to ads and only after being prodded by a friend did I try the direct approach. I soon realized that a phone call to a complete

stranger led to much more success. This was especially true around May, when the planning of summer programs began at the local schools. I was offered positions with very established programs just because I spoke with the director 3 weeks before the summer term was to start and they were short of instructors. The pay and benefits were not especially good, but had I accepted one of these positions, any one of them would have been an excellent foot in the door.

While I enjoyed some success from the phone calls, I was lucky that my poor interview skills did not leave me jobless. My interviewing skills had adapted a little too well to the Japanese interview style. My most recent interviews before leaving Japan had been of the regurgitate-the-resume variety with questions such as: *Oh, so you taught writing for 2 years, did you use a textbook?* Of course, in most Western countries there is no subscribed interview style, so I highly recommend over preparation. Your opinions, philosophies and character will all be assessed and there will be lots of hypothetical situations put forward for a response.

Lastly, remember that your experience living overseas in Japan is a huge asset. Since most of my colleagues and friends in Japan had similar backgrounds, I wrongly assumed that everyone around me back home had also lived and worked abroad. This probably will not be the case, even among other ESL teachers. Review all of the skills and abilities that you developed while overseas and make sure to spotlight them when putting together applications and responding to interview questions.

That being said, if you are not sure of what your post-Japan job focus will be, let the strengths of your experience open the door for opportunities. While purchasing a car at a local dealership I met a Japanese couple who needed help negotiating the purchase of their own car. The husband, who happened to be the vice president of a local Japanese company, offered me a job the following week. Everywhere you go, the experience of living overseas and of having worked to teach something to others are seen as great assets. While my current job is not directly related to teaching, I still do a lot of educating as I help the Americans and Japanese in the company communicate and understand each other.

Job Openings

The Job Information Center lists only brief summaries of open positions in *TLT*. Full details of each position are available on the JALT website. Please visit <www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs/> to view the full listings.

Location: Tokyo-to

School: Tokyo Woman's Christian University

Position: Part-time teachers

Start Date: April 2008

Deadline: Ongoing

Location: Tokyo-to

School: ELS Japan Solutions

Position: Part-time university teachers

Start Date: April 2008

Deadline: Ongoing

Location: Brunei

School: Brunei state schools

Position: Full-time primary and secondary school teachers

Start Date: Teachers start at different times

Deadline: Ongoing

Location: Tokyo-to

School: Keio University

Position: Full-time teacher

Start Date: 1 April 2009

Deadline: 22 April 2008

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COLUMN • CONFERENCE CALENDAR

...with Alan Stoke

<conferences@jalt-publications.org>



New listings are welcome. Please email information, including a web-site address, to the column editor by the 15th of the month, at least 3 months before a conference in Japan, or 4 months before an overseas conference. Thus, 15 March is the deadline for a June conference in Japan or a July conference overseas. Feedback or suggestions

on the usefulness of this column are also most welcome.

Upcoming Conferences

17-19 Mar 08—International Conference on Foreign Language Teaching and Learning 2008: *Innovating Minds, Communicating Ideas: Reinventing Language Teaching and Learning*, at Hilton Petaling Jaya Hotel, Malaysia. **Contact:** <imcicon.mmu.edu.my/index.php>

29 Mar 08—Wireless Ready: Interactivity, Collaboration and Feedback in Language Learning Technologies, at NUCB Graduate School, Nagoya. A one-day event to examine the role of wireless learning technologies in language education. **Contact:** <wirelessready.nucba.ac.jp>

29 Mar-1 Apr 08—American Association for Applied Linguistics, in Washington DC. **Contact:** <www.aal.org/aal2008/index.htm>

30 Mar 08—Shinshu ELT Research Support Group: Fourth Mini-Colloquium, at Matsumoto M-Wing, Nagano. This event is intended for both experienced researchers and those who wish to make their first steps into the academic community, especially distance MA students. **Contact:** <johnadamson253@hotmail.com>

2-5 Apr 08—42nd Annual TESOL Convention and Exhibit: *Worlds of TESOL: Building Communities of Practice, Inquiry, and Creativity*, in New York. **Contact:** <www.tesol.org/2008convention>

