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http://jalt.org/conference

In this month's issue . . .

Hello, and welcome to the final issue of *The Language Teacher* for 2015, arriving in your mailbox just in time for the 41st annual JALT International conference in Shizuoka. As always, the conference organizers and volunteers have been working tireless to ensure the participants can enjoy the excellent and innovative keynote speeches, presentations and poster sessions.

In the first Feature Article, "*Using speech act sets to inform study abroad instruction*," **Joseph Siegel** considers the use of speech act sets to inform study abroad instruction and examine pragmatic development of English learners before and after their overseas experiences. **Paul Stone**, in the second Feature Article, "*Video reflexive ethnography as a tool for better classroom practice*," describes an application of ethnographically-informed approaches to discourse analysis that attempts to bring about change in EFL classroom practice.

Moving on to Readers' Forum, **Jenny L. Numadate** focuses on what to consider when choosing material for Audio-visual EFL English classes. In the next Readers' Forum paper, **David O'Flaherty** argues that peer assessment can be helpful for high school students, involving students in the creation of assessment criteria and the giving and receiving of feedback can be adopted for use in high school English classes in Japan. In Book Reviews, Matthew W. Turner reviews *Understanding English across Cultures* and Adam Murray evaluates *Choose Your Own Adventure: Mystery of the Maya.*

In this final issue of the year, we say good-bye to our *TLT* senior editor, Carol Borrmann-Begg, and welcome Glenn Magee as the new junior coeditor. Thank you Carol for your dedication and hard work.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *TLT* and we are looking forward to seeing you at the conference in Shizuoka. Also, as the year comes to a close, we would like to wish you all a safe and happy holiday season.

Toshiko Sugino, TLT *Japanese-Language Editor*

Continued over



皆様、2015年最終号のThe Language Teacherへようこそ。本誌は、静岡で開催される第41回JALT年次大会の前にお手元に届くと思います。例年と同様、参加された方々が素晴らしく革新的な基調講演や口頭発表やポスターセッションを楽しむことができるように、開催委員会やボランティアの人たちが懸命に準備を重ねています。

今月号のFeatureは2つの論文を掲載しています。Paul Stone 氏は“Video reflexive ethnography as a tool for better classroom practice”の中で、EFL授業での実践に変化をもたらすために、民族学的アプローチを伴う談話分析を適用する試みについて記述しています。Joseph Siegelは、2つ目のFAで、留学前教育において発話行為セット（SAS）の使用を奨励することと、留学前後における英語語用論的能力、特に発話行為の発達を分析しています。

最初のReaders’ Forumで、David O’Flahertyは、評価基準作成における学習者の参加、フィードバックの相互付与といったピアアセスメントの要素の、日本の高等学校英語授業における有効性について述べています。もう１つのRFで、Jenny L. Numadateは、「オーディオ・ビジュアル英語」の授業で教材を選ぶ際に考慮すべき点などについて述べています。

本年の終わりに向けて、編集者の１人であるCarol Borrmann-Beggが辞められ、Glenn Mageeが代わりに役職を引き受けてくださいます。Carolの長年の功績に対してここの感謝の意を表したいと思います。

どうぞ今月号が皆様にとって役立つものになりますように、静岡での年次大会でお会いするのを楽しみにしています。また、本年の終わりに向けて、皆様が健やかで楽しい休暇を過ごせますようにお祈りいたします。

Toshiko Sugino, TLT *Japanese-Language Editor*

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Using Speech Act Sets to Inform Study Abroad Instruction

Joseph Siegel
Meiji Gakuin University

This paper considers the use of speech act sets (SASs) to inform study abroad instruction and examine pragmatic development of English learners before and after their overseas experiences. To do so, it focuses on pre/post-study abroad oral discourse completion tasks completed by five Japanese university students who studied abroad in the US for one semester. Their spoken responses to a set of ten scenarios were video recorded, transcribed and compared to SASs, which are models of functional language use. To exemplify this approach to pragmatic assessment, the paper focuses on three SASs: apology, request, and thanking. Findings from the SAS analysis show not only pragmatic development but also identify specific aspects that teachers may wish to address during study abroad instruction. This type of informed instruction can build on students' existing ability and target pragmatic options that they may need to adopt if they are going to study abroad.

本論の目的は、留学前教育において発話行為セット（SAS）の使用を奨励することと、留学前後における英語語用論的能力、特に発話行為の発達を分析することにある。本研究では1学期間の米国留学を行った5名の日本人大学生　に対して実施した口頭談話完成タスク　(ODCT：oral discourse completion task) に着目した。このテストは留学前と帰国後に実施され、10の筋書きに対する応答を録画し、書き起こして、機能的言語使用のモデルとされるSASと比較した。中でも「謝罪」「依頼」「感謝」の3つのSASに焦点を当て分析を行った。その結果、発話行為に発達がみられただけでなく、留学前教育において指導が必要とされる点が明らかになった。このような研究に基づいた指導は学習者が既に持っている能力を伸ばすことができるだけでなく、特に留学の際に必要となる発話行為に焦点を当てることができる。

With the increasing ease of international travel, the importance of intercultural communication, and the position of English as a lingua franca, university students from English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts are studying abroad in English as a second language (ESL) settings in increasing numbers. All of these trends will likely continue, as study abroad leads to "increased cultural capital for the individual [and] improved international relations" (Bryam & Feng, 2006, p. 1). In Japan, the Education Ministry reports that 58,600 Japanese students studied abroad in 2010, a number the Japanese government appears motivated to double in the near future (Kameda, 2013). Given these expectations for Japan and other countries where EFL is taught, study abroad preparation courses and the development of language abilities while abroad are relevant areas in need of immediate attention from second language (L2) teachers and researchers.

Students on study abroad programs typically have opportunities to attend classes, join clubs, make friends, and interact with host families in the L2—adventures that undoubtedly contribute to their L2 development. That development is often assessed by standardized receptive tests that may overlook or undervalue the pragmatic competence and output of study abroad learners in favor of skill-based multiple choice questions. Further, such tests do little to inform subsequent teaching and curriculum planning. Study abroad invariably involves interaction with people in real life (e.g., ordering food, using public transportation, etc.). Therefore, it is important to understand and monitor the pragmatic ability and progress of students in study abroad programs.

The purpose of this paper is to consider the value of speech act sets (SASs) in monitoring pragmatic development and determining students' needs for targeted instruction in study abroad preparation courses. While this paper focuses on students studying abroad, many university students do not study overseas. However, some may hope to travel abroad, live overseas short-term, and/or communicate in their L2 in other contexts. As such, pragmatic ability is also likely a necessary attribute for those students. The paper begins by discussing pragmatics as a general field within EFL/ESL education and then moves on to outline SASs. These are prototypical, move-by-move sequences that accomplish particular objectives. As such, SASs are valuable tools for examining language and strategic choices made during speech production. To exemplify this approach to language analysis, and how it can be used to inform study abroad instruction, analysis of three SASs (apologizing, requesting, and thanking) completed by five Japanese university students are highlighted. Because the number of participants involved in this project is limited, the findings and discussion in this article should be viewed as illustrative rather than comprehensive.

Pragmatic Development and Study Abroad

Pragmatics has been defined as "the study of language from the point of view of users, especially the choices they make . . . and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication" (Crystal, 1997, p. 301). Two aspects of this definition should be points of emphasis for study abroad instructors and students: *choice* and *effect*. When it comes to pragmatic choice, EFL/ESL learners need to be aware of the range of linguistic and strategic options to which they can avail themselves. The linguistic options will certainly differ from their first language (L1), while the strategic alternatives in English may also vary depending on L1 and cultural background (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). It is important for learners to develop a repertoire of practical situation-dependent communicative choices. This is because study abroad students need to interact successfully in diverse contexts and new cultures with speakers ranging in age, gender, social class, and status (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Kinginger & Farrell, 2004).

In terms of effect, learners need to realize and be introduced to the potential consequences of using these different linguistic options in certain situations and contexts. For instance, speaking to a friend in the cafeteria about a poor test result may require different language and strategies than speaking about the same topic to an instructor who administered the test. Such situations require speakers to consider options and select among alternatives to produce contextually-appropriate speech (Kasper & Rose, 2002). The capacity to operate within pragmatic norms, which are a "range of tendencies or conventions for pragmatic language use that are . . . typically or generally preferred in the L2 community" (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 13), is important in such scenarios.

Violation of these norms may lead to unintended consequences and unequal treatment for the speaker. On the other hand, cultured choices and appropriate interaction with different sub-groups will potentially lead to more positive experiences and increased L2 motivation for learners. Based on this pragmatic line of thinking, teachers involved in study abroad support programs may consider the following questions: Are learners equipped with the linguistic and strategic range to appropriately adjust their output depending on different situations? Do they understand the potential impact of choosing one phrase or strategy over another?

Given the importance of pragmatic competence to productive and successful study abroad experiences, one might expect a reasonable amount of classroom time devoted to pragmatic choice and effect. The typical classroom context in Japan, like many other EFL/ESL environments, may struggle to prime learners with extensive and appropriate pragmatic abilities to thrive in interactions beyond the classroom. That is, pragmatic development may be underrepresented in classes and/or in teaching materials. While the classroom context may be suitable for targeting grammar or syntax, it is often largely inadequate for pragmatic and sociolinguistic development (Fraser, 2010; Kasper & Rose, 2002). According to Kinginger and Farrell (2004, p. 19), study abroad can serve as a useful "complement [to classroom instruction, as it potentially links] linguistic and pragmatic features."

Study abroad experiences can compensate for the lack of pragmatic attention in typical L2 classrooms and are said to provide ample opportunities to gain meaningful pragmatic perception and experience (Taguchi, 2011). Taguchi (2014, p. 4) notes that study abroad benefits learners by "[developing] their sociopragmatic sensitivity [so that learners] come to understand that their linguistic choices are guided by the contextual factors of the circumstances. [Moreover] their choices have a direct consequence on the outcome of interaction and interpersonal relationships". In other words, students need to be aware of their options and the consequences that can come from appropriate and inappropriate choices. Even though L1 norms for language functions may differ from the L2, learners embarking on study abroad will benefit from familiarity with L2 speech act norms. Given this importance, it may be advantageous for educators to examine students' pragmatic abilities prior to and following study abroad. Such examination would allow teachers to understand how to prepare learners. In addition, it would provide them with data on how pragmatic competence evolves during the students' time abroad.

Speech Act Sets

While pragmatics is a broad area within linguistics, much related research has involved speech acts performed by learners, and the linguistic and strategic choices they make (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013). A speech act entails the "communicative function associated with a single utterance, e.g., requesting, advising, or warning" (Mitchell, Myles & Marsden, 2013, p. 305). That is, speech acts succinctly describe what speakers are *doing* with language and thus, examinations of speech acts have been valuable in identifying and differentiating the steps and stages of functional communication.

In an effort to advance pragmatic studies through a speech act perspective, the notion of speech act

sets (SASs) has been promoted in recent literature (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). A SAS is a group of possible strategies and linguistic moves that speakers may employ when performing a speech act. They consist of patterns of output by successful language users in an effort to establish frameworks and options typically employed for specific purposes (for example, to make a request or thank someone). As this study involves EFL learners, English-based SASs have been incorporated; however, SAS patterns may vary by language and culture.

To illustrate, Ishihara and Cohen (2010, p. 8) point out that there are at least five possible options within the speech act set for apologizing: "expression of apology, acknowledgement of responsibility, explanation or account, offer of repair, and promise of non-recurrence." A successful English user would select from these options based on situational factors. SASs may contain obligatory moves (for example, the head act during a request) as well as optional steps (for example, using an attention getter such as "Hi there"). It is important to note that the order of these moves is not always fixed and may vary by situation and/or speaker preference.

The moves for these SASs, based on Ishihara and Cohen (2010) and the University of Minnesota (2014) are displayed in Figure 1.

These formulaic spoken routines offer language teachers practical, research-based archetypes with which to compare their students' output. By using SASs, instructors can conduct "needs analyses" (Brown, 1995) that can guide instructional decisions and demonstrate pragmatic evolution.

The Study

Participants in this project were five Japanese second-year university students who studied abroad in the US for one semester. Each had received six years of compulsory EFL instruction in Japanese middle and high schools. They had also completed a required one-year four skills English course at university. In the US, participants stayed with host families and took general L2 and American culture classes at associated universities. In addition, they were involved with volunteer projects within the host community organized through the university. These experiences, along with a variety of personal contacts and interests, likely provided students ample communicative opportunities with interlocutors of various ages and social positions, thereby implicitly raising their pragmatic awareness and ability.

In order to evaluate the usefulness of SASs as (a) instruments for monitoring pragmatic speaking ability of study abroad students and (b) tools for targeting students' pragmatic needs, participants did a set of ten oral discourse completion tasks (ODCTs) based on Taguchi (2014). Each ODCT situation was read aloud by the author while participants read a written version. Participants were allowed to ask for clarification if necessary and then were

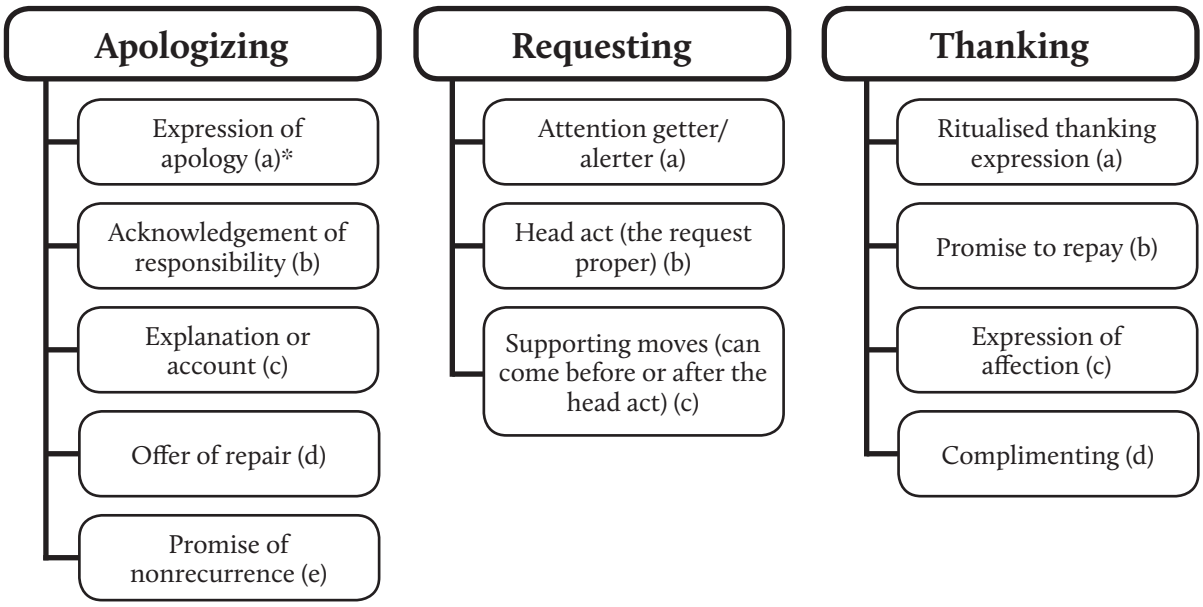

Figure 1. **Speech act sets for apology, request and thanking.**

*Note: Lower-case letters in parentheses used analysis

given one minute to think before responding to the prompt. The sessions began with practice ODCTs (as recommended by Ishihara & Cohen, 2010), took approximately one hour, and were administered by the author.

Using a pre/post-study abroad format, students completed the same set of ODCTs, which were video recorded and transcribed. The transcribed responses were then compared to the standard SASs (described above) to determine which pragmatic steps and strategies learners used to accomplish the tasks. The next section discusses responses to three of those speaking tasks: an apology, a request, and a thanking scenario.

Findings and Discussion

Data for each pragmatic situation is exemplified through selected extracts, which were chosen because they were generally representative of the entire data set. The participants' spoken output from the ODCTs was compared to the SASs to determine which steps students were able to accomplish and those that may indicate a need for targeted instruction. Findings are presented in Tables 1 to 6. Pseudonyms have been used for participant names. Lower-case letters after each step correspond to the SASs in Figure 1, and the symbol (x) indicates an utterance that does not fit easily into the SAS patterns.

