The Language Teacher

http://jalt-publications.org/tlt

Feature Articles

Readers' Forum

TLT Interviews

My Share

JALT Praxis

The Japan Association for Language Teaching
Volume 41, Number 4 • July / August 2017
ISSN 0289-7938 • ¥1,900 • *TLT* uses recycled paper

JALT Publications

JALT Publications Board Chair

Jerry Talandis Jr.
pubchair@jalt-publications.org

TLT Editorial Staff

- *TLT* EDITORS
  Philip Head
  Gerry McLellan
  tlt-editor@jalt-publications.org
- *TLT* ADVISOR
  John Roberts
- *TLT* ASSISTANT EDITOR
  Caroline Handley
- *TLT* JAPANESE-LANGUAGE EDITOR
  杉野 俊子 (Toshiko Sugino)
  tlt-editorj@jalt-publications.org
- *TLT* JAPANESE-LANGUAGE ASSOC. EDITOR
  迫 和子 (Kazuko Sako)
  tlt-editorj2@jalt-publications.org
- *TLT* WEB EDITOR
  Theron Muller
  webedit@jalt-publications.org
- *TLT* WEB ADMIN
  Malcolm Swanson
  webadmin@jalt-publications.org

JALT Praxis Editors

- TLT INTERVIEWS
  Torrin Shimono & James Nobis
  interviews@jalt-publications.org
- MY SHARE
  Steven Asquith & Nicole Gallagher
  my-share@jalt-publications.org
- *TLT* WIRED
  Edo Forsythe
  tlt-wired@jalt-publications.org
- BOOK REVIEWS
  Robert Taferner
  reviews@jalt-publications.org
- PUBLISHERS' REVIEW COPIES LIAISON
  Steve Fukuda & Julie Kimura
  pub-review@jalt-publications.org
  Bunkyo University
  3337 Minami Ogishima, Koshigaya
  Saitama 343-8511 JAPAN
- YOUNG LEARNERS
  Mari Nakamura
  young-learners@jalt-publications.org
- TEACHING ASSISTANCE
  David McMurray
  teach-assist@jalt-publications.org
- THE WRITERS' WORKSHOP
  Charles Moore & Vikki Williams
  writers@jalt-publications.org
- DEAR *TLT*
  Tiernan L. Tensai
  dear-tlt@jalt-publications.org
- OLD GRAMMARIANS
  Scott Gardner
  old-grammarians@jalt-publications.org

JALT Focus Editors

- SIG FOCUS
  Joël Laurier & Robert Morel
  sig-focus@jalt-publications.org
- JALT NOTICES EDITOR
  Malcolm Swanson
  jalt-focus@jalt-publications.org

Production

- COPYEDITORS & PROOFREADERS
  Brian Birdsell, Stephen Case, Antonija Cavcic, David Cooke, Jeremy Eades, Chris Edelman, Peter Ferguson, Nicole Gallagher, Bryan Gerrard, Decha Hongthong, Rob Kerrigan, Lorraine Kipling, Laura MacGregor, David Marsh, Colin Mitchell, Neil Stead, Kevin Thomas
- 和文校正・翻訳者
  (JAPANESE PROOFREADERS & TRANSLATORS)
  宮尾 真理子(Mariko Miyao)
  納富 淳子 (Junko Noudomi)
  中安 真敏 (Masatoshi Nakayasu)
  阿部 恵美佳 (Emika Abe)
  植田 麻実 (Mami Ueda)
- DESIGN & LAYOUT
  Pukeko Graphics, Kitakyushu
- PRINTING
  Koshinsha Co., Ltd., Osaka

Review

- *TLT* EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD
  Eric Bray – *Yokkaichi University*
  Steve Cornwell – *Osaka Jogakuin College*
  Michael Furmanovsky – *Ryukoku University*
  Scott Gardner – *Okayama University*
  Chiaki Iwai – *Hiroshima City University*
  Masaki Kobayashi – *Kanda University of International Studies*
  Shirley Leane – *Tottori University*
  Todd Jay Leonard – *Fukuoka University of Education*
  Robert Long – *Kyushu Institute of Technology*
  Laura MacGregor – *Gakushuin University*
  Theron Muller – *University of Toyama*
  Bern Mulvey – *Iwate University*
  Tim Murphey – *Kanda University of International Studies*
  Yoko Okayama – *Bunkyo University*
  Jonathan Picken – *Tsuda College*
  Martha Robertson – *Aichi University*
  Stephen Ryan – *Kwansei Gakuin University*
  Lorraine Sorrell – *Macquarie University*
  Toshiyuki Takagaki – *Onomichi University*
  Dax Thomas – *Meiji Gakuin University*
  Deryn Verity – *Penn State University*
  York Weatherford – *Kyoto Notre Dame University*
  Asako Yoshitomi – *Tokyo University of Foreign Studies*
- ADDITIONAL READERS
  Dale Brown, John Eidswick, Frank Daulton, Danielle Fischer, Patrick Foss, Naomi Fujishima, Austin Gardner, James Hobbs, Brandon Kramer, Aleda Krause, Paul Lyddon, Donald Patterson, Greg Rouault, Troy Rubesch, Vick Sssali, Tim Stewart, Toshiko Sugino, Bernie Susser, Jerry Talandis Jr., Katherine Thornton, Chris Wharton, Jennifer Yphantides

JALT Journal

- *JALT JOURNAL* EDITOR
  Anne McLellan Howard
  jj-editor@jalt-publications.org
- *JALT JOURNAL* ASSOCIATE EDITOR
  Eric Hauser
  jj-editor2@jalt-publications.org
- *JALT JOURNAL* JAPANESE EDITOR
  Ken Urano
  jj-editorj@jalt-publications.org
- *JALT JOURNAL* REVIEWS EDITOR
  Greg Rouault
  jj-reviews@jalt-publications.org
- *JALT JOURNAL* ASSISTANT REVIEWS EDITOR
  John Nevara

Post-Conference Publication

- EDITORS-IN-CHIEF
  Peter Clements
  Aleda Krause
  Howard Brown
  pcp_editor@jalt-publications.org

Peer Support Group

- PSG COORDINATOR
  Loran Edwards
  peergroup@jalt-publications.org
- PSG MEMBERS
  Loran Edwards, Paul Beaufait, Steve McGuire, Theron Muller, Michael Laspina, Brian Hutchinson, Troy McConachy, Peter Quinn, Brian Gallagher, Nick Boyes, Myles Grogan, Douglas Jarrell, Joshua Myerson, Brandon Kramer, Charles Moore, Dawn Lucovich, Suwako Uehara, Jean-Pierre, David Ockert, Fiona Creaser, Anna H. Isozaki, Wayne Arnold, Chris Fitzgerald

JALT Central Office

Urban Edge Bldg. 5F, 1-37-9 Taito, Taito-ku, Tokyo 110-0016
t: 03-3837-1630; f: 03-3837-1631
jco@jalt.org

Contents

JALT Publications Online

http://jalt-publications.org
July/August 2017 online access

Material from all our publications produced in the last 6 months requires a password for access. These passwords change with each issue of *TLT* and are valid for a 3-month period. To access our archives:

[login: jul2017 / password: HN44qDWY]

In this month's issue . . .

Welcome to the July/August edition of *TLT*. For many of us this is a rewarding but busy time of the year as classes progress and students improve before the summer break. We hope that this issue might provide a little inspiration to continue this positive momentum before gearing down for some creative rejuvenation in the summer.

Speaking of a little inspiration, in our roles as coeditors of the My Share column we are privileged to work with the many talented authors who send us both practical and innovative ideas. It's truly a pleasure to read submissions from a wide spectrum of teachers both here in Japan and other countries around the world, and we would like to encourage any educator with a good idea to share it with us and the *TLT* readers. Students really do appreciate them!

In this issue, we start with two thought-provoking Feature Articles. In the first, **Yo Hamada** investigates learners' and teachers' perceptions of intelligible communication, finding important gaps between those sounds that Japanese learners and educators deem most essential to being understood. In the second article, **Paul Wicking** considers the suitability of learning-oriented assessment (LOA) as a theoretical model of assessment practices in the Japanese context. This should be of interest to many of us frustrated with high-stakes summative testing practices.

In the Readers' Forum, **Tomoko Ishii** describes a lecture conducted with Japanese secondary school teachers to explain current research on vocabulary acquisition. The participants found this highly informative, and she provides suggestions for future seminars to support teachers with little time to learn about research. The second article, **Elton LaClare** explores the equally important and fascinating issue of dyslexia in Japanese English language learners. Also, we have all our regular columns including JALT Praxis, Teaching Assistance, Dear *TLT*, and of course My Share.