7-11 Apr 08—42nd Annual International IATEFL Conference and Exhibition, in Exeter, UK. **Contact:** <www.iatefl.org/content/conferences/2008/index.php>

11-13 Apr 08—53rd Annual Conference of the International Linguistic Association: *Language Policy and Language Planning*, at Suny College, Old Westbury, New York. **Contact:** <www.ilaword.org>

12 Apr 08—Fourth Asian EFL Journal Conference: *Innovation and Tradition in ELT in the New Millennium*, at Pukyong National U., Pusan. **Contact:** <www.asian-efl-journal.com/index.php>

3-4 May 08—2008 International Conference on English Instruction and Assessment: *Change from Within, Change in Between*, at National Chung Cheng U., Taiwan. **Contact:** <www.ccu.edu.tw/flcccu/2008EIA/English/Eindex.php>

10 May 08—First Conference on English for Special Purposes: *Exploring the ESP Paradigm: Theory to Practice*, at Himeji Dokkyo U. To discuss: the use of technology in ESP; cultural considerations within ESP; ESP research; ESP resources; classroom applications; and interdisciplinary implications. **Contact:** <www.geocities.com/hdu_conf/main.html>

10-11 May 08—Seventh Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference 2008: *Diversity and Convergence: Educating with Integrity*, at Doshisha U., Shinmachi Campus, Kyoto. Plenary speakers will be Tim Murphey and Junko Yamanaka. To be hosted by JALT Pragmatics SIG, Testing and Evaluation SIG, Teacher Education SIG, Materials Writers SIG, Other Language Educators SIG, Gender Awareness in Language Education SIG, Lifelong Language Learning SIG, and Kyoto chapter. The deadline for pre-registration is 15 Mar 08. **Contact:** <www.jalt.org/pansig/2008/pansig08/>

31 May-1 Jun 08—JALT CALL SIG Annual International Conference: *New Frontiers in CALL: Negotiating Diversity*, at Nagoya U. of Commerce & Business. The keynote speaker will be Phil Hubbard. **Contact:** <www.jaltcall.org>

2-5 Jun 08—26th Summer School of Applied Language Studies: *Mediating Multilingualism: Meanings and Modalities*, at U. of Jyväskylä, Finland. **Contact:** <www.jyu.fi/hum/laitokset/kielet/conference2008/en>

6-8 Jun 08—Fifth National Conference of Japan Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education, in Nagoya. **Contact:** <jasce.jp/conf0501indexe.html>

14 Jun 08—First Chubu Region JACET/JALT Joint Conference 2008: *Toward a Synergistic Collaboration in English Education*, at Chukyo U., Nagoya. To focus particularly on collaboration between NESTs and Japanese EFL teachers. Hosted by JACET Chubu and JALT Gifu, Nagoya, and Toyohashi chapters. **Contact:** <www.jacetchubu.org/> <jalt.org/main/conferences>

18-20 Jun 08—Language Issues in English-Medium Universities: A Global Concern, at U. of Hong Kong. **Contact:** <www.hku.hk/clear/conference08>

25-28 Jun 08—30th Language Testing Research Colloquium: *Focusing on the Core: Justifying the Use of Language Assessments to Stakeholders*, in Hangzhou, China. **Contact:** <www.sis.zju.edu.cn/sis/sisht/english/ltrc2008/main.html>

26-28 Jun 08—Building Connections with Languages and Cultures, at Far Eastern National U., Vladivostok. **Contact:** <felt.wl.dvgu.ru/upcoming.htm>

26-29 Jun 08—Ninth International Conference of the Association for Language Awareness: *Engaging with Language*, at U. of Hong Kong. **Contact:** <www.hku.hk/clear/ala>

1-3 Jul 08—Second International Conference on Language Development, Language Revitalization and Multilingual Education in Ethnic Minority Communities, in Bangkok. **Contact:** <www.seameo.org/_ld2008/index.html>

3-5 Jul 08—Fifth Biennial Conference of the International Gender and Language Association, at Victoria U. of Wellington, NZ. **Contact:** <www.vuw.ac.nz/igala5/>