Apology

Learners responded to the following prompt, which called for an apology:

"You and your friend, Jessica, are working on a class project together. You meet Jessica at a school cafeteria to talk about the project. You forgot to bring your notes that you had promised to bring to the meeting. What do you say to Jessica?"

Through SAS analysis, these extracts from Ann's and Tom's pre/post-study abroad ODCTs show changes in pragmatic ability to apologize.

Table 1. Ann's Apology Output

Pre	Post
I'm sorry I forget my note at my house. (a) If we have time for project mm? ah, meeting I'm sorry I come back to my house. (possibly d)	I'm so sorry I left my note in my house. (a) If you have time today, I can I back to my house and bring my note? (d) Or if you don't have time, can I change meeting schedule? (d)

Table 2. Tom's Apology Output

Pre	Post
I'm sorry I forget my notes (a) so could you take me some notes? (x)	Ah, I forget my notebook. Sorry (a), ah. Please give me just a moment, so I go back to ah classroom last classroom classroom to get to get to bring the my notes. (d) I'll be back soon. (x)

By comparing these speech samples to the SAS for apologizing, it is clear that the learners are able to accomplish one of the steps easily (expression of apology). Another move (offer of repair) is successfully employed in both participants' post-study abroad responses. However, the other three options in the apology SAS are not attempted (acknowledgement of responsibility, explanation or account and promise of non-reoccurrence). It could be that the learners were aware of these options and chose not to incorporate them, or that they felt the situation did not warrant their use. However, another possibility is that learners are not able and/or not confident enough to attempt them in English. As such, it may be beneficial for teachers to include in study abroad preparation.

Also noteworthy are the two utterances marked (x), which do not fit as smoothly into the apology SAS. In Tom's pre-study abroad output, the utterance "so could you take me some notes?" may be an attempt at a solution to the problem, which would allow the situation to progress. Further, in his post-response, the statement "I'll be back soon" seems an attempt to soften the imposition of delaying the meeting. Therefore, the apology SAS may need to be expanded to include steps such as "attempted solution" and "softening impact."

Request

The following prompt called for learners to make a request:

"You are doing homework in your host family's house. Your host brother, Ken, is an eight-year-old boy and you often play with him. He is watching TV, and it is very loud. It distracts you from your study. You want Ken to turn down the volume. What do you say to Ken?"

Both Helen's and Tom's responses changed noticeably in terms of utterance length, politeness, and sophistication.

Table 3. Helen's Request Output

Pre	Post
Ken (a), can you turn down? (b) It's noisy. (c) I want to study. (c)	I'm doing my homework now, but I can't focus on that because TV is noisy (c), so would you turn down the volume? (b)

Table 4. Tom's Request Output

Pre	Post
Eh, Ken, (a) I want to study. (c) So the room is too loud, (c) so could you turn down the TV volume? (b)	Ken (a), what what are you watching? (c) It's good, ah so actually, I study I'm studying. (c) I'm doing homework (c) so could you could you turn turn down volume a little bit? (b) I ah after that I, when I finish the homework, ah, I want to watch with you. (c)

These extracts show that participants are able to incorporate all three parts of the request SAS, though to varying degrees. Helen's pre-study abroad request consists of all stages, but several are brief and direct. Her development is evident through her later reply that includes more polite and descriptive statements. Tom also utilized all parts of the SAS both before and after his time abroad. However, in his post-response, he incorporates more supporting moves (c), both before and after the head act (b). His opening gambit, "what are you watching?", is particularly interesting, as he is able to strategically and indirectly address Ken and his TV viewing. Such sophistication was largely absent from all pre-study abroad responses.

This analysis of requests may inform teaching practice in a different way than the apology analysis. For apologies, it was evident that learners were not able to include or were omitting certain parts of the SAS; thus, those steps make clear teaching points. In the case of requests, however, the participants demonstrated the ability to include all three parts: attention getter/alerter, head act, and supporting moves. In order to build on the linguistic and strategic knowledge students have exhibited, teachers may wish to focus on a variety of expressions for the head act (for example, *Would you mind…?* Or *Do you think you could…?*) to expand learner choice. Another point of emphasis could be ensuring that learners are able to make a request to a range of interlocutors by adjusting age, position and/or social status in role play situations.

Thanking

Students also responded to the following thanking scenario:

"You and your close friend, Molly, are taking the same Spanish class. You misplaced your textbook, so you borrowed Molly's textbook over the weekend to do your homework. You return the textbook to Molly on Monday. What do you say to her?"

Below are Sal's and Helen's responses.

Table 5. Sal's Request Output

Pre	Post
Molly, ah, I could, I could finish my homework because of your help. (c) I'll buy you lunch today. (b)	Oh, oh, this is your textbook. (x) Ah, if I if you didn't borrow me your textbook, maybe I would not I would not do my homework, (c) so I appreciate it. (a) Thank you. (a)

Table 6. Helen's Request Output

Pre	Post
Thank you for borrowing your textbook. (a)	Thank you for your textbook. (a)

Whereas Sal's responses include several of the options from the thanking SAS (e.g., thanking act, promise to repay, and expression of affection), Helen's brief replies are nearly identical and include only the thanking act (a). This analysis offers teachers the opportunity for individualized instruction techniques. Sal has demonstrated the ability to use a number of SAS stages effectively, but may benefit from learning certain nuances within those steps as well as working to eliminate grammatical errors. In Helen's case, instruction that introduces the various strategies and options available for thanking would likely increase her pragmatic range in English.

Limitations

While these comparisons of ODCT responses and SASs have both displayed pragmatic development and established an itemized catalog of potential teaching aims, both have inherent limitations. As a data collection tool, ODCTs have been criticized for a lack of authenticity and because they are hypothetical rather than natural productions of speech (Taguchi, 2014). Despite these shortcomings, ODCTs were used in this study because they allow the researcher to control social variables and

generate responses that are relatively convenient to compare and analyse. Weaknesses of SASs include the notion that not all steps are equally important to accomplishing the task and that a single utterance may serve multiple functions (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). Furthermore, the analysis is limited by the fact that speakers may omit one or more of the items in the SAS and thus it is unclear whether participants decided to omit or were unaware of certain options. In addition, as shown through this analysis, there may be some ambiguity about matching utterances to aspects of SASs. However, this study also demonstrates how SASs can provide practical frameworks for evaluating student performance and isolating language and strategies that learners may benefit from, and thus, they can inform instruction. Finally, these findings come from a small number of participants and therefore sample size is a limitation.

Pedagogic Implications and Conclusion

As illustrated above, SAS analysis can help inform study abroad instruction, ensuring that teachers are targeting areas and functions their students have not yet acquired. It can also aid curriculum planning that aligns with needs analysis principles (Brown, 1995). When patterns of general student performance are identified, such analysis can inform teachers of whole-class needs. In cases where individual student output varies noticeably (as in the thanking examples above), teachers may tailor instruction to meet specific student needs, either by making content more challenging or by emphasizing SAS stages that students may be unaware of or underutilizing. Instructional support for study abroad students can come either prior to or after the study abroad experience, preferably both. The former can prepare learners with rudimentary tools, while the latter can refine and build on what they have gained after returning to their home countries.

Through role play and dialogue activities, teachers can expose students to various relationships and situations, practice which will prepare students for the myriad interactions they will encounter on study abroad. Such activities are staples of study abroad preparation. However, SAS analysis can inform and improve role play and dialogue activities by highlighting the strategies students both use and neglect, which can help teachers pinpoint those areas with which students need the most support. Subsequently, more meaningful instruction can take place. Shively (2010) suggests using recordings of natural conversations, L2 films, and transcripts for pragmatic practice. Likewise, Taguchi (2014, p. 20) recommends "cultural adaptability [and] strategy training" to help students prepare for creating and maximizing opportunities for pragmatic practice. These and other types of pragmatic instruction are accessible to any EFL/ESL educator, either NNS or NS, so long as they have adequate socialization with L2 pragmatic conventions (Kasper & Rose, 2002).

This paper has demonstrated how viewing study abroad students' responses to ODCTs through SASs can inform instruction. Although the focus was on students who studied overseas, the findings can apply to learners who are planning to travel or live overseas and/or to those who may interact with other users of the L2. Once analysis like that illustrated in this paper has identified linguistic and/or strategic steps that learners need practice with, teachers and curriculum planners can develop tailored and targeted instructional methods. Through informed teaching practices, learners will expand their range of pragmatic choice and exercise that range to achieve intended interpersonal effects,

thereby addressing two cornerstones of pragmatic ability. While the SASs may not account for every single utterance produced during functional communication, they provide practical, accessible archetypes that transfer easily from academic literature to the classroom.

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Video Reflexive Ethnography as a Tool for Better Classroom Practice

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This article describes an application of ethnographically-informed approaches to discourse analysis that attempts to bring about change in EFL classroom practice. The project was conducted by a teacher-researcher at a Japanese university and one group of learners that he taught. It centres on the use of video as a tool to bring about discussions between the teacher and learners that help them to better understand both their own classroom behaviour and each other's. The paper discusses the insights that such a project can bring as well as some problems inherent in conducting a project of this kind. This is not intended to be a paper that describes best practice, but is intended to outline a way in which teachers and learners can work together as co-researchers to better understand what they do in the classroom as a basis for improving classroom practice.

本論ではEFL授業での実践に変化をもたらすために、民族学的アプローチを伴う談話分析を適用する試みについて記述する。このプロジェクトは日本の大学教師である研究者が行い、授業を担当している学生の1グループを対象とした。ビデオをツールとして使用し、教師と学生の間に議論をうながすことで、相互間と学生個々の授業中の行動習慣の両方をより良く理解できるようにする。また、このようなプロジェクトがもたらしうる洞察及びこのようなプロジェクトに内在する問題について議論する。本論は成功事例（ベストプラクティス）の記述を目的とするのではなく、授業内での実践を向上させるための土台として、学生達の教室内の行動をより良く理解するために、教師と学生が共同研究者として協働する方法のアウトラインを記述することを意図する。

There is currently much interest in using video to help improve educational practice (Lefstein & Snell, 2014). This article draws on ethnographically-informed research into discourse that uses video playback methodology to involve participants in the research process as co-researchers. The article's aim is to show that teachers can utilize such practices to promote teacher-learner dialogue that provides new understandings of what happens in the classroom, with the ultimate aim of improving classroom practice.

Background

Video has for some time been used to provide teachers with feedback and promote reflection (see Tripp & Rich, 2012). This feedback has often come from teachers and administrators, but it is also important to take into account students' perceptions (Murphey, 1993). This article discusses the use of video to promote teacher-student discussions and include students' perceptions in a process of reflection on classroom practice.

The project reported on here makes use of *video-reflexive ethnography* (e.g., Iedema & Carroll, 2014), a methodology that involves the researcher video-recording people doing things and then watching these videos back in discussion sessions with the participants. This allows the participants to become involved in the research process and to better understand their own behaviour. *Video-reflexive ethnography* is used to bring about change in institutions. For example, Iedema and Carroll (2014) have used this methodology to help healthcare professionals better understand their work practices and subsequently change these practices for the better.

My project also borrows from Ron and Suzie Scollon's use of ethnographic methods in their discourse analysis research (e.g., Scollon, 2001; Scollon & Scollon, 2001, 2004). Their approach similarly allows participants to take an active role in the research process. Of particular importance here is their use of what they call *observer's interactions with members,* or what Norris (2011, p. 58) calls *contested data*. This contested data involves video playback sessions where the observer takes his or her observations back to the group about which they were made. Through this process, it is possible for both the observers and the members of the group to come to understandings of the video data together.

While my project was actually a study of learner identity, a major aim of the project was to use reflexive video (or contested data) in order to facilitate teacher-learner discussions and affect change in the classroom. It is this aspect of the project that I am primarily concerned with here.

Data/Method

The project discussed here is a study of one Japanese university EFL class of 15 students. The project was explained clearly to all the students in the first class of the year and they were free to participate or not. All students chose to participate. Adapting the method for *video-reflexive ethnography* described in Carroll et al. (2008), the project can be divided into

three phases: (1) observations of students performing classroom tasks and informal interviews with students to identify issues, (2) video recording of classroom interactions for more detailed analysis and material to use in video sessions, and (3) the video sessions themselves.

The observations and interviews performed in phase (1) served as a first stage of noticing that raised issues for further investigation. As well as the observations and interviews, I also asked students to compose short pieces of writing about their experiences in the classroom and I used these to help identify issues as well. For example, one problem raised was the common occurrence of silence in student discussions.

These issues were then investigated further with detailed analysis of the video recordings of classroom interactions in phase (2). As my interest was in how identities and learning are performed in classroom actions, I asked the following questions to guide my video analysis: "What actions are being performed?", "What identities/roles are being performed?" and "What learning is happening?". For example, in investigating the issue of student silence, I looked at the different actions that silence was used to perform, the classroom roles students performed when they were silent, and how silence helped or hindered learning.

Through the initial observations I made in phase (1) and the more detailed video analysis of phase (2), I identified problems that I would like to discuss with the students in phase (3). I selected a video (usually about five-ten minutes long) for each student to watch in class, giving them three or four questions to think about as they watched the video. These varied according to the video but included general questions (e.g., "What is happening here?") and other questions that more specifically addressed the problems I had identified in phases (1) and (2).

Once the students had made their observations, I invited them to take part in small-group discussions with each other and myself. This happened in the classroom once a month throughout the semester (three times in total). Students who showed a particular interest in the project asked for extra lunchtime discussions on five occasions. In these discussions, which lasted from 20-30 minutes in the classroom and up to an hour outside of the classroom, we watched the video together and discussed our interpretations of what was happening. The sessions were semi-structured with the use of the same questions given to the students when they originally watched the video.

I also gave students opportunities to make comments that did not address the questions I had asked, so they could raise issues that I had not identified. The aim of these sessions was to facilitate a discussion between the students and teacher and bring about new ways of seeing classroom practices for all participants. That is, the project was not intended to just provide the teacher with feedback, but to initiate discourse between the teacher and students.

Table 1 gives an overview of the data collected for this project.

Table 1. Overview of data

Type of data	Details
Video recordings	I recorded 28 hours of naturally-occurring student-student interactions and classroom discussions, once-a-week over one semester
Audio recordings	I made 10 hours of recordings of video-playback sessions, as well as four hours of semi-structured interviews with students
Field notes	I made observations during each class and wrote these up in a notebook at the end of the class. My informal interviews with students that could not be captured as audio recordings were also written up in the notebook.
Student writing	I asked students to compose short pieces of writing about their English language learning and classroom experiences

Findings

This was an exploratory project and as such it brought to light a great variety of insights that might otherwise have remained hidden. Through conducting this project I was, for example, able to come to a new understanding of my own classroom behaviour and how my behaviour sometimes contradicted my beliefs. To give an example, while I believe in encouraging students to be independent thinkers and to not simply accept what their teachers say, I could see in the data that I often spoke over students, told them what to do and imposed my point of view on them. I will briefly describe some of the other insights provided by this project (Appendix 1 gives an overview of the major insights of the project).

Silence and turn-taking

Silence is commonly observed in Japanese classrooms (e.g., Nakane, 2003) and as a teacher I have sometimes been frustrated that once I have set up an activity the room has plunged into silence. Why was it that students, who were mostly highly motivated and enthusiastic about their studies, often did not seem to fully engage in classroom activities?

It became clear that a major source of student silence was the negotiation of who should take the first turn at the start of a task when I had not specified how students should manage their interactions. Students claimed that they were sometimes confused as to how to conduct group discussions in the classroom, as they had little experience of doing this previously. So once I had asked them to start the activity they were sometimes at a loss as to how to proceed.

Many students said that they were reluctant to assume leadership and begin an activity unilaterally, and this was one reason why a number of activities began with a period of silence. The person who should speak first, and the subsequent order of turns, needed to be negotiated by the group prior to the actual activity starting, and this was often done nonverbally (and sometimes in Japanese). The video sessions brought this to light and allowed us to discuss ways in which to change these practices.