As always, we would like to thank all the authors who have contributed to making this another outstanding issue of *TLT*, and we hope that our readers continue to have both a rewarding and successful summer.

Steven Asquith & Nicole Gallagher, Coeditors, My Share

Continued over



The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

A nonprofit organization

The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) is a nonprofit professional organization dedicated to the improvement of language teaching and learning in Japan. It provides a forum for the exchange of new ideas and techniques and a means of keeping informed about developments in the rapidly changing field of second and foreign language education.

JALT Board of Directors, 2016-2017

President . . . . . Richmond Stroupe
Vice President . . . . . Naomi Fujishima
Director of Membership . . . . . Fred Carruth
Director of Program . . . . . Louise Ohashi
Director of Public Relations . . . . Thomas Bieri
Director of Records . . . . . Maiko Katherine Nakano
Director of Treasury . . . . . Robert Chartrand
Auditor . . . . . Joseph Tomei

Contact

To contact any officer, chapter, or Special Interest Group (SIG), please use the contact page at <http://jalt.org>.

Submitting material to *The Language Teacher*

Guidelines

The editors welcome submissions of materials concerned with all aspects of language education, particularly with relevance to Japan.

Submitting online

To submit articles online, please visit:

http://jalt-publications.org/access

To contact the editors, please use the contact form on our website, or through the email addresses listed in this issue of *TLT*.

http://jalt-publications.org/contact

JALT2017

43rd Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exhibition

November 17–20, 2017

Tsukuba International Congress Center (Epochal Tsukuba), Tsukuba, Ibaraki, Japan

TLTの2017年7/8月号へようこそ。今の時期は、授業も軌道に乗り学生たちも夏休みの前に学力も伸び、私たちにとってとりわけやりがいもあり、また忙しくもある時期です。鋭気回復の夏に向かい授業が落ち着いて行く前に、この号が皆様にとってインスピレーションのヒントとなり、授業のはずみとなりますことを願っております。

さて、インスピレーションと申し上げましたが、My Shareコラムの共同編集をさせていただくことは、実践的でかつ斬新なアイデアを送ってくださる多くの優秀な著者の皆様と一緒に仕事をさせていただくという私たちの特権です。日本国内を問わず、広く海外からも様々な領域の先生方が送ってくださるアイデアに触れることは真の喜びですので、素晴らしいアイデアをお持ちの教育者の皆様は、我々やTLTの読者の方たちとそのアイデアを共有してくださるようお願い申し上げます。

この号はまず、示唆に富む2編のFeature Articleから始まります。最初にYo Hamadaが、学習者と教師それぞれの、分かりやすいコミュニケーションについての認識を調査し、双方が、理解されるためもっとも重要な発音とみなしているものが乖離しているという重要な点を明らかにしています。次にPaul Wickingが、学習重視の評価learner-oriented assessment (LOA)が日本という環境において、評価実践の論理的モデルとして適合するかを検討します。これは、総括的な一発試験を行う現状にうんざりしている私たち多くの者にとって興味深い内容となっています。

Readers' ForumではTomoko Ishiiが、中学・高校の教師たちを対象とする、語彙習得に関する最近の研究を説明するワークショップについて述べています。参加者たちはこれを非常に有益と感じており、Ishiiは研究について学ぶ時間がほとんどない教師たちを支援する将来的なセミナーを提案しています。続いては、Elton LaClareによる、日本における英語学習者のdyslexia（失読症）に関する興味深い調査です。これらに加えて、通常のコラムであるJALT Praxis、Teaching Assistance、Dear *TLT*、そしてもちろん、MyShareもあります。

私たちはこのTLTを特別なものとしてくださった著者の皆様方へ感謝の言葉を述べますと共に、読者の皆様方が引き続き満足感と達成感のある夏を過ごされることを願ってやみません。

Steven Asquith and Nicole Gallagher
Coeditors, My Share
MyShare共同編集者

Learners' Perceptions of Intelligible Pronunciation and the Gaps Between Teachers' and Learners' Perceptions

Yo Hamada
Akita University

This study investigated Japanese EFL learners' perceptions on priorities for intelligible pronunciation. Which aspects do they think are most important for intelligible pronunciation? Are there gaps in priorities between learners and experienced teachers? A 25-item questionnaire, which focused on 17 segmental features and 8 suprasegmental features, was used. It was administered to 142 university freshmen (72 males and 70 females). The results show that learners consider major segmentals (l, ɹ, ð, θ, v), stress, and intonation to be important, but secondary segmentals (f, æ, ʌ) are considered less important. The gaps between teachers and learners were found in *L1 effect at syllable levels* (syllabification, cognates) and *assimilation* (sɪ, ʃi, tɪ).

本論では、分かりやすい発音のための優先順位に対する日本人英語学習者の認識調査を行った。研究課題は、学生にとって分かりやすい発音のために重要な要素は何か、また教員と認識の差はあるのか、である。17の分節に関する項目と8つの超分節に関する計25項目の質問紙を142名の大学1年生（男性72名、女性70名）に配布した。結果は、主要な分節(l, ɹ, ð, θ, v)、強弱、イントネーションが学生にとって重要項目であり、第2分節(f, æ, ʌ)はあまり重要視されていない。教員と学習者とのギャップは、カタカナ英語等の音節レベルにおける第1言語の影響や同化(sɪ, ʃi, tɪ)に見られた。

The topic of pronunciation was emphasized by language teachers during the 1960s and 1970s when the Audio Lingual Method was dominant, but with the advent of Communicative Language Teaching, it took a back seat in classrooms (Derwing, 2012) and was neglected in classroom-oriented research (Baker, 2014). However, it has gradually been regaining popularity recently. The summative review study by Saito (2012), which carefully analyzes 15 quasi-experimental pronunciation studies, concludes that instruction contributes to improvement of learners' segmentals and suprasegmentals and their comprehensibility. Regarding important pronunciation features for intelligible pronunciation, Saito (2013) examined cognition of 120 experienced teachers, including both native speakers of English and Japanese. To bridge theory and practice, studying this topic in further depth should provide teachers with useful information. To this end, this study first explores learners' perceptions of important pronunciation features for intelligible pronunciation and compares the learners' perceptions with the findings obtained in Saito (2013).

Intelligible Pronunciation

The terms *intelligibility*, *comprehensibility*, and *accentedness* are commonly associated with the term pronunciation. Derwing (2012) briefly explains these as follows: *Intelligibility* is "the extent to which a listener understands the productions of an L2 speaker" (p. 1-2); *comprehensibility* is how easy or difficult L2 speech is to understand; and *accentedness* is a rating of the degree of difference between an L2 speaker's productions and the local variety of the language in question. An L2 speaker with a heavy accent can still be intelligible and comprehensible, while a speaker with low intelligibility and comprehensibility is always judged as having a heavy accent (Derwing, 2012). Therefore, we should focus on improvement of comprehensibility and intelligibility for better communication.

To improve comprehensibility and intelligibility, one may wonder which should be more prioritized in classroom, segmental features or suprasegmental features. This depends on the degree of distance between the learners' first language and English (Sypyra-Kzlowaska, 2015). For example, studies on Japanese EFL learners reveal crucial L1-L2 transfer problems at segmental levels (Riney & Anderson-Hsieh, 1993). Additionally, since Japanese is a mora-timed language, while English is a stress-timed language, less focus on suprasegmental features would negatively affect Japanese EFL learners' acquisition of intelligible pronunciation. Therefore, both need focus for Japanese EFL learners.

Teacher Beliefs

Because pronunciation teaching was not prioritized until recently, the scope of understanding second

language teacher cognition on pronunciation was limited. Still, two noteworthy studies were conducted recently. Baker (2014) attempted to uncover teachers' cognitions and practices on pronunciation in class by means of semi-structured interviews, class observations, stimulated recall interviews with teachers, and questionnaires with students. The three primary findings are that controlled techniques (less communicative and teacher-oriented) are prevalent among the teachers; kinesthetic/tactile teaching is important for learner pronunciation development; and that pronunciation instruction is boring for students. While Baker's study was an in-depth case study that involved five participants, Saito (2013) targeted a larger number of participants and examined the perspectives of experienced teachers on priorities for intelligible pronunciation. In consideration of the crucial limitation of teacher questionnaire studies, raters' subjectivity (i.e., factors arising from their background, teaching experiences, familiarity with English accents, and knowledge about pronunciation), only highly-experienced teachers with similar backgrounds were recruited for the study. A 25-item questionnaire using a 1-5 Likert scale was administered to examine which pronunciation features the teachers thought to be important for teaching. The principal component analysis extracted eight factors, which led to pedagogical suggestions as to what features should be taught. These factors are as follows: crucial segmentals /v, θ, ð, w, l, ɹ/ and complex syllables (e.g., Consonant-Consonant-Vowel-Consonant-Consonant-Consonant such as *print* CCVCCC) should be taught first; then, assimilation rules and /æ, ʌ, f/, along with vowel quality (long and loud vowels) and a wide range of pitch should be taught; lastly, diphthongs /aʊ, aɪ, oʊ, ɔɪ, eɪ / and other segmentals /p, t, k, n, ŋ, h/ should be taught. Learners should also be encouraged to speak faster and reduce pauses and repetitions. Examining teacher belief on teaching is important because it may show the disparity between theory and practice in the classroom.