9-12 Jul 08—ACTA2008: *Pedagogies of Connection: Developing Individual and Community Identities*, in Alice Springs. **Contact:** <www.tesol.org.au/conference/>

10-11 Jul 08—CADAAD2008: Second International Conference of Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis Across Disciplines, at U. of Hertfordshire. **Contact:** <cadaad.org/cadaad08>

advert

16-20 Jul 08—11th International Conference on Language and Social Psychology, in Tucson, Arizona. **Contact:** <www.ialsp.org/Conferences.html>

21-26 Jul 08—18th International Congress of Linguists, at Korea U., Seoul. **Contact:** <cil18.org>

31 Jul-3 Aug 08—PROMS 2008: Pacific Rim Objective Measurement Symposium, at Ochanomizu U. To promote the use of Rasch measurement models to analyze data from assessments, including educational measurement. On one day the symposium will focus on language learning and assessment, including development of questionnaires. Participants will have an opportunity to consult with a researcher on how to apply the Rasch model. There will also be workshops to demonstrate Rasch-based software. **Contact:** <www.proms-tokyo.org>

5-6 Aug 08—WorldCALL2008: Third International Conference, in Fukuoka. WorldCALL is a worldwide association of teachers interested in CALL. **Contact:** <www.j-let.org/~wcf/modules/tiny0/>

24-29 Aug 08—15th World Congress of Applied Linguistics: Multilingualism: Challenges and Opportunities, in Essen. So far, about 950 papers and 130 symposia have been confirmed, and over 2,000 participants are expected. Pre-register as follows: earlybird, by 31 Mar 08; standard, by 30 Jun 08; latecomer, after 30 Jun 08. Applications are currently invited to chair sessions. **Contact:** <www.aila2008.org>

30 Aug-2 Sep 08—Antwerp CALL2008: 13th International CALL Research Conference: Practice-Based and Practice-Oriented CALL Research, at U. of Antwerp. **Contact:** <www.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=.CALL2008>

23-26 Oct 08—NCYU 2008 Second International Conference on Applied Linguistics: Global and Domestic Perspectives, at National Chiayi University, Taiwan. **Contact:** <web.ncyu.edu.tw/~chaochih/ncyu2008ical.htm>

Calls for Papers or Posters

Deadline: 15 Mar 08 (for 4-5 Jul 08)—National Language Policy: Language Diversity for National Unity, in Bangkok. **Contact:** <www.royin.go.th/th/home/>

Deadline: 31 Mar 08 (for 11-13 Sep 08)—BAAL 2008: British Association for Applied Linguistics: Taking the Measure of Applied Linguistics, at Swansea U., Wales. **Contact:** <www.baal.org.uk/confs.htm>

Deadline: 1 Apr 08 (for 4-6 Jul 08)—Applied Linguistics Association of Australia: Critical Dimensions in Applied Linguistics, at U. of Sydney. **Contact:** <escholarship.library.usyd.edu.au/conferences/index.php/LingFest2008/ALAA>

Deadline: 15 Apr 08 (for 17-19 Oct 08)—31st Annual Second Language Research Forum: Exploring SLA: Perspectives, Positions, and Practices, at U. of Hawaii, Manoa. **Contact:** <nflrc.hawaii.edu/slr08/>

Deadline: 25 Apr 08 (for 31 Oct-3 Nov 08)—PAC7 at JALT2008: 34th JALT International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exposition: Shared Identities: Our Interweaving Threads, at National Olympics Memorial Youth Center, Tokyo. **Contact:** <conferences.jalt.org/2008>

Deadline: 19 Jul 08 (for 8-10 Dec 08)—Inaugural Conference of the Asia-Pacific Rim LSP and Professional Communication Association: Partnerships in Action: Research, Practice and Training, at City U. of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Polytechnic U. **Contact:** <www.engl.polyu.edu.hk/lsp/APacLSP08>

The editors welcome submissions of materials concerned with all aspects of language education, particularly with relevance to Japan. If accepted, the editors reserve the right to edit all copy for length, style, and clarity, without prior notification to authors. Materials in English should be sent in Rich Text Format by either email (preferred) or post. Postal submissions must include a clearly labeled floppy disk or CD-ROM and one printed copy. Manuscripts should follow the American Psychological Association (APA) style as it appears in *The Language Teacher*. Please submit materials to the contact editor indicated for each column. Deadlines are indicated below.