Different focus of teacher and students

The project brought to light the ways in which the students and myself were often working to different aims when performing interactions in the classroom. This could be seen clearly in small-group activities or pair-work where students often ignored my instructions. In spite of the teacher being in a more powerful position in the classroom, students do not always follow his or her instructions. So, while the teacher has an idea of how classroom interactions should unfold, what actually happens may differ significantly from what they had envisaged. Sometimes this may be because students do not understand instructions, or it may be an act of resistance, but frequently in the data collected for this class it was because the teacher and the students had different aims, which were related to different ideas about good, or normal, educational practice.

When setting up small-group activities my main aim was often to give students opportunities to practice using the L2 together. However, the students were often more focused on task completion or producing a neat and accurate record of work. For example, one activity required students to produce a short written text in pairs. I asked them to do this by communicating in English. The goal of the task (as I saw it) was to practice working together to solve problems in English, rather than produce a piece of writing per se. However, the video data revealed that the students worked together almost exclusively in Japanese with the only English words they used being those that they wrote in their notebooks (or nominated as candidates to be written in the notebook, but subsequently rejected). That is, the interactions were in Japanese, and English was treated as an object to be talked about, rather than the medium of interaction.

At several moments in the videos I stopped the activity to remind the students of the goal (i.e., to communicate in English). However, although the students clearly heard me they continued to communicate in Japanese. It is unlikely that this was only due to the students' English ability, as when I visited each group to talk to them they were able to communicate with me about the task in English.

When I brought this observation to the students in the video sessions it became clear that they were prioritizing doing the work of writing an accurate text. So, while my aim had been to focus on the *process* of producing the text, the students were focused on the written *product*. For them, it was easier to make this product by communicating in Japanese rather than English, and so the activity was not helping to achieve what I had set out to do.

In the video sessions, many students expressed surprise that I was not so concerned with the written product, but more with the quality of their spoken interactions. This allowed them to better understand my aims, but also allowed me to better understand the students and what was important for them.

Correctness

A closely related insight was that almost all students expressed a concern with being "correct" and leaving a neat and precise record of their work. That is, they were concerned that their English should be "correct" and that their written work should be done in a "correct" manner. Each student in the class brought with them a set of classroom materials that included pencils and erasers, and it was noticeable in the videos that they spent a lot of time erasing mistakes from their notebooks. At times, they withdrew from interactions or missed important information from the teacher as they erased or made notes in their book.

When I discussed this with the students a number of them explained that it was a regular part of their high school classroom practice to produce neat and

accurate work and to use a mechanical pencil (so that they could correct mistakes), and that their high school teacher might criticize them if their work was untidy. Many students also said that they wanted to have tidy and correct notes to revise from or check in the future.

This concern with neatly copying "correct" information suggests that many students value learning what is correct. This could be clearly seen in one participant's comment that she liked grammar classes as there was a definite "correct answer." So, many students did not tolerate ambiguity or potential mistakes, which in turn constrained their ability to participate freely and learn from making mistakes.

It was noticeable that this concern with producing neat and accurate work extended to making rough notes on scrap paper (e.g., when brainstorming). Students often carefully made these 'rough' notes, meaning that an activity that I would ideally have liked to take just a minute or two could quite often take twice as long. This hindered the purpose of the brainstorming, which was to quickly come up with a variety of ideas. So, while I do not necessarily wish to encourage students to make "incorrect" or untidy notes, the slow and meticulous approach to producing correct and neat written work at all times was sometimes problematic for me.

Discussion

Through viewing the videos and the subsequent video discussion sessions it was possible to identify problems in the classroom, such as how the students and I were often working to different ideas of good educational practice. For example, while I was working to principles that stressed the importance of the process that students go through and the importance of interacting in the L2, the students were often working according to principles that stressed the importance of producing a "correct" product, with at times little or no importance given to actually communicating in English. Through taking part in the video sessions, the students were better able to understand my methodology and my reasons for doing certain activities, while I was better able to understand students' classroom behaviour.

In response to the insights brought about by this project I have attempted to change my classroom practice. For example, I think more carefully about setting up activities in relation to turn-taking (as well as teaching English phrases to help negotiate the beginning of activities) and I ask students to refrain from using erasers when brainstorming. I also try to avoid talking over students, as I had observed myself doing in the data. A number of the students commented that they have also tried to make changes to their own practices, and this has been noticeable in the classroom.

For example, one group of students were surprised when I explained that I saw their 'conversational' interactions as being more successful than their 'formal' interactions (in which they took it in turns to express an opinion, but did not engage with one another's ideas, so that the interaction resembled mini-presentations). They had seen the more conversational interaction as inappropriate for the classroom. However, after the video session in which we discussed the learning potentials provided by conversation, as well as my beliefs about learning through interaction, this group had more dialogic discussions in the classroom and I could not find a subsequent example of them delivering their 'mini-presentations' to one another.

The greatest benefit of this project has been in bringing myself and my students into a dialogue about classroom practice that has allowed us to better understand one another and why we do what we do in the way we do it. This discussion and reflection have provided the basis for change.

Of course, a project of this kind brings challenges. First, it is time-consuming to record and watch all of the data, and a practicing teacher is unlikely to have time to collect and analyze the amount of data that I did. In addition, bringing observations of people's behaviour back to them can be threatening. Finally, some people do not like to be recorded. It is extremely important to be clear about the nature of the project from the beginning and to offer students the option of participating or not. However, I found the students in my class to be enthusiastic towards the project. It would also be feasible for many teachers to adapt the project to suit their everyday practices. The project would be much more manageable, for example, if teachers just focused on phase (3) and recorded activities that they then watched back in discussion with students.

I had expected language to be a problem in the video sessions. As expected, some of the students were not always able to express complex ideas clearly in English, or were not always able to completely understand my ideas. However, language proved to be less of a problem than I had anticipated and the video discussions proved to be very fruitful. The videos themselves provided a concrete focus to the discussions, which at times facilitated the communication of ideas that might have otherwise been more difficult to understand in the abstract.

Conclusion

It is not the aim of this article to argue, for example, that either student silence or a focus on accuracy are in themselves good or bad. The article is instead focused on a way in which critical reflection on practice may help to promote dialogue and develop thoughtful students and teachers who can come to new understandings of their practice and make better-informed decisions about what they do together.

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Appendix

Major insights of the project

- More conversational talk was seen towards the end of discussion tasks and at boundaries between tasks. This more conversational talk more accurately resembled the kind of talk the teacher was aiming for. While the teacher valued this, learners often thought it inappropriate for the classroom.
- Unfamiliarity with classroom roles expected by the teacher was a reason for student silence.
- The teacher and students had different ideas about what a "good student" and a "good teacher" should do in the classroom.
- Classroom materials (textbooks, CDs, etc.) provided students with examples of English-speaking identities and roles to copy when they performed classroom activities. While not necessarily finding the language content difficult in itself, some students did not feel comfortable performing the roles that were presented to them in the materials.
- The project revealed how certain participants required familiar student roles in order to motivate them to speak English in the classroom, while other participants were more motivated when speaking outside of these roles.
- Students oriented to "primary speaker" (see Hauser, 2009) turn-taking practices during group work, which was a major cause of student silence. The project uncovered reasons for this, how this affects learning opportunities, and how it is connected to identity issues.

Teaching Audio-Visual English to University Students: Factors to Consider

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Audio-visual English classes focus on teaching both aural and visual aspects of English as a foreign or second language. A discussion on factors to consider when choosing material for such classes and the rationale for showing full seasons of television series with both English audio and subtitles are presented. The series LOST is suggested as suitable material.

「オーディオ・ビジュアル英語」の授業では、オーラルとビジュアルという側面から英語を外国語または第二言語として教える。本稿では、こうした授業で扱う教材を選ぶ際に考慮すべき点や、英語音声に英語字幕を付けてテレビドラマ全体を授業で見せることについて議論していく。 テレビドラマのLOSTは適切な教材として提案されています。

Audio-Visual English

Unlike communication-based classes, which emphasize the production of English, audio-visual English classes focus on the receptive aspects of listening to and watching people using English to communicate. Although the focus is different, audio-visual classes can also be used to promote communicative competence. Video-based spoken English can expose learners to various discourse elements including slang, metaphors, and accents, which students will encounter when they talk to native English or English as a second or foreign language speakers. Thus, to help students improve their communication skills, when choosing materials for audio-visual classes it is important to consider authenticity, use of subtitles, suitability and the degree of frequency of which the language in the material is used by English speakers. The series LOST is suggested as suitable material with rationale for the choice.

Authenticity

Realia, such as newspapers, magazines, books, radio broadcasts and television shows are often considered to be authentic materials. Films, in particular, are assumed to be accurate representations of natural and authentic speech (Tatuski, 2006). To determine whether these materials are natural or authentic, both of these terms must be defined.

In a spoken context, a natural conversation is one that occurs spontaneously between two or more people who speak the same language for communication purposes (Al-Surmi, 2012). Authenticity, however, is more difficult to define. Porter and Roberts (1987) suggest that spoken language not intended for non-native learners nor produced for language-learning purposes is authentic. Nunan (1988) suggests that authentic sources are materials produced for purposes other than teaching language. This is echoed by Kaiser (2011), who states that materials can be considered authentic if they are written for native speakers, not language learners. Gilmore (2007) provides an excellent review of the various meanings associated with authenticity and comes to the conclusion that teachers can use any materials they feel will help their students become communicatively competent. With this aim, when using materials for audio-visual classes, speed, intonation, accents, and other discourse factors should be considered along with the type and frequency of language used.

Although scripted material is not natural and has different pragmatic features than spontaneous conversation (Gilmore, 2007; Tatsuki, 2006; Tatsuki & Kite, 2006), it does resemble naturally occurring speech and can be considered authentic under the above definitions. And unlike textbook English, which only provides specific language forms without presenting how or in what context the language can be used, it offers the listener clues through facial expression, intonation and gestures, which are important factors for communicative competence.

In this paper, authentic materials are defined as those that are created for native speakers and not for the purposes of language learning.

Subtitles

When teaching audio-visual material, if subtitles are used, a decision must be made on whether to use target-language (English) or native-language (Japanese) subtitles to accompany the English soundtrack. Multiple studies have shown that the use of target-language subtitles (Vanderplank, 1988)

or close captioning (Huang & Eskey, 2000; Koskinen, Wilson, Gambrell, & Jensema, 1991) accompanying the target-language audio, is beneficial for intermediate-level second language learners, especially those who are exposed to subtitles on a regular basis (Vanderplank, 1988). Japanese students often watch native-language television shows with Japanese subtitles. Thus, exposing them to material subtitled in a foreign language does not force them to undertake an overly unfamiliar task. However, for beginner or low-intermediate learners who may have low second-language reading speeds or a lack of vocabulary, new words and phrases should be introduced prior to viewing to ensure that these students can follow the story (Vanderplank, 2010). The use of target-language subtitles to accompany the target-language soundtrack has also been shown to be effective in both improving listening skills (Bean & Wilson, 1989; Hayati & Mohmedi, 2011; Rokni & Ataee, 2014) and increasing vocabulary (Bean & Wilson, 1989; Harji, Woods, & Alavi, 2010).

Appropriate Materials

With an aim of improving communicative competence, material that highly reflects the language used by native speakers in common situations is preferred. Some popular television dramas, such as 24, Grey's Anatomy, Law and Order, and C.S.I. involve medical, police or legal settings and thus incorporate language not commonly used by native speakers in daily situations. Other shows, such as Friends, Glee and Modern Family, are also popular and offer more commonly-used language. However, the speed and the abundant use of humor and metaphor may inhibit the learners' ability to comprehend the material. Teachers must consider whether these types of materials would benefit their students.

Transcripts can be compared to a corpus to measure whether material reflects the way English is used by native speakers. The New General Service List (Browne, Culligan, & Phillips, 2013), a list of the most frequently used core words that ESL/EFL learners should be taught, can be used to measure the frequency of the words used in materials. By comparing the transcript of an episode of a show to the NGSL, a rating of the frequency of language used in that episode can be calculated. A high rating indicates that the series uses language that highly reflects native-speaker use, whereas a low rating indicates that the language is not used frequently. A series with a higher rating will be more effective in promoting communicative competence.

Regarding concerns about using copyrighted material in classes, under Section 110(1) of the U.S. Copyright Law, instructors are given permission to show DVDs, etc. if used in an educational face-to-face setting (United States Copyright Office, 2014).

Show the Whole Season

Kaiser (2011) makes an argument for showing clips of film in foreign language classrooms stating that clips provide students with the opportunity to focus deeply on one specific scene allowing them to understand how, why, when and where that particular language is used. The amount of new language in a clip is limited so students have many opportunities to listen repeatedly and acquire the targeted language. However, showing clips has some disadvantages including the fact that they do not provide the viewer with background information and thus decontextualize the language. Also, throughout a film or TV series, the dialogue often echoes earlier script and the juxtaposition of various scenes is an important aspect that aids understanding (Kaiser, 2011). For students to more easily comprehend the language in audio-visual materials, contextual clues, background information and repetitive use of language in different situations should not be excluded. Thus, showing a full season of a TV series is expected to be effective in aiding comprehension.

Comprehension may also be enhanced using a narrow viewing approach. Narrow reading and narrow listening (Krashen, 1996, 2004) have been introduced as effective and efficient ways for second language learners to acquire a target language. For narrow reading, Krashen states the importance of background knowledge as, "a tremendous facilitator of comprehension" (2004, p.17). He suggests narrow reading is potentially motivating for second-language learners because if they are exposed many times to similar material that they are interested in, they will be motivated to study more. He also advocates that it is easier to acquire new language when the reading passage is understood. Therefore, numerous exposures to familiar material will enhance both acquisition and comprehension. Accordingly, viewing a season of one TV series instead of a jumble of various movies or clips can be an example of narrow viewing. Once students learn the background and general context of the show, they can focus on the language and how it is presented. Through watching full episodes of a series each week, students can follow the story easily and will not miss any information that will help them understand past or future episodes. This vital background information helps students understand and comprehend the new story enabling them to focus their attention on and acquire new language.

Suggested Series: LOST

LOST was extremely popular around the world with over 19 million viewers in the US each week for seasons 1 and 2 (Lostpedia, 2014). Every episode ended in a cliffhanger, which compelled viewers to keep tuning in to see what would happen next. This cliffhanger aspect can be exploited to motivate students to come to class and concentrate on the material. Although some of the scenes are violent and scary, the basic content and storyline are easy for students to understand. Initially, two of the characters do not speak English so students can empathize with their plight of being unable to communicate in a foreign language.

The speech in LOST can be considered authentic, that is, written for native speakers, not language learners (Kaiser, 2011; Nunan, 1988). Although scripted, it reflects the language use of people of different ages, cultures and backgrounds. Some characters are from different countries and thus use various accents. Students can hear American, Canadian, British, and Australian accents and learn how to decipher what is being said. This can be effective for preparation for standardized tests, such as TOEIC and TOEFL, which as of 2013, started using the same four English accents (American, Canadian, British and Australian) in the listening sections (Educational Testing Service, 2013).

The vocabulary in LOST comprises language frequently used by native speakers. Comparing the transcript of season 1, episode 1 (excluding proper names and non-linguistic interjections) to the New General Service List (Browne et al., 2013), 93.65% of the script is made up of the first 2000 words on the list. This indicates that students should be able to comprehend the speech from a lexical knowledge aspect. The other 6.35% of the transcript includes less common words that can be introduced prior to viewing the episode.

The script contains slang, common metaphors and idioms, which are often repeated in multiple episodes. For example, the phrase "let someone off the hook" is repeated in episodes 4, 16 and 20 in season 1. If these phrases are taught at first exposure and then mentioned again the next time(s) they appear, students can reflect on previous knowledge and reinforce their vocabulary.

Conclusion

Choosing audio-visual materials to ensure that students will benefit from the class and acquire both language and an idea of how to use it is a difficult task. Using a series that scores highly on a comparison to the New General Service List ensures students are exposed to frequently-used English that they can use and will need when they converse with an English speaker. The use of target-language subtitles can help improve students' reading abilities and vocabulary while the target-language audio track helps them improve their listening skills. If a series has various accents, students can learn how to adapt in preparation for standardized tests. Showing an entire series allows students to focus on new language instead of trying to figure out what is going on.