Learner Beliefs and Gaps

As represented by the pioneering work of Horwitz (1985), the importance of examining learner beliefs concerning language learning is well recognized as it provides helpful insights for language teachers. In fact, there is often a mismatch between what teachers teach and what is learned by learners (Nunan, 1995). There are also mismatches between teacher and learner beliefs about the usefulness of activities for EFL (Peacock, 1998). In consideration of pronunciation teaching, differences are also assumed to exist between what teachers believe to be important to teach and what learners believe to be important to learn, and this may result in inefficient learning. Filling the gaps between the teacher and learner beliefs will lead to more efficient mastering of pronunciation.

Purpose of the Study

Research on pronunciation has been gradually increasing, though research on teachers' cognition concerning pronunciation teaching has been conducted in a limited fashion. The next focus is an exploration of learners' cognition. Investigating learners' perception will give new insights, and a comparison of teachers' perception and that of learners will further pinpoint the direction that teachers need to take when teaching. This study attempts to do both, referring to Saito's (2013) work on teachers' cognition.

Two research questions are set: which aspects do Japanese EFL learners think are most important for intelligible pronunciation? (RQ1) and are there gaps in priorities between learners and experienced teachers? (RQ2)

Participants

The data of 142 university freshmen (72 males and 70 females) who belonged to a local national university were collected. The majority of the participants were 18 or 19 years old, ranging from 18 to 21 years of age. Out of these, 69 were engineering majors (54 males and 15 females) and 73 were health science majors (18 males and 55 females).

The participants in this study were carefully selected, with consideration given to the three following aspects:

First, to obtain the data of average Japanese university students, only non-English majors were selected. There was a risk of the data being biased if English-related majors were included, because English-related majors may have a more specific and higher interest in learning English.

Second, to compare teachers' cognitions in Saito's (2013) study and the learners' cognition in the present study, data from a similar number of participants were collected (142 compared to 120 in Saito's study).

Third, to collect data from different backgrounds, a national university in Tohoku region was chosen. The participants, who came from various prefectures in Japan to the two engineering and medical departments, were enrolled in a compulsory English course.

Additionally, they were selected based on three different English proficiency levels that were defined by a placement test—basic (37), intermediate (41), and advanced (64)—in order to meet the demand for variety in proficiency level as well. Though the sample size was not huge, the population in this study is considered to be well-balanced.

Materials

The 25-item questionnaire used in Saito (2013) was adapted for this study. It consisted of 17 segmental features and 8 suprasegmental features, which was implemented to 120 experienced teachers (61 native speakers of English and 59 Japanese). It was chosen for two reasons. First, the items were developed specifically for EFL settings in Japan, and were created by careful cross-linguistic analyses and review of a wide range of resources that deal with pronunciation problems specific to Japanese learners of English and typical of all ESL/EFL learners. Additionally, the use of the same questionnaire items and 1-5 Likert scale made it possible to compare the data found in Saito (2013) and the data in this study. The 1-5 Likert scale (1: very important; 5: not very important) was also used with the leading sentence: How important do you think it is to learn the item for intelligible pronunciation? This means the smaller the number the participants choose, the greater they think the item is important. Because the participants were not familiar with the International Phonetic Alphabet, the author demonstrated each pronunciation feature and example, with more explanation when necessary while administering the questionnaire, so that all the participants understood each item completely.

Analysis

To answer the RQ1, the mean scores and standard deviation (SD) were calculated, and a repeated measure of one-way ANOVA was employed. To answer the RQ2, the mean scores and SD of this study were simply compared with the data in Saito (2013), so that only the categories where major differences between teachers and learners are found were focused on. The eight categories (Table 1) that Saito identified by means of a principal component analysis were adopted for their robustness and for the sake of comparison.

Table 1. ***Categories of Eight Pronunciation Features (Based on Saito, 2013)***

Category	Example
Major segmentals	l, ɹ, ð, θ, v
L1 effect at syllable levels	Cognates (Katakana), Syllabification
Assimilation	sɪ, ʃɪ, tɪ
Stress/intonation	sentence/lexical stress, intonation
Secondary segmentals	æ, ʌ, f
Dipthong	aʊ, aɪ, oʊ, ɔɪ, eɪ
Minor segmentals	p, t, k, w, n, ŋ, h
Fluency problems	fluency, speech rate

Results

The descriptive statistics of the obtained data (Figure 1) show that *stress/ intonation* (1.80) received the most attention (below 2.00), followed by *major segmentals* such as /l, ɹ, ð, θ, v/ (2.03), while *minor segmentals* such as /p, t, k, w, n, ŋ, h/ (2.85) received the least attention from the participants. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed significant differences among the variables [$F(1, 5.52) = 27.17$, $p < .001$, $h_p^2 = .16$]. The post-hoc analysis showed significant differences in multiple combinations (Table 2). Significant differences were found in a majority of combinations. Notably, no differences were found between *stress/ intonation* and *major segmentals*; *major segmentals* and *dipthong* (/aʊ, aɪ, oʊ, ɔɪ, eɪ/). Simply put, *stress/intonation* and *major segmentals* were found to be quite important for learners. The *minor segmentals* were considered least important, and *secondary segmentals* (/æ, ʌ, f/), *L1 effect at syllable levels* (cognates (i.e., *katakana*) and syllabification), *assimilation* (/sɪ, ʃɪ, tɪ/), and *fluency* received fair attention.

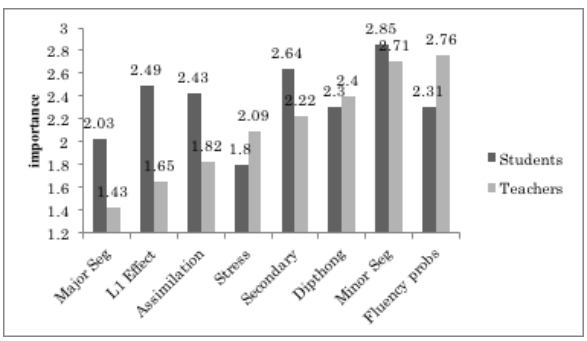


Figure 1. Comparison of teachers' and learners' perceptions.

Table 2. *Results of Multiple Comparison*

	Major segmentals	L1 effect at syllable levels	Assimilation	Stress/intonation	Secondary segmentals	Dipthong	Minor segmentals	Fluency problems
Major segmentals		**	**	n.s.	**	n.s.	**	*
L1 effect at syllable levels	n.s.		n.s.	**	n.s.	n.s.	**	n.s.
Assimilation	**	n.s.		**	n.s.	n.s.	**	n.s.
Stress/ intonation	n.s.	**	**		**	**	**	**
Secondary segmentals	**	n.s.	n.s.	**		*	*	*
Dipthong	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	**	*		**	n.s.
Minor segmentals	**	**	**	**	*	**		**
Fluency problems	*	n.s.	n.s.	**	*	n.s.	**	

Notes. ** means the value is significant at $p < .01$; * means the value is significant at $p < .05$; n.s. means the value is non-significant.

Next, when comparing teachers' perceptions and those of students, teachers showed higher sensitivity to the pronunciation features than the students in general (Table 3). Notable differences were found between teacher and student perceptions in *L1 effect at syllable levels* (Learners: 2.49, Teachers: 1.65). Notable differences were also found in *major segmentals* (Learners: 2.03, Teachers: 1.43) and *assimilation* (Learners: 2.43, Teachers: 1.82).

Discussion

This study set two research questions: Which aspects do Japanese EFL learners think are most important for intelligible pronunciation? (RQ1) and are there gaps in priorities between learners and experienced teachers? (RQ2) Each topic is discussed respectively, followed by limitations of this study.