日本国内での語学教育に関する投稿をお待ちしています。できるだけ電子メールにリッチ・テキスト・フォーマットの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。郵送の場合には、フロッピーディスクかCD-ROMにラベルを張り、プリントアウトしたものと一緒にお送り下さい。書式はアメリカ心理学会(APA)スタイルに基づき、スタックリストページにある各コラムの編集者まで締め切りを留意して、提出してください。提出されたものにつきましては編集者に一任していただくことになります。

Feature Articles

English Features. Submissions should be well-written, well-documented, and researched articles. Analysis and data can be quantitative or qualitative (or both). Manuscripts are typically screened and evaluated anonymously by members of *The Language Teacher* Editorial Advisory Board. They are evaluated for degree of scholarly research, relevance, originality of conclusions, etc. Submissions should:

- be up to 3,000 words (not including appendices)
- have pages numbered, paragraphs separated by double carriage returns (not tabbed), and sub-headings (boldfaced or italic) used throughout for the convenience of readers
- have the article's title, the author's name, affiliation, contact details, and word count at the top of the first page
- be accompanied by an English abstract of up to 150 words (translated into Japanese, if possible, and submitted as a separate file)
- be accompanied by a 100-word biographical background
- include a list of up to 8 keywords for indexing
- have tables, figures, appendices, etc. attached as separate files.

Send as an email attachment to the co-editors.

日本語論文: 実証性のある研究論文を求めます。質的か、計量的か(あるいは両方)で追究された分析やデータを求めます。原稿は、匿名のTLTの査読委員により、研究水準、関連性、結論などの独創性で評価されます。8,000語(資料は除く)以内で、ページ番号を入れ、段落ごとに2行あけ、副見出し(太文字かイタリック体)を付けて下さい。最初のページの一番上に題名、著者名、所属、連絡先および語数をお書き下さい。英文、和文で400語の要旨、300語の著者略歴もご提出下さい。表、図、付録も可能です。共同編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

Readers' Forum articles are thoughtful essays on topics related to language teaching and learning in Japan. Submissions should:

- be of relevance to language teachers in Japan
- contain up to 2,500 words
- include English and Japanese abstracts, as per Features above
- include a list of up to 8 keywords for indexing
- include a short bio and a Japanese title.

Send as an email attachment to the co-editors.

読者フォーラム: 日本での言語教育、及び言語学習に関する思慮的なエッセイを募集しています。日本での言語教師に関連している、6,000字以内で、英文・和文の要旨、短い略歴および日本語のタイトルを添えて下さい。共同編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

Interviews. If you are interested in interviewing a well-known professional in the field of language teaching in and around Japan, please consult the editors first. Lengths range from 1,500-2,500 words. Send as an email attachment to the co-editors.

インタビュー: 日本国内外で言語教育の分野での「有名な」専門家にインタビューしたい場合は、編集者に最初に意見を尋ね下さい。3,600語から6,000語の長さです。共同編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

Conference Reports. If you have attended a conference on a topic of interest to language teachers in Asia, write a 1,500-word report summarizing the main events. Send as an email attachment to the co-editors.

学会報告: 語学教師に関心のあるトピックの大会に出席された場合は、4000語程度に要約して、報告書を書いてください。共同編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

Departments

My Share. Submissions should be original teaching techniques or a lesson plan you have used. Readers should be able to replicate your technique or lesson plan. Submissions should:

- be up to 1,000 words
- have the article title, the author name, affiliation, email address, and word count at the top of the first page
- include a *Quick Guide* to the lesson plan or teaching technique
- follow My Share formatting
- have tables, figures, appendices, etc. attached as separate files
- include copyright warnings, if appropriate.

Send as an email attachment to the My Share editor.