LOST is an exciting, language-rich series that provides an opportunity for improving the communicative competence of ESL students through audio-visual classes. Showing students how colloquial English is used builds on their knowledge of textbook English enabling them to enhance their language skills. Through using both target-language subtitles and audio, students are given the opportunity to acquire language visually and audibly.

Following Krashen's (2004) suggestion that students will be motivated to study more if they are interested in the material, future research should examine whether this narrow viewing approach of using a TV series is effective in increasing motivation, vocabulary and retention or improving listening skills. Additionally, comparing the use of target or native-language subtitles will provide insight as to which is more effective in aiding language acquisition.

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Applying the Benefits of Peer Assessment to the High School English Classroom

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The vast majority of studies and literature relating to peer assessment has focused on university level students. Proponents of peer assessment (PA) argue that the active involvement of students in the creation of assessment criteria, ongoing feedback, and the opportunity to grade and be graded by their peer group leads to greater understanding and ownership of the learning process. Critics of the process point to students' reluctance and lack of ability to effectively engage in the process of assessment. Limited knowledge and a lack of confidence in their ability could result in the assessment element of PA being a step too far for high school students. Involving students in the creation of assessment criteria and the giving and receiving of feedback are, however, elements of PA that can be adopted for use in high school English classes in Japan.

ピアアセスメント（生徒相互評価）に関する研究や考察は大学レベルの生徒に焦点が当てられているものが大多数である。ピアアセスメントの肯定論者は、生徒自身が積極的に評価基準の作成に関わること及びフィードバックの生徒間相互付与が、学習過程における理解深化及び積極性を高めるのに非常に有効であると主張し、否定論者は限られた知識及び自身の能力に対する自信の欠如を挙げ、生徒の非積極性と評価基準作成に対する能力の欠如を指摘する。本論では、評価基準作成における生徒の参加、フィードバックの相互付与といったピアアセスメントの要素の、高等学校英語授業における有効性について述べる。

Dissatisfaction with perceived limitations of traditional assessment methods has led to a reevaluation of the role of assessment within the learning process. Traditional summative assessment focuses on the result of the learning process in the form of a grade, certification or some indication of attainment information. There is little focus on the actual process of learning; it merely verifies that learning has occurred (McDowell, 1995). Dochy, Segers, & Sluijsmans (1999) argue, "the view that the assessment of students' achievements is solely something that happens at the end of a process of learning is no longer tenable" (p. 332). Various forms of alternative assessment methods have emerged as ways of moving away from, or supplementing, summative assessment. Attention has turned to assessment as a formative process whereby the focus is on providing students with ongoing information and feedback about their progress (Orsmond, Merry, & Reisling, 2000). Peer assessment is one such method of formative assessment.

Definition of Peer Assessment

Topping (1998) defines peer assessment (PA) as "an arrangement in which individuals consider the amount, level, value, worth, quality, or success of the products or outcomes of learning of peers of similar status" (p. 250). Cheng and Warren (1999) add that PA also requires students to reflect on what they have learnt and how that learning has taken place. The PA process tends to be implemented in the form of students assessing each other using a set of pre-determined criteria. A key element in the process is student involvement in the creation of the criteria.

Benefits of Peer Assessment

One of the main themes running through the literature on PA is the benefit students receive from being involved in the creation of the assessment criteria by which they will grade and be graded. The process of discussing, deciding, clarifying, and employing the criteria leads to a greater understanding of what constitutes a good piece of work (Topping, 1998). As well as gaining an explicit understanding of the criteria, students are able to feel a sense of ownership of and responsibility for the process (Otoshi & Heffernen, 2008; Peng, 2008; Pond, Rehan, & Wade, 1995).

In an analysis of 48 PA studies, Falchikov and Goldfinch (2000) concluded there are many other benefits to PA beyond the understanding and involvement in assessment criteria. One of these is the opportunity for students to receive feedback from both teacher and peers during the process itself rather than solely at the end, when it is too late for remedial action. In an earlier study, which placed emphasis on critical feedback, Falchikov (1995) found the giving and receiving of feedback required more thought from the students, and as a result they learnt more. The main strength of the process was the "enhancement of student learning by means of reflection, analysis and diplomatic

criticism" (p. 175). Indeed, McDowell (1995) found students preferred an emphasis on feedback rather than the allocation of marks.

A related benefit of PA is the opportunity for norm referencing. Students are, through the feedback and assessment process, able to judge and gauge their own performance in relation to their peers (Falchikov & Magin, 1997). This understanding may also reveal to them where they need to improve and how to make those improvements (Topping, 1998).

Criticisms of Peer Assessment

Involvement in the creation and employment of assessment criteria, the giving and receiving of feedback during the learning process, and the ability to rank their performance within their peer group, are among the benefits students receive from PA. There are, however, reported problems with the process that inhibit its efficacy. One of the most frequently reported problems is students' unwillingness or inability to assess their peers (Brindley & Scoffield, 1998; Falchikov 1995; Peng 2008). This is clearly a critical flaw. Student buy-in and support for the process is vital for its success. In a study of upper-intermediate learners of English, Lim (2007) found learners were not comfortable assessing their peers, particularly when they were asked to assess the grammatical accuracy and pronunciation of more proficient peers. Despite this, in an analysis of 63 studies, Dochy et al. (1999) found the reluctance to assess peers decreased as students gained confidence. This emphasizes the need to train students in the process.

Some studies have also shown student involvement in the creation of assessment criteria does not always lead to a greater understanding of what is expected of them. Orsmond et al. (2000) concluded students might not be able to clearly distinguish elements of the marking criteria when they create it themselves, as opposed to criteria they have been provided. This is due to the students creating "mind maps" of the marking criteria they create themselves and not being able to see the elements in discrete terms as they may when they are provided with pre-determined criteria (p. 36).

A final criticism of PA is the issue of whether students should be involved in the assessment process at all, and specifically in the allocation of grades. Do students have the knowledge and expertise to give an accurate assessment of their peers, particularly when those judgments will affect final grades? While the majority of studies have reported positive feedback from students regarding the overall process and benefits of PA, it has also been shown that many feel they should not have more involvement in their final grade (Brindley & Scoffield, 1998; McGarr & Clifford, 2013).

Issues of Validity and Reliability

A final issue relating to PA as a feasible method of assessment is the validity and reliability of the process. In their analysis of 63 studies, Dochy et al. (1999) found results were mixed. In his analysis, Topping (1998) found 18 out of 31 studies reported agreement between peer and teacher marks, while 7 found the agreement was too low to be deemed acceptable. The literature on PA does indeed produce varied results in this area with many studies reporting similar teacher/peer marks (Falchikov, 1995; MacAlpine, 1999; Peng, 2008; Pond et al., 1995), while others failed to find any such correlation (Cheng & Warren, 1999; Mowl & Pain, 1995).

An interesting question raised about the issue of teacher/peer marking agreement is whether it is a valid measure of the success of PA as an assessment method. Do student grades have to reflect those of the teacher to make the process worthwhile? Is this the key goal of PA? While some researchers have used this as their measure of success or failure, others argue it is the learning outcomes of the PA process that are of the greatest benefit to students, not the actual act of assessment.

Using the Benefits of PA in the High School English Classroom in Japan

Most PA studies have focused on university students. There has been less attention paid to the implementation of PA processes in high schools. This is perhaps not surprising given the reported limitations of the process. There are questions as to whether university students have enough expertise to judge their peers. This doubt would surely be amplified at high school level, particularly for students learning a foreign language. This doubt could also be echoed in the reservations students have when it comes to assessing their peers. In addition, it could be prohibitively time-consuming to fully implement a PA process in a high school. Finally, with most high school students working towards university entrance exams, there may be little inclination within the school to move away from summative assessment.

With these reservations in mind, it is fair to question whether there are any benefits to adopting or adapting PA for high school learners of English. This would, however, ignore the hugely positive

feedback about the process from students. Despite its drawbacks, the vast majority of PA studies have reported positive evaluations from students in relation to the learning that took place. If this learning can be of benefit in terms of their final summative assessment, it is surely a worthwhile exercise.

One way of implementing the positive elements of PA into a high school English class setting would be to focus on the criteria and feedback elements of the process rather than the actual assessment stage. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, many of the criticisms of PA focus on the actual act of peer grading. A reluctance on the students' part, questions as to whether students should be involved in the process, and doubts as to the validity of their grading have all been cited as problems with the process. Secondly, many studies have focused on the understanding of criteria and feedback elements as the most beneficial features of PA in terms of learning (Davies, 2006; McDowell, 1995; Orsmond, 2000; Peng, 2008). Indeed, in their analysis of 48 PA studies, Falchikov and Goldfinch (2000) make several recommendations for practitioners implementing a PA process including, "peer assessment can successfully focus on the provision of feedback and may also be used in the absence of marking" (p. 318). This move away from the actual assessment element could allow teachers to use PA solely as a learning tool.

If we take the example of creating and giving a presentation in an English class in a Japanese high school, the key benefits of the formative element of PA can be easily implemented. A traditional formative assessment procedure would involve students preparing individually for their presentations and being graded based on pre-determined criteria that they may or may not have an awareness or understanding of. The first step to introducing elements of PA would be to involve the students in the creation of the assessment criteria. This can be achieved in various ways. For example, students could be put into small groups to discuss pre-determined criteria created by their teacher. They could report back to the class about their understanding of each criterion. After eliciting each group's ideas, a class definition of each criterion could be formulated along with examples of what constitutes successful attainment of that criterion. Alternatively, students can be given more responsibility by creating the criteria themselves. Rather than being given pre-determined criteria, students could be asked to brainstorm what would make a successful presentation. After eliciting their ideas, they could then rank the ideas in terms of importance. Discussion could continue until agreement upon a set of criteria has been established. In both cases, students will have a greater understanding of what they will be graded on, what elements make up each criterion and information on what they need to do to successfully meet the overall criteria.

In relation to the feedback element of the PA process, once the criteria has been established and agreed upon, time could be allotted for students to practice their presentations in small groups. Students could give feedback to their group members in relation to the criteria. This would allow each member to adapt and improve his or her presentation before it is graded. By implementing this part of the PA process, students can identify where they are going right or wrong and make amendments to their work accordingly.

Conclusion

It is important for students to understand what constitutes a good piece of work. If they are not involved in the assessment process, they can become passive towards it (Otoshi & Heffernen, 2008). PA may be difficult to implement in the Japanese high school English classroom in its full form. Involvement in the creation of grading criteria, or at least discussion of it, together with the chance to give and receive feedback, however, are elements that can be adapted for use in high schools with little disruption to the learning process and without putting unnecessary pressure on students to be involved in the actual assessment of their peers.

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[RESOURCES] MY SHARE

Philip Head and Gerry McLellan

We welcome submissions for the My Share column. Submissions should be up to 700 words describing a successful technique or lesson plan you have used that can be replicated by readers, and should conform to the My Share format (see the guidelines on our website below).

Email: <my-share@jalt-publications.org> Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>

Salutations and welcome to another edition of My Share, your premiere source of practical classroom activity suggestions. First up, Gerry McLellan offers a fun game to get students using English to explain vocabulary meanings to each other. Next, Mike Sharpe offers a framework for students to conduct and report on a group science project in English. In addition, anyone who has struggled to teach common word reductions in spoken English is gonna wanna check out Rachel A. Manley's useful guide. And last but not least, Lance Stilp explains how students can use their smartphones to produce videos as an alternative to yet another powerpoint presentation. Finally, make sure to save yourself a lot of planning time by checking out the online appendices to see the wonderful worksheets that the authors have put together. And of course we are always looking for new ideas, so feel free to submit your own unique and useful activities.

$1000 Pyramid Game: Using English to Explain and Simplify Difficult Words

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Quick guide

- Keywords: *Speaking, adjectives, creative thinking*
- Learner English level: *Low intermediate and above*
- Learner maturity: *Junior high school*
- Preparation time: *20 minutes*
- Activity time: *40 minutes*
- Materials: *Blackboard, chalk, handouts*

This game is based on the popular TV show of the same name. The aim is to help students use English to explain generally known words to members of the same team. It is particularly useful in small classes of no more than twenty students. Larger classes can be divided into smaller groups to maximize student participation. Many students in EFL classes revert to L1 or use electronic dictionaries to explain difficult words. This does not help them when challenged to offer an explanation in a real life situation. By giving students opportunities to be creative and use English to simplify and clarify difficult concepts, they can develop confidence in more challenging situations.

Preparation

Step 1: Make a list of categories that students can choose from. Under each heading write six words that fall under the particular category. Examples are as follows: things that are red, things that are yellow, things that are cold, etc. A more comprehensive list can be found in Appendix A. The words can be made easier or more challenging depending on the level of the students

Step 2: Make a handout for the students explaining useful vocabulary and expressions they will need to know in order to successfully accomplish the task. For example, the teacher may wish to focus on some of the following: It is a (gas, liquid, solid), it has…. you can see it in… it lives in… etc.

Step 3: Teachers may also wish to elicit responses from students as to what constitutes a gas, liquid, etc. It is also useful to make a short quiz for the students and to get them to make a short quiz using the target language. For example: Hint number one: It is a gas. Hint two: It is yellow. Hint three: You can see it in the sky. Hint four: It is very hot. Hint five: It is big, etc.

Procedure

Step 1: Give handouts to students and go over the new words and phrases. If a student knows the meaning of any new vocabulary have them explain in English to class members who do not understand. Try to avoid the use of Japanese in the class.

Step 2: Depending on class size, divide students into groups of two, three, or four. Students then take turns at coming to the front of the class in their groups. The teacher should ensure that chairs are placed in front of the blackboard for the students to sit. If four students are in each team, two should face the board and two should have their backs to it.

Step 3: Explain the rules of the game. The students as a team decide on a particular topic. The teacher then writes six words pertinent to the topic on the blackboard. The students who can see the board are then asked if they understand the meaning of the words. If they do not the teacher can whisper the meaning in Japanese or show them a card with the Japanese translation. Once the words are understood, the game can begin.

Step 4: Play the game. Students who can see the board shout out similes of the words on the board. If the other students guess correctly, the word is erased and the team scores a point. A time of two minutes is given for the task. If students complete the task within 30 seconds they get five bonus points; three points for completion within one minute and one point for completions within 90 seconds.

Step 5: Upon completion of one round, another group tries the task. When all groups have finished, round two begins with students changing roles.

Conclusion

This game offers students a chance to shout out and have fun in class without inhibition.

Appendix

The appendix is available from the online version of this article at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>

Collaborative Science-based Projects for STEM Students

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Quick Guide

- Keywords: *Collaborative learning, project-based learning, science*
- Learner English level: *Beginner to low intermediate*
- Learner maturity: *First year technical high school and above*
- Preparation time: *2-3 hours*
- Activity time: *Varies, but for the project described 3 x 90 to 100-minute sessions*
- Materials: *Varies for each project.*

Collaborative science-based projects offer English teachers working with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) majors a means for building motivating, meaningful, and enjoyable learning opportunities into their language curricula. As a classroom activity, they provide scope for practicing general English communication skills: building specific vocabulary, practicing English grammar forms commonly used in science/engineering reports, practicing English information structures commonly used in science/engineering reports (Description; Sequence; Cause and Effect, Comparison), learning the basic introduction, method, results, and analysis (IMRA) structure of an experimental report.

This framework provides details on how to plan and organise a classroom-based science project for second language learners. It is based on several years of practical experience developing and implementing such projects at a Japanese technical high school and a college of engineering.

Preparation

Step 1: Research/select an appropriate project for your group (see Appendix B for links to web resources). Important criteria are group level/size, available budget, available time, and students' specialisations. Projects based on scientific concepts related to students' specialisations are often appropriate. For example, for mechanical engineering majors, a catapult project is suitable because it incorporates the principles of torsion, potential energy, and kinetic energy. Also, as students will probably be familiar with these concepts from their disciplinary studies, the cognitive focus is on language learning.

Step 2: Write introductory notes for students detailing: project theme and sequence of tasks to complete (build machine, test machine, write-up results), language learning objectives, time schedule, scientific background.

Step 3: Assemble materials. Note that while many science projects use everyday materials, others require more specialised parts, such as solar panels, electric motors, etc., that may need to be sourced from a supplier.