The answer to RQ1 is that the learners consider *stress/intonation* and *major segmentals* to be the most important for intelligible pronunciation. Given that Japanese is a syllable-timed language, mastering the *stress/intonation* of English language is a challenge. For Japanese EFL learners, even identifying stressed syllables in sentences is difficult (Watanabe, 1988, as cited in Riney & Anderson-Hsieh, 1993), which easily leads us to assume that they have difficulty in stressing syllables appropriately when speaking. Because primary stress does affect the intelligibility of nonnative discourse (Hahn, 2004), learners' high attention to this issue is welcome. Equally importantly, the *major segmentals* are considered to affect comprehensibility (Saito, 2012), and the learners also recognized the importance of *major segmentals*. Especially, the attention learners gave to /ɹ/ is high (mean score being 1.52). /ɹ/ is claimed to be the top priority for Japanese EFL learners (Saito & Lyster, 2011) and it indeed receives special attention in studies on Japanese EFL learners (e.g., Bradlow, Akahane-Yamada, Pisoni, & Tohkura, 1999; Bradlow, Pisoni, Akahane-Yamada, & Tohkura, 1997).

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics of Learners Perceptions (Mean Score/Standard Deviation)*

	Major segmentals	L1 effect at syllable levels	Assimilation	Stress/intonation	Secondary segmentals	Dipthong	Minor segmentals	Fluency problems
Learners	2.03/ 0.71	2.49/ 1.16	2.43/ 0.87	1.8/ 0.78	2.64/ 0.82	2.30/ 1.08	2.85/ 0.77	2.31/ 0.88
*Teachers	1.43/ 0.86	1.65/ 0.85	1.82/ 1.01	2.09/ 0.98	2.22/ 1.08	2.40/ 0.96	2.71/ 1.11	2.76/ 1.11

**data* taken from Saito (2013)

In line with the findings above, the results offer another helpful insight into teaching. Despite the salience of *secondary segmentals*, the learners' attention to these features was not as high as expected. Especially, /f/ is considered to be the prioritized segmental feature to teach (Saito, 2011; 2013) but the learners' sensitivity to it was not high (3.00). Also, less sensitivity to /ʌ/ (2.83) may reflect the lower sensitivity of the learners to vowels than to the other pronunciation features. The knowledge that vowels are often pronounced /ə/ in weak forms (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992) will be helpful for learners in listening as well. This result suggests that teachers need to raise learners' awareness toward *secondary segmentals* in addition to *major segmentals* and *stress/intonation.*

The answer to RQ2 is that teachers and learners do not necessarily share the same beliefs as to which features are important for intelligible pronunciation. Fundamentally, teachers' sensitivity to pronunciation features is higher than that of learners, and especially, the notable discrepancy between the two is observed in *L1 effect at syllable levels* (syllabification and cognates) and *assimilation*. While English has five syllable types, combinations of open syllables (words ending with a vowel such as *key*) and closed syllables (words ending with a consonant such as *desk*), the Japanese language allows only open syllables. Put simply, Japanese does not end a word with a consonant other than *n*, and Japanese has no initial or final consonant clusters (Ohata, 2004; Riney & Anderson-Hsieh, 1993). For example, a Japanese learner who does not know these rules is likely to pronounce blueprint (/blu:print/) as /bulu:pulinto/, adding a vowel after each consonant. This will negatively affect rhythm and stress when speaking, which will consequently lower intelligibility. As reported by Hahn (2004), correct placement of primary stress contributes to better intelligibility; therefore, teaching these rules and raising learners' awareness of them should be encouraged. Though *L1 effect at syllable levels* seems to be more important, *assimilation problems* also easily cause a misunderstanding. Japanese learners have problems with /sɪ/ and /ʃi/, /tɪ/ and /tʃi/ (Riney & Anderson-Hsieh, 1993), so, for example, they often pronounce ticket (/tɪket/) as/tʃiket/ and see (/sɪ:/) as /ʃi:/. *Assimilation* is listed among the top three priorities by the teachers, and filling this gap will contribute to more intelligible pronunciation among learners. To sum up, among the top three pronunciation features that are considered important by teachers, two were perceived as less important by learners. Therefore, filling the gaps between the beliefs of students and teachers should come before teaching pronunciation features.

Lastly, a weakness of this study is that RQ2 discussed the differences between teachers and learners, but the comparison was inevitably based on descriptive statistics.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest three implications for teaching. First, because learners think *major segmentals* (l, ɹ, ð, θ, v), *stress*, and *intonation* are important, teachers should also encourage and help them to improve these features. However, they think less of *secondary segmentals* (f, æ, ʌ), so teachers first need to convince them of the importance of these pronunciation features. Second, gaps in priorities were found between teachers and learners on *L1 effect at syllable levels* (syllabification and cognates) and *assimilation* (sɪ, ʃɪ, tɪ), so emphasis on these will be beneficial for learners. Lastly, and most importantly, this paper focused on the pronunciation features that learners think to be important and the gaps between teachers' and learners' priorities; however, the mean scores in all eight categories were under 3.00 in the 1-5 Likert scale (1: very important; 5: not very important), so learners' sensitivity to the pronunciation features is not necessarily low. In other words, the teachers' role is to raise their awareness further, especially with regards to important features where gaps exist between teachers and learners, and shift their teaching to improve student pronunciation regarding each feature.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Dr. Kim Choonkyong and two reviewers for their helpful comments.

This research was partly supported by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research [JP15K16788]

References

Avery, P., & Ehrlich, S. (1992). *Teaching American English pronunciation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Baker, A. (2014). Exploring teachers' knowledge of second language pronunciation techniques: teacher cognitions, observed classroom practices, and student perceptions. *TESOL Quarterly, 48*(1), 136–163.

Bradlow, A., Akahane-Yamada, R., Pisoni, D., & Tohkura, Y. (1999). Training Japanese listeners to identify English /r/and /l/: Long-term retention of learning in perception and production. *Perception & Psychophysics, 61*(5), 977–985.

Bradlow, A. R., Pisoni, D. B., Akahane-Yamada, R., & Tohkura, Y. (1997). Training Japanese listeners to identify English /r/ and /l/:IV. Some effects of perceptual learning on speech production. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, *101*, 2299–2310.

Derwing, T. (2012). Pronunciation instruction. *The encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics.* Wiley Online Library. doi: 10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0968.

Hahn, L. (2004). Primary stress and intelligibility: research to motivate the teaching of suprasegmentals. *TESOL Quarterly, 38*(2), 201–223.

Horwitz, E. (1985). Using students beliefs about language learning and teaching in the foreign language methods course. *Foreign Language Annals*, *18*, 333–340.

Nunan, D. (1995). Closing the gap between learning and instruction. *TESOL Quarterly, 29*(1), 133–158.

Ohata, K. (2004). Phonological differences between Japanese and English: Several potentially problematic areas of pronunciation for Japanese ESL/EFL learners. *Asian EFL Journal*, *6*(4), 1–19. Retrieved from http://www.asian–efl–journal.com/december_2004_KO.php

Peacock, M. (1998). Exploring the gap between teachers and learners about 'useful' activities for EFL. *International Journal of Applied Linguisctics, 8*(2), 233–250.

Riney, T., & Anderson-Hsieh, J. (1993). Descriptions of Japanese pronunciation of English. *JALT Journal*, *15*, 21–36.

Saito, K. (2011). Identifying problematic segmental features to acquire comprehensible pronunciation in EFL settings: The case of Japanese Learners of English. *RELC Journal, 42*(3), 363–378.

Saito, K. (2012). Effects of instruction on L2 pronunciation development: A synthesis of 15 quasi–experimental intervention studies. *TESOL Quarterly*, *46*(4), 842–854.

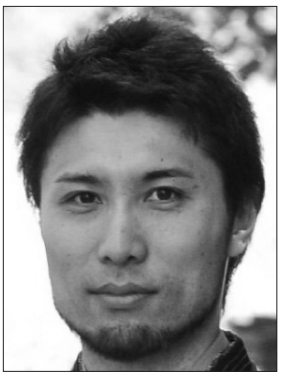
Saito, K. (2013). Experienced teachers' perspectives on priorities for improved intelligible pronunciation: The case of Japanese learners of English. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 24*(2), 250–277. doi:10.1111/ijal.12026

Saito, K., & Lyster, R. (2012). Effects of form-focused instruction and corrective feedback on L2 pronunciation development of /ɹ/ by Japanese learners of English. *Language Learning, 62*(2), 595–633. doi:10.1111/j.1467–9922.2011.00639.x

Sypyra-Kzlowaska, J. (2015). *Pronunciation in EFL instruction*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual matters.

Watanabe, K. (1988). Sentence stress perception by Japanese students. *Journal of Phonetics, 16*, 181–186.