マイシェア: 学習活動に関する実践的なアイデアについて、テクニックや教案を読者が再利用できるように紹介するものです。1,600字以内で最初のページにタイトル、著者名、所属、電子メールアドレスと文字数をお書き下さい。表、図、付録なども含めることができますが、著作権にはお気を付け下さい。My Share 担当編集者に電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

Book Reviews. We invite reviews of books and other educational materials. Contact the Publishers' Review Copies Liaison <pub-review@jalt-publications.org> for material listed in the Recently Received column, and the Book Reviews editor if you wish to review unlisted material, including websites or other online resources. Review articles treating several related titles are particularly welcome. Submissions should:

- show a thorough understanding of the material reviewed in under 750 words
- reflect actual classroom usage in the case of classroom materials
- be thoroughly checked and proofread before submission.

Send as an email attachment to the Book Reviews editor.

書評: 本や教材の書評です。書評編集者 <pub-review@jalt-publications.org> に関合わせ、最近出版されたリストからお選びいただくか、もしwebサイトなどのリストにない場合には書評編集者と連絡をとってください。複数の関連するタイトルを扱うものも特に歓迎します。書評は、本の内容紹介、教室活動や教材としての使用法に触れ、書評編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

JALT Focus. Submissions should be directly related to recent or upcoming developments within JALT, preferably on an organization-wide scale. Submissions should:

- be no more than 750 words
- be relevant to the JALT membership as whole
- encourage readers to participate more actively in JALT on both a micro and macro level.

Deadline: 15th of the month, 1½ months prior to publication. Send as an email attachment to the JALT Focus editor.

JALTフォーカス: JALT内の進展を会員の皆様にお伝えするものです。どのJALT会員にもふさわしい内容で、JALTIC、より活動的に参加するように働きかけるものです。1,600字程度で、毎月15日までにお送り下さい。掲載は1月半後になります。JALTフォーカス編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

JALT Notices. Submissions should be of general relevance to language learners and teachers in Japan. JALT Notices can be accessed at <www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/focus/>. Calls for papers or research projects will be accepted; however, announcements of conferences, colloquia, or seminars should be submitted to the Conference Calendar. Submissions:

- should be no more than 150 words
- should be submitted as far in advance as is possible
- will be removed from the website when the announcement becomes outdated.

Submissions can be sent through the JALT Notices online submissions form.

掲示板: 日本での論文募集や研究計画は、オンライン <www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/focus/> で見ることができます。できるだけ前もって掲載いたしますが、終了次第、消去いたします。掲示板オンライン・サブミッション形式に従い、400字以内で投稿して下さい。なお、会議、セミナーは Conference Calendar で扱います。

SIG News. JALT's Special Interest Groups may use this column to report on news or events happening within their group. This might include mini-conferences, presentations, publications, calls for papers or presenters, or general SIG information. Deadline: 15th of month, 6 weeks prior to publication. Send as an email attachment to the SIG News editor.

SIGニュース: SIGはニュースやイベントの報告にこのコラムを使用できます。会議、プレゼンテーション、出版物、論文募集、連絡発表者などの情報を記入下さい。締め切りは出版の2か月前の15日までに、SIG委員長に電子メールの添付ファイルで送ってください。

Chapter Events. Chapters are invited to submit upcoming events. Submissions should follow the precise format used in every issue of *TLT* (topic, speaker, date, time, place, fee, and other information in order, followed by a 60-word description of the event).

Meetings scheduled for early in the month should be published in the previous month's issue. Maps of new locations can be printed upon consultation with the column editor. Deadline: 15th of the month, 2 months prior to publication. Send as an email attachment to the Chapter Events editor.

支部イベント: 近づいている支部のイベントの案内情報です。トピック、発表者、日時、時間、場所、料金をこの順序で掲載いたします。締め切りは、毎月15日で、2か月前までに、支部イベント編集者に電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

Chapter Reports. This column is a forum for sharing synopses of presentations given at JALT chapters around Japan. Submissions must therefore reflect the nature of the column and be written clearly and concisely. Chapters are limited to one report per month. Submissions should:

- be interesting and not contain extraneous information
- be in well-written, concise, informative prose
- be made by email only – faxed and/or postal submissions are not acceptable
- be approximately 200 words in order to explore the content in sufficient detail
- be structured as follows: Chapter name; Event date; Event title; Name of presenter(s); Synopsis; Reporter's name.