Step 4: Depending on the L2 writing experience/skill level of the group, develop a writing guide to help students prepare project reports (see Appendix A).

Procedure

Session 1

Step 1: Distribute and talk through the introductory notes. To ensure that the focus stays on language learning, tell students they will be assessed on their language output, not the design or performance of the machine. Also give design advice and tips. For example, in the case of a solar-powered car project, the importance of power/weight ratio, drive train ratios, and so forth. Or in the case of a catapult, the importance of strength (rigidity), stability, power, momentum, or trajectory.

Step 2: Ask students to preview materials, then brainstorm and design their machine in their assigned groups.

Step 3: Ask students to begin construction. Remind them of the deadline for completing construction. While they engage in the task, circulate and interact with students by asking questions related to design, pointing out design features, and suggesting improvements/modifications where necessary or requested.

Session 2

Step 1: Remind students of the need for development testing as a project process. Again, make suggestions as appropriate.

Step 2: When all groups have finished construction and testing, have them evaluate the performance (e.g., load-carrying capacity, velocity, range) of their machine/structure and record the data.

Session 3: Remind students that they have to produce a final experimental/project report. Explain that the report should have four major sections and specify the content and purpose of each section. Where necessary, give each student a copy of the writing guide (Appendix A). Talk through the guide, explaining that it can be used as a framework to construct sentences, but that they can also add their own ideas and opinions. Then, ask students to proceed with writing their report, emphasising again that this is a collaborative effort, that they should consult their dictionaries, and moreover that they can request advice and help with their writing at any time.

Variation

Students do a mini-presentation on the project.

Appendices

The appendices are available from the online version of this article at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>.

Word Reduction Activity

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Quick Guide

Keywords: Word Reduction, slang

- Learner English Level: *Intermediate*
- Learner Maturity: *High school to Adult*
- Preparation Time: *15 minutes*
- Activity Time: *Approx. 60 minutes*
- Materials: *List of common reduced words, pattern worksheet, reduction practice worksheet, reduction listening activity, homework data collection worksheet, reductions quiz A and B, movie data collection, and in class video clip data collection worksheet. Copies of the worksheets can be found in the appendices.*

Casual conversations in English often include the reduction of words. Common ones such as *gonna* and *wanna* are consistently heard throughout conversations. There are some patterns and clues to determine how a word will be reduced, if at all. Using the materials, found in the Appendices, I have found that my students quickly learned how to reduce words and had fun doing so. The activities provided in the Appendices can help explicitly demonstrate to the students how to use reduced words in conversations. Finding English language conversations in EFL settings can be difficult. Therefore, it can be useful for students to learn about reduced words for those intending to travel overseas. Those who want to learn about words used in American casual conversations can also benefit from this activity.

Preparation

Step 1: Print out the worksheets found in the appendices.

Step 2: Find a video clip or sound clip in which reduced forms are used. Usually YouTube video clips of movies or shows will have what you are looking for.

Procedure

Step 1: Start the class with a warm-up question: "What are reduced words?" Students brainstorm what they think they are.

Step 2: Pass out a handout of "list of common reduced forms" (Appendix A). Go over the different types of reduced forms with students.

Step 3: Pass out "pattern worksheet" (Appendix B) and have students, answer the questions on what patterns they notice with the help of Appendix A. Go over Appendix B with the class. You can also take this time and have students practice saying the reduced words.

Step 4: Next, hand out the "Reduction Practice Worksheet" (Appendix C). Students are given a chance to write either the reduced or long form of the words. Go over the answers with the class. Students can also practice saying these sentences.

Step 5: Since students now know about the reduced forms of words, they can practice them through a listening activity. Handout the "Reduction Listening Activity" data collection worksheet (Appendix D). Using the video or sound clip from the movie or show found online, have students listen and write down the context of the material and the reduced words they hear. Appendix E is an extended version of Appendix D, which can be used as homework.

Step 6: Once students understand everything and there are no additional questions, you can give students a quiz (or use it as further practice). There are two versions of the quiz and the answer keys are provided as well (Appendices F, and G).

Variation

Before Step 6 I gave students another listening activity worksheet, similar to the ones in Step 5 but instead, watched a movie or show in class and filled out the data collection worksheet (Appendix H).

Conclusion

In an EFL setting it can be difficult for students to come across English conversations, or hear reduced forms of words used properly. The activities I created worked well in my class, allowing students to see explicitly what reduced words are and how they work. By using patterns, students can find it a useful way to remember reductions, thus realizing they do not need to necessarily memorize everything. Students in my class had fun practicing the pronunciation of reduced words and enjoyed watching films and video clips in class.

Appendix

The appendix is available from the online version of this article at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>

Turning Boring Presentations Into Creative Video Productions

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Quick guide

- Keywords: *Presentation, technology, video, speaking*
- Learner English level: *Intermediate to advanced*
- Learner maturity: *University*
- Preparation time: *2 hours*
- Activity time: *Three 20 minute sessions and three full 60 minute class periods*
- Materials: *Computers, smart-phones (or video cameras), video editing software, peer comment handouts, grading rubrics*

This is a proposal for a video alternative to the final presentations that many English courses require at the university level. Students create instructional videos using the smartphones that many of them already have. In this process, they will also experiment with video editing software, working either individually or in pairs. The final videos are shown on the last day of class and receive peer-feedback.

Preparation

Step 1: Prepare three 20 minute discussion lessons to review course objectives. Make discussion questions that engage students in the content being assessed. Grammar focused classrooms tend to work well for making video presentations. For example, reviewing modals or commands would prepare students to create instructional videos.

Step 2: Prepare tutorial videos or lessons on how to shoot video (most students already will know how) and how to edit video (most students will not yet know). There are many free tutorials for video editing available on YouTube, or you can make your own using screencast software that lets you take videos of your computer screen (See Appendix A for free tutorial and screencast software options).

Step 3: Create an example presentation script or video. Students should understand the expectations and requirements for their final presentation based on this example (See Appendix B).

Step 4: Reserve a room that can play student videos for the final lesson of the course. For peer-feedback, create handouts for students to fill with information and comments (See Appendix D).

Procedure

Step 1: For days 1-3, spend 20 minutes showing an example how-to video and doing the discussion questions in class. The goal of the discussion questions is to engage in target language production, which students will need to do when making the final instructional videos.

Step 2: On day 4, students make pairs and brainstorm ideas for an activity they wish to explain. Video lengths should be 3-4 minutes for individuals or 6-8 minutes for pairs. Pairs will need topic guidance to ensure each student is involved equally.

Step 3: One week before video showings, show students how to edit video, or provide them with tutorials online. Students draft scripts using target level grammar and vocabulary and turn them in.

Step 4: Correct and return students' drafts with comments and suggestions. Students shoot and edit their videos outside of class and submit them on USB flash drives. Make sure students' videos are in a format that can be viewed in class. Avoid submitting video through social networking sites or file sharing

applications due to potential privacy issues.

Step 5: On the final day, play the videos and have students fill out worksheets (Appendix D). After all the videos are shown, students mingle with their classmates and give feedback. The *compliment sandwich* works well (one positive comment, followed by something they need to work on, and ending again with a general positive comment). Grade projects based on the course presentation criteria (See Appendix C).

Conclusion

Using technology serves as an important compliment in language learning and promotes technology skills that students can take out into their future careers. More teachers are requiring the use of PowerPoint presentations, but these presentations can become overused, boring, and ineffective for achieving classroom goals. On top of that, most students would much prefer to make videos, rather than final PowerPoint presentations. Turning a presentation into a video is a simple and fun way to assess student abilities and the overall efficacy of a university course.

Appendix

The appendix is available from the online version of this article at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>.

[RESOURCES] BOOK REVIEWS

Robert Taferner

If you are interested in writing a book review, please consult the list of materials available for review in the Recently Received *column, or consider suggesting an alternative book that would be helpful to our membership.*

Email: <reviews@jalt-publications.org> Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/book-reviews>

This month's column features Matthew W. Turner's review of Understanding English across Cultures *and Adam Murray's evaluation of* Choose Your Own Adventure: Mystery of the Maya.

Understanding English across Cultures

[Nobuyuki Honna, Yuko Takeshita, & James D'Angelo. Tokyo: Kinseido Publishing, 2012. pp. 90. ¥1,900. ISBN: 978-4-7647-3942-0.]

Reviewed by Matthew W. Turner, Rikkyo University

The English language continues to prevail as an international auxiliary language, as a lingua franca used to facilitate global communication amongst communities of users (Seidlhofer, 2005). Yet, in some learning contexts, English is still presented as a language spoken by and inherent of a limited group of *native-speaking* nations (Holliday, 1994). This is often perpetuated in English learning materials, and maintained by students, schools, and teachers alike. In Japan, this largely remains the case, where the identity of English is prolonged as a property of speakers from inner-circle nations (Seargeant, 2009; Yamanaka, 2006). *Understanding English across Cultures* attempts to readdress English as a global concern by raising awareness of the intercultural characteristics of this world vernacular.

Set over fifteen units, the textbook explores the status of English over a host of world settings, and encourages its target Japanese tertiary learner audience to engage with various related issues. For example, in Unit 7, learners are introduced to the English variety spoken in Singapore: Singlish. While Unit 8 focuses the reader's attention on the situation with English in India.

Each unit begins with a brief introduction of the topic in Japanese, this is then followed with a list of vocabulary items together with their Japanese equivalents in a simple matching activity in the *Words to Learn* section. *Reading* sections follow, which serve as introductory passages about the topic of interest. Each passage is further accompanied by additional vocabulary items bolded in the margin with coordinating translations and an oc-

casional diagram or table related to the content of the reading. Multiple choice questions follow which are designed to test the learners' comprehension of the previous reading passages. On completion of the *Comprehension* task, learners are challenged to discuss the issues presented by way of a series of questions written in Japanese. Each section provides a writing activity in the form of a set of open-ended questions that encourage the learners to meaningfully connect with the unit's subject. Finally, each section culminates with a passage, again written entirely in Japanese titled *Food for Thought*. This is intended to add colour to the unit's subject and provide further opinions on the matter.

In sampling this textbook, the reviewer brought together a small group of Japanese undergraduate learners who were majoring in global business studies, and all of whom were undertaking an English discussion-based course. After completing a lively extended discussion in English, making use of the *Let's Think and Discuss* questions, the group were asked to reflect on the textbook. The group remarked that the reading level of the passage sampled had a few difficult areas. However, the participants' responses largely showed that it was written at the right level for an intermediate to upper-intermediate proficiency of English. This was also made easier with the added vocabulary support. Some learners reflected that the sample unit (Unit 6) was not of benefit to their lives personally, citing the historical nature of the reading passage. Other learners felt that the unit had the ability to give students a better direction in the way they study.

One of this textbook's apparent aims is to promote the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence amongst its audience. Intercultural Communication Competence is a multi-faceted concept, yet, this textbook appears to be attending to Japanese learners' level of knowledge and flexibility (Ting-Toomey, 1999), by raising awareness of World Englishes issues. Nonetheless, this textbook could perhaps have gone one further and incorporated these varieties into the content itself, namely through the accompanying audio CD, which unfortunately appears to contradict the overall purposes of the textbook by using speakers from inner-circle nations. These shortcomings are reflected more generally by Houghton (2014), and Hino (2014) who note that similar attempts lack a distinct framework for incorporating more diverse English varieties into the content, or opportunities for actively participating in the World Englishes community.

Understanding English across Cultures should be commended for opening up the discussion of World Englishes to undergraduate learners, and for promoting a *post-native-speakerist* pedagogy in Japan. While the progressive and vibrant subject matter of the book is slightly muted by bland design, this text serves as a welcome introduction to undergraduate courses dealing with such global issues. I suggest this textbook would be better suited to a lecture-style, or even seminar-based contexts given the bilingual nature, nevertheless, this title certainly has the potential of being adapted for more communication-driven environments, owing to the debate it is striving to raise.

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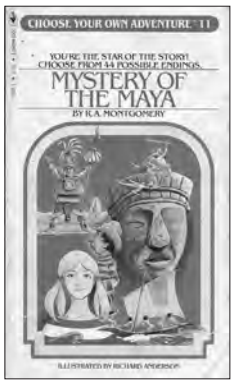
Choose Your Own Adventure: Mystery of the Maya

[R. A. Montgomery (Adapted by M. Benevides). McGraw-Hill Education, 2011. pp. 80. ¥1,024. ISBN: 978-0071327824.]

Reviewed by Adam Murray, Miyazaki International College

The *Choose Your Own Adventure* (CYOA) graded reader series consists of 30 titles that have been rewritten for English as a Second Language (ESL) or Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The books have been written at three vocabulary levels to accommodate students with various levels of proficien-

cy: 500 headwords, 700 headwords, and 900 headwords.



One book, *Mystery of the Maya*, was piloted as part of the ongoing graded reading component of a first-year compulsory reading and writing course for non-English majors. The students were first given the books to read independently as homework. While reading, the students were asked to take a memo of any new or forgotten words they encountered and to write down the story endings they experienced on a worksheet. A week later, the book was used as a part of classroom activities. To be specific, the students completed Activity Sheets which are freely downloadable from the companion website <mhecyoa.com>. Because of time constraints, only two of the four worksheets were used: Activity Sheet 1 (vocabulary) and Activity Sheet 2 (guided reading). The vocabulary worksheet consists of 10 multiple-choice questions and 5 word association questions. The guided reading worksheet leads the students on four adventures and has two comprehension questions for each adventure.

Generally speaking, the majority of the students had a favorable impression of *Mystery of the Maya*. In addition to my observations, the students were asked to rate their level of interest in the book and the difficulty of the book. All of the students indicated that they would like to read another book in the series.

In addition to being engaging, CYOA books stimulate critical thinking. For example, the reader is forced to make decisions, which have a direct influence on the outcome of the story. Concerning decision-making, some students commented about how thinking about the endings affected their decisions, "when I have to choose what to do next, I think carefully about what will happen". Some of the students commented that the endings were "unique" and "unexpected". Since *Mystery of the Maya* has 29 endings, some of the students commented that they will reread several more times to find more of the endings. One student commented, "I couldn't reach any good endings, but it was so fun" which certainly indicates that she was engaged and had read the book more than once.

Another major advantage of the CYOA format is that it ensures that the students will repeatedly encounter the same words. It has been suggested that a reader needs to encounter a word upwards of 30 times to learn it (Waring, 2012). Naturally, if a student rereads the story several times, they will see the same word many more times than a single reading. In addition to reading extensively, intensive reading activities such as a rereading are useful (See Grabe & Stoller, 2011). For this reason, the guided reading worksheets, which are available on the CYOA website, are a great classroom activity.

My only criticism concerns the companion website for students and teachers. Because reading-while-listening aids with vocabulary acquisition (Brown, Waring, & Donkaewbua, 2008), accompanying audio is a useful resource. However, in order to listen to the audio, the students must register for an account. After logging into the website, the student need to answer a copy protection-type question before they can listen to the accompanying audio. Although I can understand why the publisher would want to protect their recordings, this could be a source of frustration for students who are poor typists. In terms of negative comments from the students, there were only a few. Despite the use of simplified vocabulary, and the short glossary to introduce essential vocabulary at the beginning of each book, several students commented that the vocabulary was too difficult for them. One student wrote that it was "a bother" to turn to various pages in the book.

Despite the shortcomings of the companion website, I wholeheartedly recommend the books of the *Choose Your Own Adventure* series as class readers or as a unique addition to any university's library graded reader collection. I hope, and expect that many more of the original 185 CYOA books will be adapted for ESL and EFL readers.

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Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2011). *Teaching and researching: Reading* (2nd ed.), London: Pearson Education.

Waring, R. (2012). How much ER? Retrieved from <http://www.robwaring.org/er/ER_info/how_much_er.htm>

Recently Received

Steve Fukuda

<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

A list of texts and resource materials for language teachers available for book reviews in *TLT* and *JALT Journal*. Publishers are invited to submit complete sets of materials to Steve Fukuda at the Publishers' Review Copies Liaison address listed on the Staff page on the inside cover of *TLT*.