Yo Hamada is an associate professor at Akita University. He holds a Master's degree in TESOL from Temple University and a doctoral degree in Education from Hiroshima University. He has been researching shadowing and recently has published a book, titled *Teaching EFL Learners Shadowing for Listening: Developing Learners' Bottom-Up Skills.*



TLT / Job Information Centre Policy on Discrimination

The editors oppose discriminatory language, policies, and employment practices, in accordance with Japanese and international law. Exclusions or requirements concerning gender, age, race, religion, or country of origin should be avoided in announcements in the JIC Positions column, unless there are legal requirements or other compelling reasons for such discrimination, and these reasons are clearly explained in the job announcement. The editors reserve the right to edit ads for clarity, and to return ads for rewriting if they do not comply with this policy.

TLTでは、日本の法律、国際法および良識に従って、言語、政策および雇用慣習の差別に反対します。JICコラムでは性別、年齢、人種、宗教、出身国(「英国」、「アメリカ」ではなく母語能力としての国)に関する、排除や要求はしません。そうした差別がなされる場合には、明確に説明されるべきです。編集者は、明瞭に求人広告を編集し、かつこの方針に応じない場合には求人広告を棄却する権利を持ちます。

Learning-Oriented Assessment in a Testing-Oriented Culture

Paul Wicking
Nagoya University

The last decade has witnessed increasing attention being paid to the way in which assessment promotes learning in various cultural contexts. Even so, there has been very little scholarly discussion coming from Japan, where it appears that methods of assessment are oriented around high-stakes summative testing. One theoretical model of formative assessment that is gaining traction worldwide is learning-oriented assessment (LOA). Although LOA has been tried and tested in the Hong Kong context for implementation in Confucian heritage cultures, its suitability for Japan has not yet been explored. There are three core components of LOA praxis: learning-oriented assessment tasks, developing evaluative expertise, and student engagement with feedback. The aim of the present study is to apply this theoretical model of learning-oriented assessment as a conceptual lens to examine existing research from the Japanese context. By doing so, it is hoped that a firm contextual grounding could be established that would support and guide the practice of learning-oriented assessment in EFL education in Japan.

近年、様々な文化的文脈の中で、評価がいかに学習を促進するかに注目が集まってきている。しかし総括的評価と一発試験が重要視されている日本では、評価をめぐる学術的論議は極めて少ない。世界で普及しつつある形成的評価の理論モデルの1つに、学習重視の評価learning-oriented assessment (LOA) がある。LOA は、儒教の伝統文化圏では香港での導入が試みられているが、日本での適合性については未だ検証されていない。LOAの実践には3つの重要な要素がある。すなわち、学習重視の評価タスク、評価能力の向上、そしてフィードバックに対する学生の関心である。本論の目的は、既存研究を日本の状況から検証するための統合的手法としてLOAの理論モデルを適用することである。それによって、日本の評価方法の背景が明確になり、日本のEFL教育におけるLOAの応用が推進される。

Assessment occurs at all stages of the education process. From entrance exams and placement tests at the beginning of a course, to progress tests and short quizzes, through to final summative tests at the end of a course, assessment pervades the learning cycle. If a teacher wishes to exert an influence over what students will aim to achieve, how much time they will spend on studying and particular items they will focus on, then perhaps there is no better way than tailoring assessment tasks to meet those ends. Indeed, there is much evidence that improving assessment practices can have a dramatic effect on the amount of learning that will take place (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Pereira, Flores, & Niklasson, 2015). The ramifications of assessment practices are also wide ranging. Apart from determining whether a student passes a unit, assessment also affects diverse areas such as self-efficacy, motivation, career opportunities and at the wider level, social cohesion, and university ranking.

While we know that assessment is important, we also know that the cultural context is also important. Assessment does not take place in a vacuum, but is deeply embedded within the cultural setting in which it occurs. The wider political, social, and ideological environments exert a powerful influence on the way assessment is conceptualized and practiced (Teasdale & Leung, 2000). While there have been various studies into discrete assessment practices in Japan (such as peer-assessment, alternative assessments, provision of feedback, and so on), there is very little in the literature concerning an over-arching theoretical framework which unites these practices into a cohesive whole.

Such a framework could be provided by a model known as learning-oriented assessment (LOA). As a strand of formative assessment, LOA has been tried and tested in the Hong Kong context for implementation in Confucian heritage cultures (Carless, 2011). However, its suitability for Japan has not yet been explored. Sullivan (2014) notes, "It is unclear how widely the concept of learning-oriented assessment is known and understood [in Japan], and whether it would be readily accepted by teachers so accustomed to working within a normative assessment framework" (p. 455). This paper aims to fill the gap in the literature by drawing on the theoretical construct of learning-oriented assessment as a conceptual lens to examine existing research from the Japanese context. It seeks to answer the question, to what extent does the research literature from Japan lend support to a conceptual model of learning-oriented assessment? The central premise is that formative assessment is beneficial for learning. Therefore, if a firm contextual grounding for LOA in Japan could be established, its implementation in policy and practice would likely lead to better learning outcomes in Japanese EFL education.

The Japanese Cultural Context

Japan has been classified as a Confucian heritage culture, or CHC (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). Many other East Asian nations have been identified as falling into this category, such as Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea. Carless (2011) has argued that the worldview of CHCs manifests itself in assessment practice in a number of ways. For example, there is a tolerance of hardship when preparing for high-stakes tests. Learners are praised for enduring the psychological and physical pressures associated with being a student preparing for examinations (known as *jukensei* in Japan). The examination system is based almost exclusively on competition. There is a conviction that competition leads to hard work, which brings out the best in people, and so society prospers. To be successful in examinations, memorization is the key. The Han Chinese regarded memorization of Confucian classics as the way to develop virtues and ethics that would be worked out in behaviors and social interactions. Modern students in Japan devote inordinate amounts of time to memorizing vocabulary lists and set phrases. Repetition and memorization as pillars of education lead to uniformity, order, and conformity.

This Confucian orientation to education has had a residual impact on CHC societies. Han and Yang (2001) note four areas in which this has occurred. First, education is primarily conceived as being utilitarian in nature. In other words, it is the means toward entering a good university, getting a good job, and so on. Second, examinations play a key role in education, so that examination success is valued more highly than actual learning or genuine growth in knowledge. Third, book knowledge is prioritized at the expense of practical skill. Fourth, summative assessment is emphasized at the expense of formative assessment, which is neglected. This neglect has resulted in a vital need for the adoption of formative assessment processes to counter-balance an education system dominated by grading and competition. Yet while the development of formative assessment in CHCs may be an "urgent priority" (Carless, 2011, p. 4), it is also extremely difficult. Attempts to introduce Assessment for Learning (AfL) into the Hong Kong educational system have largely remained unfruitful (Berry, 2011), and efforts made by South Korea to break out of its bondage to a high-stakes exam based education system have also been wrought with difficulty (Kwon, Lee, & Shin, 2015).

The Learning-Oriented Assessment Model

In an attempt to counter the negative consequences of an examination-oriented culture, Carless (2014) has proposed a model of learning-oriented assessment (LOA). Carless defined LOA as "assessment where a primary focus is on the potential to develop productive student learning processes" (2014, para. 4). The model is based on three interlocking principles that capture the core elements of an approach to assessment that prioritizes student learning (Figure 1).

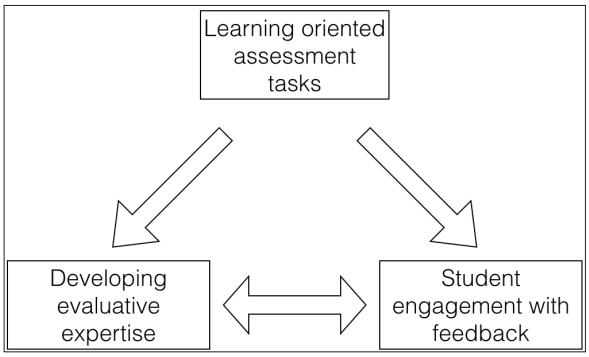


Figure 1. Model of learning-oriented assessment, as proposed by Carless, 2014.

The first principle, and occupying a central place in this model, is *learning- oriented assessment tasks*. These are tasks which lead students into deeper engagement with the area of study through problems which are closely related to the real world, and thus are seen as being authentic. The second principle, *developing evaluative expertise*, and the third principle, *student engagement with feedback*, are interconnected and support the first principle. Learners develop evaluative expertise through engaging with quality criteria as they evaluate and reflect upon their own work and that of others. Engagement with feedback concerns the way in which students receive feedback messages from the teacher or from peers, and how they use this feedback to help them progress to a higher level of learning achievement.