Send as an email attachment to the Chapter Reports editor.

支部会報告: JALT地域支部会の研究会報告です。有益な情報をご提供下さい。600文字程度で簡潔にお書き下さい。支部名、日時、イベント名、発表者名、要旨、報告者名を、この順序でお書き下さい。支部会報告編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。ファックスや郵便は受理いたしませんので、ご注意ください。

Job Information Center. TLT encourages all prospective employers to use this free service to locate the most qualified language teachers in Japan. The notice should:

- contain the following information: City and prefecture, Name of institution, Title of position, Whether full- or part-time, Qualifications, Duties, Salary & benefits, Application materials, Deadline, Contact information
- not be positions wanted. (It is JALT policy that they will not be printed.)

Deadline: 15th of month, 2 months prior to publication. Send as an email attachment to the JIC editor.

求人欄: 語学教育の求人募集を無料でサービス提供します。県と都市名、機関名、職名、専任か非常勤かの区別、資格、仕事内容、給料、締め切りや連絡先を発行2ヶ月前の15日までにお知らせ下さい。特別の書式はありません。JC担当編集者に電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

Conference Calendar. Announcements of conferences and their calls for papers as well as for colloquia, symposiums, and seminars may be posted in this column. The announcement should be up to 150 words. Deadline: 15th of month, at least 3 months prior to the conference date for conferences in Japan and 4 months prior for overseas conferences. Send within an email message to the Conference Calendar editor.

催し: コロキウム、シンポジウム、セミナー、会議のお知らせと、論文募集の案内です。Conference Calendar編集者に400語程度で電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。締め切りは毎月15日で、日本、および海外の会議で3ヶ月前までの情報を掲載します。

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The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

- a professional organization formed in 1976
-1976年に設立された学術学会
- working to improve language learning and teaching, particularly in a Japanese context
-語学の学習と教育の向上を図ることを目的としています
- over 3,000 members in Japan and overseas
-国内外で約3,000名の会員がいます

Annual international conference 年次国際大会

- 1,500 to 2,000 participants
-毎年1,500名から2,000名が参加します
- hundreds of workshops and presentations
-多数のワークショップや発表があります
- publishers' exhibition
-出版社による教材展があります
- Job Information Centre
-就職情報センターが設けられます

JALT publications include:

- *The Language Teacher*—our monthly publication -を毎月発行します
- *JALT Journal*—biannual research journal
-を年2回発行します
- Annual Conference Proceedings
-年次国際大会の研究発表記録集を発行します
- SIG and chapter newsletters, anthologies, and conference proceedings
-分野別研究部会や支部も会報、アンソロジー、研究会発表記録集を発行します

Meetings and conferences sponsored by local chapters and special interest groups (SIGs) are held throughout Japan. Presentation and research areas include:

- Bilingualism
- CALL
- College and university education
- Cooperative learning
- Gender awareness in language education
- Global issues in language education
- Japanese as a second language
- Learner autonomy
- Pragmatics, pronunciation, second language acquisition
- Teaching children
- Lifelong language learning
- Testing and evaluation
- Materials development

支部及び分野別研究部会による例会や研究会は日本各地で開催され、以下の分野での発表や研究報告が行われます。パイリンガリズム、CALL、大学外国語教育、共同学習、ジェンダーと語学学習、グローバル問題、日本語教育、自主的学習、語用論・発音・第二言語習得、児童語学教育、生涯語学教育研究部会、試験と評価、教材開発。

JALT cooperates with domestic and international partners, including [JALTは以下の国内外の学会と提携しています]:

- IATEFL—International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
- JACET—the Japan Association of College English Teachers
- PAC—the Pan Asian Conference consortium
- TESOL—Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

Membership Categories 会員と会費

All members receive annual subscriptions to *The Language Teacher* and *JALT Journal*, and member discounts for meetings and conferences. 会員は*The Language Teacher*や*JALT Journal*等の出版物を購読出来、又例会や大会にも割引価格で参加出来ます。