Recently Received Online

An up-to-date index of books available for review can be found at: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/recently-received>

** = new listing; ! = final notice* — Final notice items will be removed November 30. Please make queries by email to the appropriate JALT Publications contact.

Books for Students (reviewed in *TLT*)

Contact: Steve Fukuda <pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

21st Century Reading: Creative Thinking and Reading with TED Talks — Blass, L., Vargo, M., & Yeates, E. Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning / Cengage Learning, 2015. [4-level reading course created through a partnership between TED incl. Audio CD and DVD package, Teacher's Guide, and Assessment CD-ROM with ExamView].

! Collins Academic Skills Series — Various authors. London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2013. [6 courses titled: writing, group work, presenting, research, numbers, and lectures on academic skills for students preparing to study or are studying at an English-speaking institution].

Conversations in Class (third edition) — Talandis, J., & Vannieu, B. Kyoto, Japan: Alma Publishing, 2015. [8-unit course in oral communication designed for low-intermediate Japanese university students incl. teacher's book and audio CD].

! Four Corners — Richards, J. C., & Bohlke, D. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. [4-level integrated skills course w/ online workbook, Classware, self-study CD incl. class DVD, teacher's edition w/ assessment and audio CD and teacher resource worksheets].

** Girl Talk* — Elwood, K. Tokyo: Nan'un-do, 2014. [15-unit all around English textbook for and about women incl. teacher's manual and audio CD].

Healthtalk: Health Awareness & English Conversation (third edition) — McBean, B. Tokyo: Macmillan LanguageHouse, 2014. [13-unit content-based course on health themes for Japanese students at the intermediate level incl. extensive glossary, downloadable teacher's manual, and class audio].

** Hot Topics Japan* — Alexander, S. Seoul: Compass Publishing, 2014. [2-book series for intermediate to advanced learners focused on Japan-specific current events incl. online answer key, transcripts, and MP3 files].

! Jetstream — Revell, J., Tomalin, M., Harmer, J., & Maris, A. Crawley, UK: Helbling Languages. [6-level integrated skills course incl. workbook w/ audio CD, teacher's guide, and access to e-zone resources].

** Language Teaching Insights from Other Fields: Psychology, Business, Brain Science and More* — Stillwell, C. (ed.). Alexander, VA: TESOL International Association, 2015. [15-unit professional development title exploring language teaching from perspectives in other fields].

** NorthStar (third edition)* — Various Authors. White Plains, NY: Pearson, 2015. [5-level Reading/Writing and Listening/Speaking course with focus on critical thinking and academic skills incl. teacher's manual w/tests and classroom audio CDs and DVDs].

Reaching Out — Long, R. Nagoya, Japan: Perceptia Press, 2014. [14-unit course to help students to become familiar with the basic words, expressions, and interactions of intercultural conversations incl. teacher's guide and downloadable tests for each chapter].

! Read to Write (second edition) — Moore, D., & Barker, D. Nagoya, Japan: BTB Press, 2014. [Writing course using readings to train students to pick up chunks and make new sentences incl. English Writing Manual explaining basics and mechanics of layout].

** Say What You Think* — Perkins, D. Mountain View, CA: Creative Commons, 2015. [4-part communicative course for teaching discussion, presentation, debate, and emotion at the upper high school level incl. online worksheets, tests, slide shows, and videos].

** Tactics for the TOEFL iBT Test: A Strategic New Approach to Achieving TOEFL Success* — Lee, C. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. [26-unit course focused on skills, strategies, and language necessary for entry into post-secondary institutions incl. student book w/ 2 full practice tests and access to online skills practice].

Books for Teachers (reviewed in *JALT Journal*)

Contact: Greg Rouault <jj-reviews@jalt-publications.org>

** Exploring Listening Strategy Instruction Through Action Research* — Siegel, J. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

** Reflective Teaching in Higher Education* — Ashwin, P. et al. London: Bloomsbury, 2015.

A Response Protocol for At-Risk Students

Last issue, I wrote about teaching a special junior high school student who is (by my estimation) middle-high functioning on the autistic spectrum. Now, I want to discuss a separate but related issue pertaining to university campuses requiring the attention of English teachers. Recently, the US has seen greater enrollment of students with pre-existing mental health conditions (Benton & Benton, 2006). According to mental health professionals with whom I have spoken, the same is true in *Nihon*. Among the reasons are improved psychotropic medications supporting higher functioning, reduced public stigma towards mental illness, and competitive university recruitment. These developments are encouraging and mean greater opportunity for higher education.

However, with these new opportunities come new challenges. Having to be independent in a new environment is stressful for any young person. Therapeutic regimes like counseling and medication could be disrupted during the adjustment period, leading to more anxiety and disassociation from the environment. At worst, students may isolate themselves making it more difficult for health services to identify and intervene.

Therefore, teachers should be aware of the presence of at-risk students. In fact, they may be more visible in the ESL/EFL classroom because of closer proximity between students and instructors compared to major-based lecture courses. Without training, identifying "at-risk" behavior may be difficult, but sometimes it is obvious. Once I had a student in such distress for missing an assignment she repeatedly punched herself on the side of her head, causing severe discomfort to her classmates.

In this situation, foreign language facilities need a communication protocol. This can simply be a notification system where teachers immediately contact their supervisor or administrative office to alert the health center. However, there are two major considerations: One is privacy, and the other (unfortunately) political. Concerning the former, although a student may appear "at-risk," without their assent, interventions could be considered harassment. The second issue is more complicated: Center or department supervisors, viewing outside involvement as encroachment, may feel inclined to "manage" the situation in-house. The point is language acquisition specialists are not mental health professionals, and it is best for specialists to be consulted.

References

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Edo Forsythe

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. We invite readers to submit articles on their areas of interest. Please contact the editor before submitting.

Email: <tlt-wired@jalt-publications.org> Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/tlt-wired>

TESOL's Electronic Village Online: Helping You Begin CALLing

Edo Forsythe
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Now that we are well into the fall semester, our thoughts are drifting toward the upcoming winter vacation. A great way to keep yourself occupied while learning new CALL tools and methods through the coming winter months is to participate in the free, online courses held in the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Electronic Village Online (EVO). The TESOL conferences held in North America have highlighted CALL-focused presentations in their Electronic Village area for years, and the TESOL CALL Interest Section has taken those

learning opportunities online through their EVO. These EVO courses are free to the public and run for five weeks in January and February. The EVO's website is <http://evosessions.pbworks.com>.

The courses for the 2016 EVO were being reviewed at the time of this writing, but they should be posted on the website by early November. Previous EVOs have included courses about teaching Business English, using drama in English classes, creating e-textbooks, using mobile apps in the language classroom, explanations of how to use Moodle, and many more. Visit the EVO website and explore this year's courses to find your next professional development opportunity.

The 2016 EVO registration will run from January 3 to 10, 2016, and the courses begin January 10. Courses include both synchronous and asynchronous online interactions among the participants, so they are also an excellent opportunity to meet new colleagues, exchange experiences, and learn new tips for implementing CALL methods in the foreign language classroom. Check out TESOL's Electronic Village Online for excellent professional development courses to keep you busy during the coming winter months. What you learn in the EVO will certainly make it easier to keep your classroom *Wired!*

Editor's Note: The JALT CALL SIG invites you to join their CALL Forum at this year's JALT Conference. The theme of the forum is Language Learning Technologies & Learner Autonomy and it will be held on Saturday afternoon, November 21. Also, the *Wired* column continues to solicit articles about using technology in the classroom. It is the perfect place for you to share your practical experiences in using CALL methods and tools. Please consider submitting an article and contact the editor for more information. I hope you can take advantage of the many chances mentioned above to ensure your lessons stay *Wired!*

[JALT FOCUS] NOTICES

2015年第2回総会開催通知

Notice of the Second 2015 JALT Ordinary General Meeting (OGM)

- 日時:2015年11月22日(日)
  Date: November 22, 2015 (Sunday)
- 時間:17:15 – 18:15
  Time: 5:15 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.
- 場所:静岡コンベンションアーツセンター「グランシップ」、会議ホール・風
  Location: Conference Hall – Winds, Shizuoka Convention & Arts Center "Granship"

議案 / Agenda:

- 第1号議案 議長選出
  Item 1. Appointment of the Chair
- 第2号議案 議事録署名人選出
  Item 2. Determination of Signatories
- 第3号議案 平成26年度事業報告承認の件
  Item 3. Approval of Business Report (2014/04/01 – 2015/03/31)
- 第4号議案 その他の重要事項
  Item 4: Other Important Issues

* 11月初旬に、会員の皆様に議案の詳細と個別の不在投票へのリンク先をEメールでご案内いたします。

* An email containing details of the agenda and a link to an individualized ballot will be sent to you during the first week of November.

Eメールがお手元に届きましたら、不在投票の方法に従って投票をしてください。

本総会は、特定非営利活動法人(NPO)としての地位を保つ為に必要なもので、過半数以上の会員の皆様による出席(定足数)をもって、正式に開催することができます。

幸い当学会では、会員の皆様に向けて電子投票システムを提供させていただいており、不在投票をしていただくことで、本総会の出席者としてみなすことができます。

お手数をおかけいたしますが、ご支援とご協力のほどよろしくお願いします。

When you receive the email, please follow the instructions on how to complete the absentee ballot. Importantly, we need a majority of JALT members to be present at the OGM for it to be valid. Holding a valid OGM is necessary for us in order to maintain our status as a nonprofit organization (NPO). Fortunately, you can vote by online absentee ballot and be counted present for the meeting, as per the JALT Constitution.

Thank you very much for your membership and your support.

New JALT Associate Members

産経ヒューマンラーニング

Sankei Human Learning

産経ヒューマンラーニング株式会社は、安心・安全・高品質なオンライン英会話サービス「産経オンライン英会話」を運営しています。

国内オンライン英会話スクールでは初となる2種類の

教育ISO認証を取得。ウェブサイト上にはレベル別・目的別の教材も完備し、早朝から深夜まで場所を問わずに学習できるサービスをご提供しています。個人利用の他、企業・学校法人のお客様には特別プランもご用意。

2015年8月、文部科学省中学校学習指導要領に基づいた「学校教科書準拠」テキストをリリースしました。

産経ヒューマンラーニング
SANKEI HUMAN LEARNING

Be Native

BeNative, an award-winning e-learning service from SMATOOS Inc., teaches business English to corporate employees throughout East Asia, specifically including China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

BeNative

BeNative's business English courses are based on the video interviews and presentations of real businesspeople, making it a 100% natural and authentic language-learning experience. Business executives are filmed regularly, amassing a large database of spoken phrases and vocabulary. All this data is then analyzed and curated using unique text mining techniques in order to find the most commonly used phrases spoken in business.

Interviews include Dr. Clayton Christensen of Harvard Business School, Bob Lutz of GM, as well as other execs from IBM, PayPal, Box, 3M, Kimberley-Clark, and hundreds more.

While we are currently focused on English, our next milestones include valuable languages such as Chinese and Japanese. We also have future plans to release BeNative for Kids.

株式会社SMATOOSが提供するBeNativeは、ビジネス英語に特化したeラーニングサービスで、主に日韓中などの国々の企業顧客を中心に展開しています。

BeNativeの教材は、本物のビジネスパーソンのプレゼンやインタビュー映像などを基に作成されているため、最もナチュラルで本物の言語学習体験を提供しています。一流ビジネスパーソンたちの動画を撮り溜めることによって、ビジネス英語に特化したビッグデータを構築し、それを弊社独自のデータマイニング手法によって解析し、頻出フレーズを上手く抽出して、学習教材としております。

[JALT FOCUS] SHOWCASE

Mitchell Fryer

Showcase 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.

Email: <showcase@jalt-publications.org> Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/showcase-members-profile>

In this edition of Showcase, Mark Rebuck shares his journey that led him to teaching English for medical purposes (EMP) here in Japan and his plans to facilitate improvements in the teaching of English for Japan's future medication-use experts.

My Journey to Teaching Pharmacy English

Mark Rebuck

Last year, it was a sushi chef; now, it's a doctor. That's Eugene, aged eight, on what he wants to be when he grows up. He's already adept at administering subcutaneous injections to his younger sister (a rare chromosomal abnormality necessitates them), so perhaps he will end up in medicine. Eugene's father (this writer) began teaching English because he didn't really know what he wanted to be. My wife admonishes my blaming "the system," but I feel my future was to some extent decided when I was streamed into the lowest maths level upon entering comprehensive school at 12.

In that "dunce's class" we were expected to fail, and fail I did (for those familiar with the English exam system of yesteryear, I was awarded a CSE grade 5). Yet in other subjects, I excelled, particularly in biology, achieving an A at "A" Level. Despite my love of biology, while at school I did not even contemplate studying medicine, since a reasonable exam result in maths was a prerequisite to enter that and most other university courses. It was after leaving school that I realized medicine would have been my dream career and in my late 20s—after I had started English teaching—I thought seriously about conquering maths and applying for medical school as a mature student.

It was the passage of time, a few traumatic life experiences, and attending my first JALT conference, amongst other things, that changed me—through a convoluted mental process that would take hours in the psychiatrist's chair to untangle—from a reluctant English teacher into someone resigned to his ELT fate, and, finally, into a forty-something pretty well fulfilled by what he does. In 2013, I was fortunate enough to get a permanent position in the Faculty of Pharmacy at Meijo University in Nagoya. Having graduated with a degree in physical education, something that had hitherto been an embarrassment to me, turned out to be a factor in passing the interview (Birmingham University's School of Sport and Exercise Sciences admitted me without maths).

I now teach *through* English medical-related content that is for me intensely interesting and for some topics, as fate would have it, personally relevant. To do this job properly entails becoming somewhat of an expert on the topics you teach and the field in general. So, while I never became a doctor, I am definitely learning about medicine, as well as educating future healthcare professionals. When I taught EGP (English for general purposes), it was often the case that the topics, say "fashion" or "my family," were just vehicles or wrapping for language work (introducing vocabulary, grammar items, functions, and so on). In contrast, now the content—whether it be diabetes, drug compliance, or the mechanism of action of a new hepatitis C medicine—is paramount.

Or at least I think that it should be. The truth is that in my faculty and most probably in others around Japan, creating an English language curriculum appropriate for pharmacy students' needs is a work in progress. For pharmacy students, the ultimate return from a many-million-yen investment in an extremely demanding six-year pharmacy course is obtaining their pharmacy licence. Without this, graduates cannot work as pharmacists. It is perhaps not surprising then that English is perceived by many students as less important than subjects such as pharmacology and pharmacotherapy, essential for passing the national examination for pharmacists. Research I conducted soon after entering the pharmacy faculty indicated that linking the content of English classes to that of such specialist courses could increase student engagement in English classes.

Emerging from this research was an approach to teaching pharmacy English, encapsulated by the acronym PHARM—practical, homed-in, authentic, relevant, and motivational. These elements are expanded upon in a recent article (Rebuck, 2015). Finally, I am planning to organize a symposium or forum where teachers can share ideas and come up with concrete suggestions to improve English education for Japan's future medication-use experts. It would be great to hear from anyone interested in participating in such an event.

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Mark Rebuck has taught English in London (the city of his birth), Korea, and Japan. He holds an MA in Japanese Studies from Sheffield University and an MA in TEFL from Birmingham University. His areas of interest include materials development using authentic resources, particularly in the field of medical English. Mark Rebuck can be contacted at rebuck@ccalumni.meijo-u.ac.jp

[JALT FOCUS] SIG FOCUS


Joël Laurier & Robert Morel

JALT currently has 26 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) available for members to join. This column publishes an in-depth view of one SIG each issue, providing readers with a more complete picture of the different SIGs within JALT. For information about SIG events, publications, and calls for papers, please visit <http://jalt.org main/groups>.

Email: <sig-focus@jalt-publications.org> Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/sig-news>

Global Issues in Language Education SIG

The Global Issues in Language Education (GILE) SIG is one of JALT's oldest special interest groups, with a proud history of 25 years of research, education, and action. Its origins go back to a JALT 1988 workshop entitled "English for Unselfish Purposes" and a follow-up colloquium at JALT 1989 on the theme of "Global Issues and Language Education." GILE was officially established in June 1991, becoming the world's first interest group for foreign language teachers dealing with global education.