Learning-Oriented Assessment Tasks

The first principle of LOA encourages an approach to creating assessment tasks that are engaging, relevant, and authentic. While Carless frames his discussion of learning-oriented assessment tasks around the notion of ways of thinking and practicing (McCune & Hounsell, 2005), within the context of EFL education, task-based language teaching (TBLT) would perhaps be a better way of looking at the same principle from a different angle. TBLT

theory also states that learning tasks need to be engaging, relevant, and authentic (Ellis, 2003). The focus here is on the pragmatic use of the target language, and not a mere display of knowledge. In this way, there is a clear conceptual link between TBLT and LOA.

Although Sato (2010) has argued that TBLT is not suited to the Japanese context, this argument makes no allowances for a contextual application of the TBLT approach in a manner suited to Japan (Sybing, 2011). As an approach that is able to be adapted according to local needs, TBLT has shown great promise for increasing engagement with the language and boosting the motivation of Japanese learners (Willis & Willis, 2009).

Portfolio creation is a powerful example of a learning-oriented assessment task. A portfolio is a collection of work that has been selected by the student as demonstrating achievement in the language. It therefore involves collection, selection, and reflection (Howrey & Tanner, 2009). Accordingly, portfolios can function as the bridge that links the two LOA principles of learning-oriented assessment tasks and developing evaluative expertise. Portfolios have been widely practiced and researched in a number of university EFL settings in Japan, and have been found to increase engagement (Howrey, 2011), aid in self-reflection (Bonn, 2011) and boost motivation (Apple & Shimo, 2004). Portfolio creation as an assessment task thus encourages the growth of evaluative expertise, the second principle of LOA.

Developing Evaluative Expertise

The second principle of LOA concerns the ability of learners to critically evaluate their own work (self-assessment) and that of others (peer-assessment). Through a process of engaging with performance criteria and critically analyzing their own work, learners are said to better understand the purposes of the curriculum and develop skills that will promote more effective study habits. However, while the research into self-assessment suggests that the practice has benefits for learners in the affective dimension, the benefits in the cognitive dimension are less clear.

Matsuno (2009) used Multifaceted Rasch measurement to compare how learners rated themselves and their peers when compared with a teacher rater. Overall, analysis of the results showed that students evaluated themselves more harshly than they did their peers. Matsuno (2009) writes, "In the present study, some students also did not assess their own writing objectively; few students awarded themselves a high grade even though they may have thought that their essays were good" (p. 88). Accordingly, although self-assessment may have value in terms of encouraging metacognitive skills, Matsuno's study cannot be used to recommend self-assessment for formal grading.

Matsuno's (2009) study has been criticized by Little and Erickson (2015) on the grounds that it is unknown whether the participants were instructed in reflective learning. "It is thus perhaps not surprising that they performed the external task of evaluating their peers' essays more accurately than the subjective task of evaluating their own" (p. 130). This may or may not be the case. Either way, it would be interesting to replicate this study in an EFL program in which critical reflection was purposely promoted.

Matsuno's study did, however, produce strong evidence to suggest that peer-assessment can be used effectively as a means of awarding grades in university classes. While students tend to rate themselves quite strictly, they rated their peers more evenly. They were also internally consistent, and their own level of writing proficiency did not affect their rating patterns (Matsuno, 2009, p. 93). Although Saito (2013) also found a high agreement rate between peer and teacher rating, Mahoney's (2011) study suggested that peer grading differs significantly from teacher grading when evaluative decisions involve context and intelligibility. Overall, these studies give empirical support to teachers who may want to supplement teacher-assessment with peer-assessment, or else use peer-assessment to overcome some of the difficulties associated with teacher-assessment (such as lack of time). The value of peer-assessment in the Japanese context has also been affirmed by a number of other studies (Asaba & Marlowe, 2011; Taferner, 2008; Wakabayashi, 2008).

Student Engagement With Feedback

The third principle of LOA concerns the ways in which students make use of feedback. Receiving feedback from one's peers and the teacher is fairly straightforward, but if the student does not engage with that feedback, it will not lead to any learning gains. Reugg (2015) investigated differences in the uptake of peer and teacher feedback in a Japanese university class. Her longitudinal study suggested that, as might be expected, students paid more attention to teacher feedback than to peer feedback, which led them to make more revision attempts. However, these revision attempts were more often unsuccessful. Peer feedback led to more successful revision attempts, perhaps because the learners

were at a similar language proficiency level, which allowed them to give feedback that the other was developmentally ready to uptake (Reugg, 2015).

One of the main issues in ELT concerns whether or not the feedback is form-focused. Both the literature from studies done in Japan and that from elsewhere seem to suggest that form-focused feedback does not result in any substantial learning gains when compared with feedback that is not form-focused. Peloghitis (2011) investigated feedback methods in a writing course in Japan. Results suggested that students who received feedback only on the content of their writing improved the overall quality of their essays more than students who received feedback on the content plus errors. The ability of students to give reliable and accurate feedback in discussion classes in Japan has been argued by Saito (2013), whose study revealed a high agreement rate between teacher and student rating, as well as a high degree of favorable attitudes towards peer feedback.

However, while learners may receive quality feedback from the teacher or peers, there is no guarantee that they will productively engage with that feedback in order to progress. This is a major concern that has not yet been adequately addressed in the literature. Presently, too little is known about those factors which lead to students ignoring or disregarding feedback and those factors which lead to the productive use of feedback. For the moment, we do know that peer feedback is well-regarded and that content-based feedback has positive results. These two claims provide a general direction toward which educators in Japan may confidently embark.

Conclusion

The Contextual Grounding for Learning-Oriented Assessment Practice

The literature from Japan lends convincing support to a conceptual model of learning-oriented assessment. Learning-oriented assessment tasks, such as those aligned with TBLT theory, of which portfolio creation is a good example, have been shown to increase motivation and boost language acquisition. As students are encouraged to develop evaluative expertise through self- and peer-assessment, they come to understand the criteria for success and plan their learning accordingly. Peer feedback is well-regarded and reliable. It is not yet known how engagement with peer feedback and teacher feedback can best be stimulated, but a focus on content rather than form seems to be one positive direction.

This paper has argued that the current educational climate in Japan is one which is overly focused on summative assessment for the purposes of sorting and ranking, rather than assessment which promotes learning. This culture of testing encourages rote learning and memorization at the expense of deeper learning that is critical and creative. In order to promote productive student learning processes, an alternative paradigm of assessment is needed. It is hoped that this paper has contributed to the establishment of a contextual grounding for LOA and would prove helpful to the development of departmental assessment strategies and learner-focused assessment practices in Japanese higher education.

References

Apple, M., & Shimo, E. (2004). Learners to teacher: Portfolios, please! Perceptions of portfolio assessment in EFL classrooms. In T. Newfields (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 2004 JALT Pan-SIG Conference* (pp. 53-59). Tokyo: JALT Publications. Retrieved from http://jalt.org/pansig/2004/HTML/AppleShimo.htm

Asaba, M., & Marlowe, J. P. (2011). Using peer assessment in the language classroom. *The Language Teacher, 35*(1), 29–33.

Berry, R. (2011). Assessment trends in Hong Kong: Seeking to establish formative assessment in an examination culture. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 18*(2), 199–211. doi:10.1080/0969594X.2010.527701

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education, 5*(1), 7–74.

Bonn, S. (2011). The reflective portfolio. *OnCUE Journal, 5*(2), 34–48.

Carless, D. (2011). *From testing to productive student learning: Implementing formative assessment in Confucian-heritage settings*. New York: Routledge.

Carless, D. (2014). Exploring learning-oriented assessment processes. *Higher Education, 69*(6), 963–976. doi:10.1007/s10734-014-9816-z

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language teaching and learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Han, M., & Yang, X. (2001). Educational assessment in China: Lessons from history and future prospects. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice, 8*(1), 5–10. doi:10.1080/09695940120033216

Hofstede, G., & Bond, M. H. (1988). The Confucius connection: From cultural roots to economic growth. *Organizational Dynamics, 16*, 5–21. doi:10.1016/0090-2616(88)90009-5

Howrey, J. (2011). Promoting active learning through writing portfolios. *OnCue Journal, 5*(2), 3–18.

Howrey, J., & Tanner, P. (2009). Writing portfolios: Empowering students, teachers, and the curriculum. In A.M. Stoke (Ed.), *JALT Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

Kwon, S. K., Lee, M., & Shin, D. (2015). Educational assessment in the Republic of Korea: Lights and shadows of high-stake exam-based education system. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 24*(1), 60–77. doi: 10.1080/0969594X.2015.1074540

Little, D., & Erickson, G. (2015). Learner identity, learner agency, and the assessment of language proficiency: Some reflections prompted by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 35*, 120–139. doi:10.1017/S0267190514000300

Mahoney, S. (2011). Exploring gaps in teacher and student EFL error evaluation. *JALT Journal, 33*(2), 107–130.