- Regular 一般会員: ¥10,000
- Student rate (undergraduate/graduate in Japan) 学生会員(日本にある大学、大学院の学生): ¥6,000
- Joint—for two persons sharing a mailing address, one set of publications ジョイント会員(同じ住所で登録する個人2名を対象とし、JALT出版物は2名に1部): ¥17,000
- Group (5 or more) ¥6,500/person—one set of publications for each five members 団体会員(5名以上を対象とし、JALT出版物は5名につき1部): 1名6,500円

For more information please consult our website <jalt.org>, ask an officer at any JALT event, or contact JALT Central Office.

JALT Central Office

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Old Grammarians...

...by Scott Gardner <old-grammarians@jalt-publications.org>

How to waste your time

As I write these words I'm sitting in a franchise café, eating something called a *chokokuro* (not, as the name suggests, a chocolate-covered cockroach), staring at a blue sign outside that proudly promotes a company called *Trite*. Fumes from the smoking section waft toward me with the aid of a thoughtlessly engineered air conditioning system. With my left leg figure-foured over my right, I can see that the elastic in my socks is giving out. In short, I've had nothing else to do for the last half hour. And I have only one paragraph to show for it.

It's a pity that professional life in this country creates such a dearth of leisure time and activities, especially since even as college students, so many Japanese have their choices of recreation dictated to them by domineering club and circle organizations. At my school some 4th-year students who have retired from their clubs wander around like care-center geriatrics, unable to think of anything to do with the free time they suddenly have.

I'm intrigued by the university club system. I don't know about other schools, but most club and circle activities at mine take place in a dilapidated old building lovingly and oxymoronicallly called the "circle box." That geometric irony alone may be part of the clubs' allure, especially since the building itself is not visually appealing by any means, unless you can appreciate the powerful postmodern anti-message expressed in cinder blocks, carpet stains, and dust bunnies large enough to conceal, well, bunnies.

Typically these clubs and circles are very demanding, calling members out at 6:00 in the morning, six days a week. But students insist it is all good for them. They tell themselves, "I must endure this living hell of a tennis circle because it will teach me important life skills, such as how to endure living hells." And what good is a hobby in Japan if it isn't exacting, enervating, and restrictively expensive? It sort of reminds me of my ill-considered desire in high school, in the landlocked state of Utah, to get

a scuba diving license. We trained for weeks in swimming pools, then for certification we made a 4-hour drive to a hot spring in the Nevada desert to dive down 20 meters and kick up some mud. I've completely lost track of the license I earned for those efforts. Perhaps I left it down there in the muck.

Here are a few noteworthy hobbies pursued by acquaintances in Japan:

Castle cruising—Some people get fulfillment out of studying and visiting Japanese castles. Japan has over 120 standing castles, some of them nearly pristine, others gutted and concrete-reinforced. To take one example, Matsumae Castle in Hokkaido has one of the few remaining examples of the famed "nightingale elevators," which were meant to thwart enemy ninja trying to sneak in through the underground parking garage.

Temple trekking—Shikoku is home to 88 temples associated with the famous monk Kukai. Pilgrims from all over the world come to visit each temple in what's called the *Shikoku Hachijuu-hakkasho*. Although Okayama (where I live) would seem to be a logical starting point for the pilgrimage, with its impressive bridge across the Seto Inland Sea, most *henro* (pilgrims) choose to start from Wakayama—several prefectures away, and bridgeless. A few years ago the Okayama City Tourism Bureau tried unsuccessfully to have a kiosk on its shinkansen platform designated as the 89th temple in the circuit.

Hanami hopping—This is a deplorable foreigners' pastime which consists of showing a tourist's interest in *hanami* parties, asking drunken revelers silly "newcomer" questions about Japanese culture until invited to join in for free food and drink.

Trainspotting—Of course I mean the literal act of standing around at railroad crossings and identifying trains that go by. I did this once. We drove for 2 hours, parked, waited by a bridge with about 100 camera-toting enthusiasts, watched an old steam train roll by, then left. When I got home and back on my sofa I determined that "lint spotting" was easily as enjoyable.