Since then, similar groups have been established by JALT affiliate organizations, including the "Social Responsibility Interest Section" (SR-IS) within US-based TESOL and a "Global Issues" GI-SIG in the UK-based IATEFL.

GILE members are classroom teachers, program directors, textbook publishers, and materials writers who share an interest in integrating world problems, global awareness, social responsibility, and world citizenship into content-based language teaching. The SIG works to enable students to acquire and use a foreign language while empowering them with the knowledge, skills, and commitment needed to solve global problems. GILE thus has a double commitment to excellence in language education and to "teaching for a better world."

The official objectives of the SIG are:

- to promote the integration of global issues, global awareness, and social responsibility into foreign-language teaching
- to promote networking and mutual support among educators dealing with global issues in language teaching, and
- to promote awareness among language teachers of important developments in global education, and the related fields of environmental education, human rights education, peace education, and development education.

The SIG publishes the Global Issues in Language Education Newsletter, a 24-page quarterly newsletter containing a wealth of information—from teaching ideas on areas such as human rights and international key-pal programs to global education conference reports and peace education activities for future classes. In addition, GILE runs an active Facebook page and Twitter account. We also regularly sponsor experts from around the world for workshops, lectures, and conferences. We bring them to Japan to introduce language teachers to approaches, methods and materials linked to global issues and global education. These have included national lecture tours by Russian peace educators, Australian conflict resolution experts, Palestinian human rights activists, environmental education experts from Canada and Singapore, as well as UNESCO Linguapax experts from Germany and Spain.

The GILE annual fall Peace as a Global Language (PGL) conference brings together teachers, academics, activists, students, and NGOs from Japan and overseas for a stimulating weekend of talks, events, and presentations with a focus on the themes of language, education and peace. PGL, conceived by Japan-based peace activists and language educators in the year following the 9-11 terrorist attacks of 2001, held its first conference in Tokyo in 2002. Since then, it has been held in locations all over Japan. This year, the conference celebrates its 14th anniversary by going global! PGL 2015 will be hosted by The Management University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya on November 5 and 6. The 2015 PGL Organizing Committee invites scholars, teachers, peace activists, students and members of the community interested in these issues and more to join us for discussion, debate, and contemplation.

GILE SIG and the Peace as a Global Education conference it sponsors offer language educators an exciting chance to add an international dimension to their teaching. All those interested in helping to organize or contribute to GILE or the PGL conference are asked to contact us via our website: <http://gilesig.org>.

[JALT PRAXIS] THE WRITERS' WORKSHOP

Creating an Abstract: Informing and Intriguing the Reader

Loran Edwards
Kansai Gaidai University
Charles Moore
Concordia University

Teachers and researchers are master "skimmers" and "scanners." Whether flipping through academic journals, browsing online, or looking over conference booklets, they scan presentation and article titles looking for something attention grabbing. When they do find something interesting, they then quickly skim the **abstract**, and if that speaks to them, then they will finally slow down to read the whole article. As a writer, this means you have just a few short seconds to hook a reader and get your message out there. Write a catchy title, and then make sure your abstract is perfectly set-up to grab your reader's attention. In this column, I will discuss how to write two types

of abstracts: presentation abstracts and article abstracts.

Presentation Abstracts

If you plan to submit a presentation proposal to an academic conference, such as the JALT Pan-SIG Conference or the JALT National Conference, you will need to submit it in the form of an abstract. For these conferences specifically, this will be a 100-word maximum, one paragraph summary of your presentation. This will be used in the selection process, and then, once your presentation has been accepted, this abstract will be listed in the conference handbook and website for conference participants to view when deciding which presentations interests them or not (PanSIG, 2014).

The abstracts will be different depending on the type of presentation, and all will not include the same kind of information, but all should present a clear and specific summary of what the presentation will cover. When I coach people on their abstract writing, I try to have them write their summary in four sentences, with each sentence having its own objective. The four types of sentences are as follows:

1. Introduce the topic
2. Describe the issue you are addressing
3. Present your study, methods, or solution
4. Give the reader some takeaways

Example Presentation Abstracts

Here are two abstracts from the 2015 Pan-SIG conference handbook. Notice that both of them follow the four-sentence format listed above. They introduce a problem in the beginning and then let the reader know how the researcher addressed or studied the problem. Next, they let the reader know specifically what can be done to solve the problem and provide some very clear take-home ideas.

Abstract 1: University students have rich social lives inside and outside the classroom, but little research in Japan has examined how social networks relate to language learning. This presentation describes an exploratory study of four Japanese university students and the support they received from social networks while completing writing assignments for EAP courses. Formalized opportunities for support from peers and teachers provided the most direct support while time, need, and attitude often limited informal connections to emotional support. I will share ways teachers can encourage students to make the best use of social networks and ideas for classroom activities involving social networking (Bankier, 2015).

Abstract 2: Although a myriad of factors influence second language acquisition, affective factors have a unique impact on SLA. Japanese socio-education culture and students' perceptions towards foreign language learning can create specific challenges for the language instructor. This presentation will examine three affective variables—self-efficacy, integrative motivation, and inhibition—related with Japanese students learning English. Suggestions for bridging these potential affective "gaps" in students' learner identities during the preschool and primary school years will also be discussed, and how, in bridging these gaps, the stage can be set for more effective language acquisition during the students' English studies (Moore, 2015).

Remember, you only get 100 words, so every word has to count! Careful editing and multiple rewrites are very important when preparing an abstract for a presentation. It is very much like trying to fit odd shaped blocks into a square box—there are only a couple of ways it will work, and you will probably have to take everything out and start over again several times.

Article Abstracts

There are two main types of article abstracts: descriptive abstracts and informative abstracts. Descriptive abstracts are much shorter and more general—like the description for a book on Amazon.com. Informative abstracts are much more common for academic publications. This type of abstract is a short, powerful, self-contained summary of the entire paper; it should not be an excerpt from the main article nor should it be necessary to read the abstract in order to understand the full paper. According to the staff at The Writing Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), an abstract serves two main functions: to help potential readers decide whether the full article is of interest to them and also to allow for correct indexing of the article so that it can be retrieved accurately from online databases and search engines (n.d.). Because of this, it is important to include critical keywords that emphasize the topic of the work and give readers enough information to make a judgement about whether this article applies to their research or not (UNC, n.d.). An author should include and explain all of the important arguments, problems, evidence, and results that are going to be included in the full article. However, an abstract should rarely be more than 10% of the length of the entire article (UNC, n.d.), so once again, please make every word count! Below is an example abstract from a JALT conference proceedings article. The keywords are in bold for keyword example purposes only.

One challenge many teachers face in their **EFL writing** classes is trying to create writing tasks that can work for students of varying skill levels. Another hurdle is finding a good method for providing each student with feedback that they will be able to apply to future drafts or other writing assignments. When we were given the opportunity to create a new writing course, we explored the idea of incorporating portfolios into our writing class that would hopefully address both of these challenges. It was hypothesized that **writing portfolios** would allow students to work at their own pace and writing level by giving them the opportunity to decide how and when they would complete their writing projects. The course delivery and instruction centered around **student-teacher conferences** intended to give **individual feedback** to each student multiple times throughout the semester (Leachtenauer & Edwards, 2013).

Tips for Writing Article Abstracts

When writing an article abstract, I often coach people to think of the abstract as a paper itself and to use a similar writing process for constructing it. First make an outline, then create a first draft, and then compare it to the rest of the paper to make sure all the important parts are present, rewriting as needed. Next, have a friend, a colleague, or a PSG peer-reader read only the abstract and then tell you what your full article is about—if they get it right, you have a winner! If not, then rewrite again. Finally, proofread and edit to get every word and phrase as strong and clear as possible.

Also, if you are having trouble organizing your abstract, try reverse outlining (UNC, n.d.). On a large piece of paper or whiteboard, write down each section heading in your paper. Then, write down the main ideas of each paragraph in outline form under their corresponding section heading. Next, when writing your main abstract, try to write down all of the previously categorized main ideas under each section heading as one sentence in the abstract. (As an added bonus, reverse outlining can also help you see if there are any areas of your paper that are repetitive, missing, etc.)

Takeaway Message

It is easy to think of the abstract as just a simple little paragraph that can be whipped up quickly, just before you submit your paper. This is a bad idea! Even though it is little, the abstract is one of the most important parts of your paper and deserves your full attention. If you are unsure how to begin, decide what publication you would like to submit your article to and then read some of their previously published abstracts and articles. If you are preparing to submit a proposal for a conference, look up past conference handbooks and read through some of the proposals. For starters, you can access the handbook for the PanSIG 2015 conference at <http://sites.google.com/site/jaltpansig>. And of course, you can always ask for help from the JALT Writers' Peer Support Group at <http://jalt-publications.org/psg>.

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Creating a Sustainable JALT Conference

The Environmental Committee have a blue print for a sustainable conference.

https://sustainability.asu.edu/docs/gios/green-office/Green-Office-Level-1.pdf

If you any suggestions, however small, please contact greenjalt@gmail.com or brentoldchap@hotmail.com

David McMurray

Graduate students and teaching assistants are invited to submit compositions in the form of a speech, appeal, memoir, essay, conference review, or interview on the policy and practice of language education. Master's and doctoral thesis supervisors are also welcome to contribute or encourage their students to join this vibrant debate. Grounded in the author's reading, practicum, or empirical research, contributions are expected to share an impassioned presentation of opinions in 1,000 words or less. Teaching Assistance is not a peer-reviewed column.

Email: <teach-assist@jalt-publications.org>

Aspiring to become a professor in the biochemistry field, Zahir Hussain shares his career development strategies and observations on the teaching of English in Japan and Bangladesh with readers of Teaching Assistance. The author is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Biochemistry at the Kagawa University School of Medicine and is a TA in Ian Willey's English classes at Kagawa University. His supervisor kindly appraises the energetic and highly motivated TA in a postscript to this article.

Learning the Biochemistry of English Classes in Japan

Zahir Hussain

Kagawa University School of Medicine

Ever since I was a college sophomore, I have been passionate about choosing a research career in which I could enjoy learning about biochemistry and molecular biology. I gained a valuable background in this field from academia and research jobs in my native country, Bangladesh. Technical deficiencies in Bangladeshi institutes of higher learning were major hindrances to fulfilling my passion for further research. So, I started looking for opportunities to enroll in a doctoral course in a developed country. As chance favors the connected mind, I tried to get in touch with many friends and seniors who were already walking on the challenging path of advanced research.

Using connections in Japan, I found one potential Japanese professor in my area of interest. Together with this professor, I submitted a highly ambitious research proposal to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology (MEXT) in Japan. The proposal was granted, and I received a MEXT scholarship to support my research journey. And so here I am, in the Department of Biochemistry at Kagawa University School of Medicine working to characterize biocatalysts involved in complex fat metabolism under the supervision of Professor Natsuo Ueda.

Becoming a Mentor in Biochemistry Labs

In addition to developing myself as a researcher, I would also like to become a mentor for others, and eventually a professor, in the biochemistry and molecular biology field as one can never truly learn a subject unless one tries to teach it to others. While I was in Bangladesh, I mentored undergraduate foreign Minority Health International Research Training (MHIRT) research fellows, and after coming to Japan, I mentored a medical student conducting laboratory experiments as well as one new undergraduate fellow from Brunei to perform a mini project in my lab.

The TA's Role in the English Course at Kagawa University

In addition to my daily lab work, I decided to try to nourish my language and presentation skills by working in an English class as a teaching assistant. I also volunteered to participate in a Japanese language learning salon. To undertake both the learning and teaching of a foreign language creates an amazing synergy. Knowing a new language means one can explore the world in a new way.

I have been a TA in two English courses at Kagawa University: *Medical English* designed for third-year medical students and *Clinical English* designed for fourth-year medical students. Both classes are divided into two sections, with one teacher in charge of each section of about 60 students. I usually stay with one of the teachers throughout the semester so that I can become familiarized with one particular group of students.

As a TA for the *Medical English* and *Clinical English* classes, my roles are to take the attendance in the class, disburse study materials among students, help professors with exams, and encourage the students to speak in English in general. Though I feel idle

sometimes as my professor plays the leading role, I enjoy the class. I learn many new language skills as if I were one of the registered students. So, the TA position seems to be somewhere in the transition state between becoming a full teacher and being a naïve student.

Different Views on University Education in Japan and Bangladesh

Being a graduate student, I am required to take classes on a wide range of subjects. As most doctoral students are Japanese, the medium of instruction is Japanese. Over my short experience of academic exposure in Japan, I suggest there are the following differences with Bangladesh.

- Classes in Japan are less interactive and mostly, one-way. In my country, most classes are interactive, and silence among students is taken as a lack of interest.
- Most textbooks in our country at the university level are in English whereas Japanese universities are limited to Japanese versions of textbooks.
- Japanese students enjoy lots of freedom in the class: they can play, read novels, gossip, sleep, or leave the classroom at any time without receiving permission from the professor. This is unimaginable in my country, and these actions are usually treated with zero tolerance.

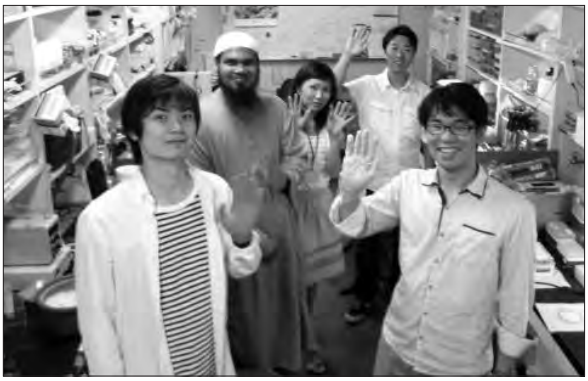
Observations on the English Classes

Language classes are expected to be different from classes on technical subjects: language classes involve communication and, hence, should be interactive. Needless to say, I found the Japanese students appearing to be very shy, silent, and closed in class. However, the professor who oversees these classes, Ian Willey, has been teaching English here for a long time, and he tries to make the class as interactive as he possibly can. In spite of the inherent silence of his Japanese students, their participation in free writing, reading their notebooks aloud in the class, being quick and prompt in answering quiz questions, or in discussions after watching videos, are positive activities worth mentioning.

Postscript by TA Supervisor Ian Willey

I'd like to add a few words about the Medical and Clinical English classes at Kagawa University and the contribution of TAs such as Zahir. I've been teaching these classes for over ten years. In the beginning, as I do not have a medical or scientific background, I had hoped to work with medical faculty in designing and teaching these classes. For various reasons this proved impossible; however, we eventually worked out a compromise: foreign doctoral students could help out as TAs. Since then, four TAs from Brunei and Bangladesh have joined these classes.

Although Zahir is modest about his role, his presence in the class is essential. Classes involve lots of group work and discussion, and Zahir is always moving about and encouraging the students to speak in English. He brings such a positive energy to the class (something we teachers can too quickly lose!). It's also good for students to be exposed to different English accents and different outlooks on medicine and life. I only hope this experience will help him out in his (quite promising) career.



TA teaching English to biochemistry students

The author (far left in back row) in biochemistry lab

Mari Nakamura

The Young Learners column provides language teachers of children and teenagers with advice and guidance for making the most of their classes. Teachers with an interest in this field are also encouraged to submit articles and ideas to the editor at the address below. We also welcome questions about teaching, and will endeavour to answer them in this column.

Email: <young-learners@jalt-publications.org>

The Three-Stage Literacy Program: A Picture Book Based Unit for Young Children

Mari Nakamura

Hello, colleagues! In the previous issue, I described the overview of and the rationale behind Stage 1 of the Three-Stage Literacy Program at my school, English Square. I am now very excited to share with you a sample unit from this picture book-based pre-literacy program.

Unit Overview

- Age Group: K-G1
- Goal: to learn about wild animals and their habitats while appreciating a story and developing oral language
- Focus Topics: animals, animal sounds, animal habitats, actions
- Content Areas: biology, geography
- Picture Book: *Walking Through the Jungle* (Debbie Harter)
- Duration: four 45-minute sessions

About the Book

Walking Through the Jungle (1997, Harter) is a story of an adventure where a girl travels around the world and makes friends with wild animals. The text consists of rhythmic and repetitive refrains with rhymes that encourage young EFL learners to join in by reading aloud and singing the story-based song. With the vibrant illustrations of animals and their habitats, this book makes an attractive biology and geography resource as well. The book is accompanied by an enhanced CD that includes a story song and video.