Matsuno, S. (2009). Self-, peer-, and teacher-assessments in Japanese university EFL writing classrooms. *Language Testing, 26*(1), 75–100.

McCune, V., & Hounsell, D. (2005). The development of students' ways of thinking and practising in three final-year biology courses. *Higher Education, 49*(3), 255–289.

Peloghitis, J. (2011). Form-focused feedback in writing: A study on quality and performance in accuracy. In A. Stewart (Ed.), *JALT2010 Conference Proceedings* (pp. 260–268). JALT: Tokyo.

Pereira, D., Flores, M.A., & Niklasson, L. (2015). Assessment revisited: A review of research in Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education,* 1–25. doi:10.1080/02602938.2015.1055233

Reugg, R. (2015). Differences in the uptake of peer and teacher feedback. *RELC Journal, 46*(2), 131–145. doi:10.1177/0033688214562799

Saito, Y. (2013). The value of peer feedback in English discussion classes. In N. Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT2012 Conference Proceedings* (pp. 430–438). Tokyo: JALT.

Sato, R. (2010). Reconsidering the effectiveness and suitability of PPP and TBLT in the Japanese EFL classroom. *JALT Journal, (32)*2, 189–200.

Sullivan, K. (2014). Reconsidering the assessment of self-regulated foreign language courses. *Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal, 5*(4), 443–459.

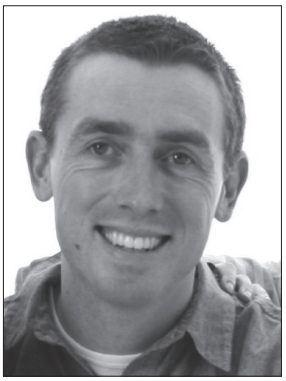
Sybing, R. (2011). A response to criticism of TBLT in Japan's language classrooms. *JALT Journal, 33*(1), 67–76.

Taferner, R. H. (2008). Toward effective EFL writing revision: Peer review. *OnCUE Journal, 2*(2), 76–91.

Teasdale, A., & Leung, C. (2000). Teacher assessment and psychometric theory: A case of paradigm crossing? *Language Testing, 17*(2), 163–184.

Wakabayashi, R. (2008). The effect of peer feedback on EFL writing: Focusing on Japanese university students. *OnCUE Journal, 2*(2), 92–110.

Willis, D. & Willis, J. (2009). Task-based language teaching: Some questions and answers. *The Language Teacher, 33*(3), 3–8.



Paul Wicking is currently completing doctoral research at Nagoya University and working in the Faculty of Foreign Studies at Meijo University. He has been researching and teaching in universities in Japan for the last 12 years. His research interests include formative assessment, task based language teaching, and global competency education. He can be contacted at <pwicking@hotmail.com>

Bridging Research and Secondary School Classrooms: A Case of Vocabulary Learning

Tomoko Ishii
Meiji Gakuin University

Despite the great advancement we have seen in vocabulary research, secondary school English teachers in Japan are not necessarily well informed in regard to such findings. This paper describes one workshop designed to help a private six-year secondary school in the Tokyo area. Although none of the topics covered is new to vocabulary researchers, the feedback from the teachers showed that the workshop was useful to them. Some teachers commented that they had learned about new concepts and that they could clarify the goals they should be working towards. Other teachers said that it was good for them to learn about research-based support for their choice of materials and stated that they could now teach with more confidence. This paper argues for the benefit of contextualizing research findings in each teaching setting and working together with the teachers to consider ways to improve their vocabulary instruction.

語彙習得研究は近年大きな成果を挙げてきたが、それが中学・高校の教育現場で充分には活かされていないようだ。本論では、都内の私立中高一貫校で英語科教員を対象に行った語彙指導ワークショップの概要を紹介する。ワークショップでは、語彙習得研究者には基礎的な事柄を扱ったにもかかわらず、「新しい知見が学べた」、「使用している教材に理論的根拠があることを知って自信がついた」など、前向きな反応を得た。研究成果を各学校の状況に適用して議論し、教員と研究者が共に指導の向上を目指すことは有益であると言える。

Over the last few decades we have seen significant advancements in vocabulary acquisition research, from which language teachers can learn greatly. One example is that we have better understanding about how the words are used in English, and some useful lists of basic vocabulary lists have been developed, such as the New General Service List (e.g., Browne, 2014). However, secondary school teachers in Japan do not seem to have sufficient time to learn about these research findings, and it is sometimes not quite obvious how those findings can be applied to their particular teaching settings. Research by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) showed that Japanese secondary school teachers have more administrative and extracurricular duties than their counterparts in 34 OECD member countries (OECD Newsroom, 2014). With this heavy workload, few teachers have the luxury of learning from research. Based on personal communications with secondary school teachers, I feel it is necessary for researchers to distill the essence of our findings for them.

In 2010, *danshari* (断捨離) was nominated for the word of the year in Japan. This word literally means to *cut*, *throw away*, and *stay away*, and is used mostly in the context of encouraging people to possess less and keep life simple. Our modern lives are filled with objects, but the amount we can keep is limited. However, even when trying to minimalize, some things are essential for our lives; we therefore need to make careful selections about which items we need and which we could live without. This is similar to how teachers should view vocabulary instruction. There are many words to be learned, and knowing a word fully involves many types of knowledge, such as derivation and collocation. Although there is much to teach, the time in classrooms is limited. *Danshari* of vocabulary instruction is therefore necessary, and teachers need to select wisely what should be taught during class time.

This paper describes a workshop that I conducted to inform secondary school teachers of recent key research findings in vocabulary. It illustrates that very basic concepts in the research field can potentially be valuable resources to classroom teachers, and it aims to encourage more researchers to share their expertise.

Workshop

Background

The workshop took place at a private school in Tokyo that incorporates both a junior high and a high school, with all ten English teachers at this school. The students are highly academically oriented, and passing university entrance examinations is one of their primary concerns. Prior to the workshop, I interviewed one of the teachers at the school and learned about their vocabulary instruction practices. This teacher was in good communication with her colleagues, and she could inform me of various opinions her colleagues had. At the time

of the workshop, in addition to having students learn words through reading textbooks, they used the *Kikutan: Basic* and *Kikutan: Advanced* textbooks (ALC, 2015a, 2015b) as supplementary materials for vocabulary building. Vocabulary quizzes were administered six times a year to encourage students to study these books. Through the interview, I learned that these bimonthly quizzes were burdensome for some teachers and that they were hoping for less frequent quizzes. I also discovered that some teachers were not comfortable using Japanese translations when teaching vocabulary, as they were worried that the use of Japanese might discourage students from learning the words more deeply. This compounded the pressure caused by the vocabulary quizzes, as the teachers felt that the quizzes needed to cover a range of aspects of word knowledge.

On the day of the workshop, I delivered a 50-minute lecture about recent findings in vocabulary research, which was followed by a 50-minute discussion, during which teachers expressed their thoughts about the content of my lecture and described the problems encountered in their daily teaching. The next section of this paper outlines the lecture and discusses how it was received by the teachers.

Workshop Content

1. How many words do learners need to know?

Before discussing how many words learners need to know, two types of word counting units were explained briefly: lemmas and word families. A lemma counts a headword and its inflected forms as one word. For instance, *apple* and *apples* are one lemma, and *happy, happier,* and *happiest* constitute one lemma. In addition to the inflected forms, a word family includes derived forms. In the case of the word *happy*, its derived forms such as *happily,* and *happiness* also join the family. Therefore, the knowledge of 3000 lemmas is actually much more limited than that of 3000 word families. In the literature of vocabulary research, these counting units co-exist; much research has been conducted based on word families, while recent studies are often lemma-based. It is therefore important for the teachers to know about these word counting units when discussing vocabulary learning goals.

An important outcome of vocabulary research relates to text coverage, that is the percentage of known words in a text. In English, a small proportion of vocabulary covers a massive amount of text, and the importance of teaching high-frequency words has long been recognized. Nation (2013) proposes the principle of *cost-benefit* when teaching vocabulary items. The time and effort spent learning high frequency words is highly rewarded, whereas those involved in learning low-frequency words might not be. According to Nation (2013), the most frequent 1000 word families in the British National Corpus cover more than 80% of the corpus, with the next 1000 words adding only about 8%. Less frequent words contribute to the text coverage to an even lesser extent. With 4000 word families, the coverage reaches around 95%. Figure 1 shows how this idea of text coverage was presented to the teachers in a visual manner.