You can watch the story video at <http://youtube.com/watch?v=plvY0quSyJg>

Session 1

Goals

1. to establish interests in wild animals
2. to understand the overall meaning of the story
3. to join in the story song in ways that each student feels comfortable

Materials

Video with a jungle theme, picture book, flashcards of animals

Activity 1: Tone Setting

Welcome children while playing a video that shows a jungle to set the tone for the rest of the lesson. Once they have settled down, stop the video and discuss what a jungle is like using simple language.

Activity 2: Introduction of the Book

Show the book cover to children, and elicit some animal words while pointing at the pictures on the cover and talking about them.

Activity 3: Shared Reading

Read the story. Use the tones of your voice, facial expressions and body language to aid children's comprehension. Keep the level of children's interactive engagement high by encouraging them to join in the story whenever possible.

Activity 4: Animal Vocabulary Practice

Show the flashcards of animal vocabulary one by one. Elicit the words from students as much as possible. Introduce and practice animal sounds along with the words to make the experience fun for children.

Activity 5: Animal Quiz

Spread out the animal flashcards, and give them an oral quiz. For example, say, "I see an animal that is big and strong. It has sharp teeth, and it goes snap, snap, snap", and imitate the way a crocodile bites on prey using your arms. Children point to the crocodile flashcard.

Activity 6: Closure

Play the story song and sing along while showing the book. Prompt children to join in if they can.

Session 2

Goals

1. to participate in read-aloud
2. to practice animal vocabulary, animal sounds, and their habitats

Materials

Picture book, flashcards of animals and animal habitats

Activity 1: Story Review

Start singing aloud the story song slowly and softly to generate children's interest. Once a few children join in the singing, open the book and sing aloud the whole story while encouraging all the children to join in.

Activity 2: Animals and the Sounds They Make

With the book closed, ask children what animals they met in the story. Show the animal flashcards, and practice the words while miming the movement of animals. Open the book and read aloud the text, highlighting the sounds that each animal makes and prompting children to mimic them.

Activity 3: Animal Habitats

Introduce the concept of animal habitats using the illustrations of the book. For example, point to the illustration of the lion on page 4 and ask where the lion lives. Draw children's attention to the background picture and help them say, "In a jungle". Discuss what the habitat is like using simple language. For example, "Is it hot or cold in a jungle?" "What animals live there?" "Some of the animals in a jungle are very colorful." Do the same with the rest of the habitats presented in the story.

Activity 4: Matching of Animals and Their Habitats

Practice the habitat vocabulary using the habitat flashcards. Then, show one of the animal flashcards to children and ask, "What is this animal?" "Where does it live?" Put the animal flashcard next to the matching habitat flashcard. Do the same with the rest of the animal flashcards.

Activity 5: Read-Aloud Practice

Read aloud the story while pointing at the text or illustrations depending on children's literacy level. Children join in the read-aloud gradually.

Session 3

Goals

1. to practice performing the story as a whole group
2. to review animal habitats and learn where they are in the world
3. to practice action vocabulary

Materials

Picture book, flashcards of animals and their habitats, a child-friendly atlas

Activity 1: Sequencing

Spread the animal flashcards on the table, and ask children to put them in the order of the story. Once it is done, play the CD, and have them confirm if the order is correct. Encourage children to join in the song.

Activity 2: Action Practice

Everyone stands up. Show the first page of the story and say, "walk through the jungle". Mime the action with children. Do the same with the rest of the action phrases in the book. Decide the name of the girl in the story with your children, and play your version of Simon Says using the girl's name instead of "Simon". For example, if you say "Mary says swim in the ocean", the children mime the gesture. If you say "Swim in the ocean", children stay still.

Activity 3: Story Performance

Perform the story song with children, doing the actions that you practiced in Activity 2 and some additional actions.

Activity 4: The World Map and Animal Habitats

Quickly review the animal habitats directing children's attention to the habitat illustrations in the book. Then with a child-friendly atlas, show children where in the world the animals in the story live. Introduce some interesting facts about animals and their habitats with simple language and mimes. (e.g., Rattlesnakes in deserts have good sense of smell. They find water using their nose.)

Session 4

Goal

1. to make animal masks and perform the story wearing them

Materials

Picture book, construction paper, crayon, scissors, glue, stapler, rubber bands

Activity 1: Animal Mask Craft

Children make their animal masks. Prior to the lesson, ask children which mask they want to create. Make sure that at least one student makes a mask for each animal in the book. Also, ask them to bring crayons, scissors and any other simple art supplies they want to use to the lesson. You will also want to have some materials listed in the materials section above ready. In the lesson, children make their masks. While they are making masks, play the story CD and some other jungle-themed songs, walk around the room and give children necessary help. Make sure to use simple English when interacting with children and elicit some vocabulary such as colors, body parts, sizes and shapes by asking them questions about their masks. If you prefer to make this craft activity easier, feel free to use some animal mask templates available on the Internet.

Activity 2: Story Performance

Children perform the story song with their masks on. At first, they may only join in with actions. Gradually encourage them to join in the song verbally.

The above is an example of how I structure a unit of study using a picture book. Even if you use the same story, your program will be different from mine, and both you and your children will appreciate the literature and language learning in unique ways. It is this uniqueness and flexibility that motivates me to design picture book based programs.

How would you like to use the story in your class? Please share your ideas on JALT TYL SIG Facebook page! <http://facebook.com/groups/jshsig>

Picture Book

Harter, D. (1997). *Walking Through a Jungle*. Cambridge. Barefoot Books.

Recommended Atlas

Boyle, B. (1999). *My First Atlas.* (2nd Ed.) London, Dorling Kindersley Publishers.

[JALT PRAXIS] DEAR TLT

Tiernan L. Tensai

Got a teaching problem you can't solve? Need some advice about classroom practice? Stressed out from living in a different country? Then Dear TLT is the column for you. Be it serious or comical, our panel of experts will endeavour to answer all your queries. Send your questions to the email address below.

Email: <dear-tlt@jalt-publications.org>

Sleeping in Class

Dear TLT,

My students are sleeping during class, and it really bothers me. For example, I recently gave one student a speaking test who had used the pre-test revision time for a snooze - during the test she had a red mark on her forehead where it had been laying on her desk! I had to laugh, but this sort of things happens regularly, and it's driving me crazy! What can I do to keep my students awake?

Frustrated in Fukuoka

Dear Frustrated,

Thanks for bringing attention to a persistent problem that many teachers face not only here in Japan, but around the world. There are various ways to deal with this issue. You could give in to your emotions and take a nasty approach by publicly shaming your sleeping students, perhaps by projecting photographs of them onto a big screen or kicking their desk. However satisfying these actions would be in the moment, we don't recommend it. While it could work if occasionally done in humor or if you have a solid rapport with your class, if sleeping is something that regularly happens, as you say, constant shaming will likely corrode the positive learning atmosphere you've carefully worked hard to cultivate.

Instead of shaming your students, it is much more effective to put your time and attention into getting to know them better. How well do you really know your sleepy students? There is a long story behind every one of those heads on the desk. For example, is their behaviour happening only in your class, or is it a general pattern? What about their health? Are they sleeping because they are sick or dealing with some other health concern? How much sleep do they usually get, and what about their diet? Outside sources of stress also need to be considered: are your students feeling lots of stress from problems at home, too much part-time work, or too many club activities? In addition,

for university students, you might also consider the impact of living away from home and whether they are successfully managing their lives.

Taking the time to get to know your students can pay great dividends because it shows them that you care. When you make this effort, you're simultaneously building what John Hattie (2012) calls *teacher credibility*, which, according to his extensive research, ranks highly as a positive effect on student learning. Punitive actions, on the other hand, have very little effect. Taking the time to get to know even one student can end up inspiring your whole class. Your students will come to see you as a teacher that cares not only that they learn, but more importantly understands who they are. So the next time you find a student sleeping in your class, just sit with them afterwards for a little while and talk about why they're so tired. Hopefully, this will solve the problem.

In addition to getting to know your students, there are other ways of bringing attention to the problem of students sleeping in your class. Keep in mind there are some cultural differences with regards to this issue. In general, class sleepiness is not considered as rude in Japan as in other countries. As Hussain (in McMurray, 2015 this volume/issue) notes, "Japanese students enjoy lots of freedom in the class: they can play, read novels, gossip, sleep or can leave the classroom at any time without receiving permission from the professor. This is unimaginable in my country and these actions are usually treated with zero tolerance" (p. 39). It may help, therefore, to bring this issue up in your first class of the year as you introduce your course. Let them know that in your culture, sleeping in class is considered very rude behaviour, and it will not be tolerated, for sleeping is the same as being absent. Then, tell them what you will do if you find them sleeping. For example, you could say that falling asleep will cause you to ask them to answer a question in front of the entire group. You may also ask them to leave the classroom for a moment to take a short break so they can gather up their energy. They can run up some stairs, do some stretching, or splash water in their eyes . . . whatever works for them.

Beyond the students, another thing you can do to combat sleeping it to bring more conscious creative attention to how you teach. What can you do to bring more movement, interest, and interactivity to your lessons? There are many ways to do this. For example, you can keep students physically active via group activities, mixing them up for speaking tasks so they have to move around, and standing to answer questions. Physical movement will keep them both awake and on their toes. Having them perform short skits or make group presentations are also tried and true techniques. When reading, how about getting students to read aloud to each other? New topics of conversation can also be practiced via pair-writing, where each student writes out their part of a common dialog. Anything you can do to incorporate collaboration will help create an active atmosphere where sleeping just isn't an issue any longer.

Finally, if the problem continues despite your best efforts, we advise you to treat it as a learning opportunity. Here are some ideas for how to go about this, in a step-by-step plan we call *The Sleep Project*:

1. In groups, do a mind map on sleeping to lay the groundwork for the rest of the topic.
2. Groups create a survey on sleeping, with each one focusing on a different area, such as time, type of bedding, sleep problems, etc. Before the next class, group members must interview as many people as possible and collate the results.
3. Using data from the survey, plus information gleaned from research, each group creates a poster presentation on their topic. Students can share what they've learned and provide any recommendations they've come up with.
4. Hold group discussions on topics such as *How to avoid sleepiness in class* or *Advice for teachers on keeping their students awake*. Have students share their ideas and then create a set of guidelines for their topic.
5. Follow-up Idea 1: Create a sleep-related product (to either promote better sleep or keep them awake during the day). Encourage wacky, off-the-wall ideas. Go on to create a commercial to advertise the product. Make a video using their smartphones or create a skit to perform for the class.
6. Follow-up Idea 2: Do the 7-day challenge: Each student commits to a one-week research activity where they follow good sleeping practices every day as discussed earlier. Discuss the effects in the next class.

We realise that while following this exact plan may not be practical in all of your classes, we hope it has generated some creative thinking on your part on how lemons can be turned into lemonade. Hopefully by bringing the topic out into the open, problematic students might self-monitor more, plus understand that sleeping will hinder their overall progress. And who knows, you might learn a thing or two yourself!

References

Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible Learning for Teachers*. New York & London: Routledge.

McMurray, D. (2015). Teaching assistance. *The Language Teacher, 39*(6).

JALT MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

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
  -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
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<http://jalt.org>

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JALT Publications

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- 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

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JALT Community

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。バイリンガリズム、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。

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- 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

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Use the attached *furikae* form at Post Offices ONLY. When payment is made through a bank using the *furikae*, the JALT Central Office receives only a name and the cash amount that was transferred. The lack of information (mailing address, chapter designation, etc.) prevents the JCO from successfully processing your membership application. Members are strongly encouraged to use the secure online signup page located at <https://jalt.org/joining>.

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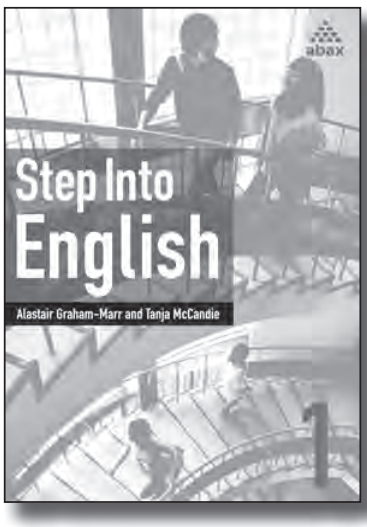

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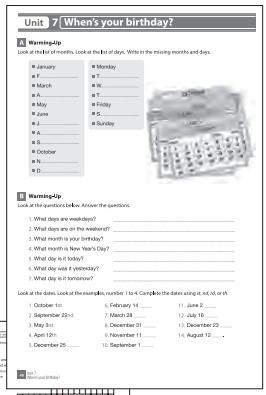

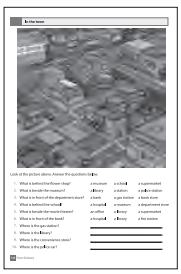

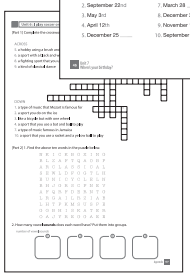

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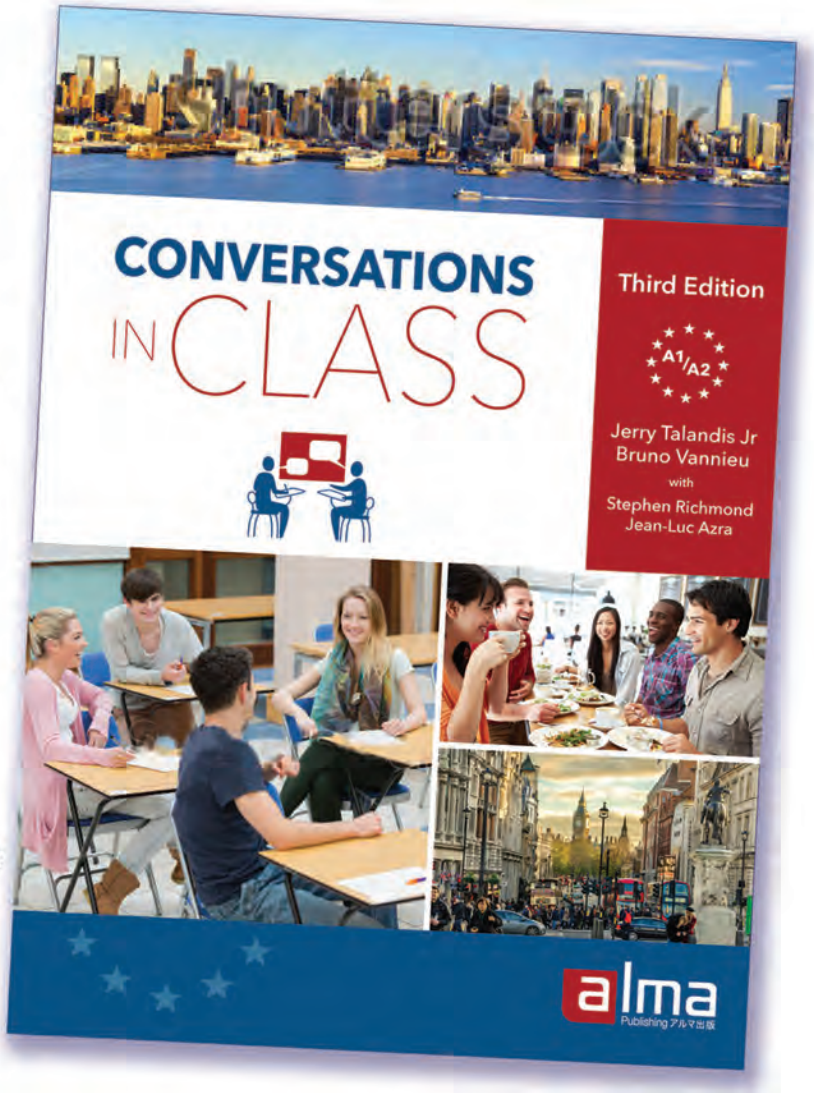

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