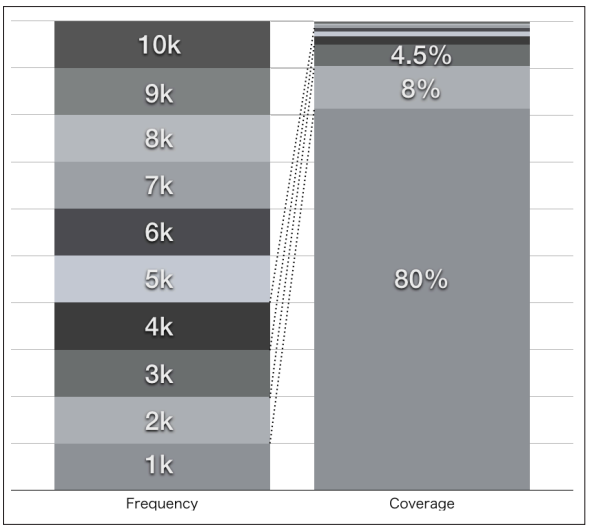


Figure 1. The principle of text coverage.

This point, although widely accepted among vocabulary researchers, was not well known among the teachers. During the discussion, several teachers expressed concern that supposedly learned lexis in junior high school might not be remembered at high school. As a result of learning about the percentage of the text covered by high-frequency words, they realized how problematic it was to move forward with instruction without the mastery of lower level words.

The workshop then addressed the number of words students should aim to learn. It is difficult to set a precise number, as it varies on the purpose of learning English. I proposed that mastering 4000 word families would be a suitable initial goal for all students (including those who do not particularly like studying English), aiming for a text coverage of 95%.

2. What vocabulary is presently taught at the school?

The next topic covered in the workshop was how well the materials used at this particular school were covering this 4000-word goal. The *Kikutan* vocabulary books used at this school were based on a word list called *Standard Vocabulary List 12000* (hereafter, *SVL12000*; ALC, n.d.). According to the source of this list (ALC, n.d.), *SVL 12000* is a corpus-based list designed for Japanese learners of English, and it comprises 12 levels of 1000 words each. Although not explicitly stated, the items on the *SVL 12000* suggest the list is based on lemmas and not on word families. *Kikutan: Basic* covers up to 4000 lemmas, and *Kikutan: Advanced* up to 6000 lemmas. The initial learning goal of 4000 words mentioned above is word family-based, whereas the *Kikutan* books are lemma-based, and so a re-interpretation of the numbers is required. In their study investigating text coverage in *TOEIC*, *TOEFL*, and *EIKEN*, Chujo & Oghigian (2009) identified that approximately the first 6000 lemmas from the *SVL 12000* were equivalent to 5000 word families from Nation's (2006) list, in terms of the text coverage. It can then be assumed that covering all the words in the two *Kikutan* wordbooks would lead students to achieve a working vocabulary of more than 4000 word families. In the feedback, some teachers expressed relief upon discovering that the vocabulary learning goals they had set for their students were indeed supported by academic rationale.

3. Do learners remember the vocabulary they have learned?

At the time of this workshop, the English teachers conducted vocabulary quizzes six times a year, with no repetition of words. This meant that students might begin preparing only a week before a quiz by studying many pages at once, complete the quiz, and never return to review those words again. However, people tend to forget something if they only see it once without repeated exposure. Vocabulary is no exception, and researchers have investigated optimal cycles for repeated reviews (e.g., Nakata, 2015).

I presented a series of diagrams (Figure 2) to express visually how students can forget the words they have learned and how important it is to encourage students to review. In these diagrams, the largest circle indicates unknown words that exist in English but that the learner has never encountered. The next circle represents inactive words that the learner has previously seen, but can no longer remember the meaning of. The circles representing receptive and productive words follow. As a learner's vocabulary grows, words from the unknown area will move to either the receptive or productive areas as shown in diagram B. However, without enough repetition, receptive words can quickly fall into the inactive zone (diagram C in Figure 2).

In order to encourage students to study their wordbooks regularly, it was suggested that they take more quizzes, and that the same words should be tested on multiple occasions. As was mentioned earlier, some teachers were finding the quizzes burdensome and were hoping to have them less frequently. This suggestion was initially received with surprise, especially since the word *danshari* had been a keyword for the workshop. However, these quizzes should be designed to build a regular habit of vocabulary learning and not to measure the students' capacity to learn a large number of words at one time. Even with an increased frequency of quiz administration, by making the quizzes simple, the increase in teachers' workload could be minimized. Also, encouraging students to review their wordbooks can be done through a wide range of classroom activities that do not require much teach-

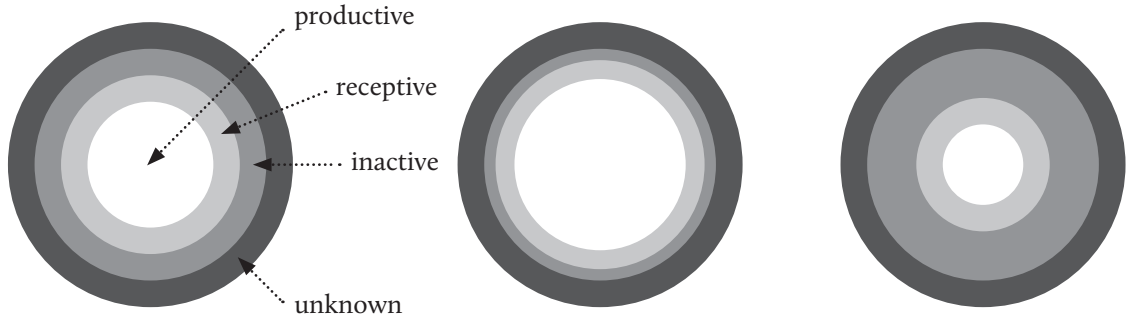


Figure 2. Diagrams representing vocabulary growth and decay.

er preparation. It was emphasized that the number of times students reviewed their wordbooks should not be sacrificed in order to reduce teachers' workloads. Rather, teachers should explore different ways of maximizing the frequency of the reviews without creating more work.

4. Should we avoid Japanese translations?

Some teachers disagreed strongly about teaching lexis using Japanese translations whereas others were open to this approach. Even if not entirely against the use of translation, some teachers expressed concern that the use of the English-Japanese matching format might instill the notion that learning one Japanese meaning is all that vocabulary learning involves.

However, although there is much to learn about any word, it is not possible to teach all the aspects at one time. Reviewing the literature, Webb (2009) concludes that the use of L1 translation is an accepted approach to introducing new words. Vocabulary learning is incremental in nature, requiring many encounters with each word in various contexts. It probably is not the role of wordbooks to cover all these aspects. Focusing on the primary translation of each word and helping learners to increase the number of the words they know one meaning of should be acceptable goals for list learning. In the workshop, I encouraged the use of Japanese translation as a compromise to increase the frequency with which students review their wordbooks. Awareness about various other aspects of vocabulary knowledge can be cultivated within reading courses where students meet words in context.

Teachers' Reaction

In summary, the workshop was developed with *danshari* as a keyword, and the following three points were emphasized:

1. A vocabulary of 4000 word families is an appropriate initial goal.
2. Frequent encounters with vocabulary words should be prioritized.
3. The initial use of translation is not to be discouraged.

It was noted that focusing on identifying primary meanings via the use of Japanese is a good option. However, regardless of what teachers omitted from their vocabulary instruction, frequent encounters with the words to be learned should never be sacrificed in their *danshari* process. In addition, it was emphasized that the vocabulary learning target, namely the wordbooks they were using, was appropriate in light of the 4000 word families goal.

These messages were well received by the teachers. Some teachers commented that they did not know about word counting units and text coverage, and that they could now clarify the goals they should be working towards. Other teachers said that it was beneficial for them to learn about research-based support for their choice of word books and stated that they could now teach with more confidence. This workshop also elicited a change in teachers' actions: shortly after the workshop, they began incorporating short vocabulary activities into each lesson, such as having students attempt oral vocabulary quizzes in pairs. This should help the students to review their vocabulary books more frequently, without overly adding to the teachers' workload. This seems an example of successful *danshari* of their teaching.

Considerations for Future Workshops

This workshop occurred as a result of conversing with one of the teachers at this school. She shared her concerns and the problems her colleagues were facing, and the workshop was an attempt to help them find solutions. Understanding the problems teachers were facing was essential in order to make the workshop beneficial. As mentioned earlier, there has been a massive accumulation of research findings on vocabulary learning. However, interpreting research findings and applying them to each teacher's unique teaching context is not always easy. Sometimes teachers are not well informed about the materials they teach with. Explaining how teaching materials compare to what research says can be reassuring and encouraging for teach-

ers, as was seen through the teachers' feedback. At this school, some teachers were looking for a way to reduce the number of vocabulary quizzes, while more frequent quizzes were in fact desirable for a better learning outcome. Acknowledging the teachers' hard work and discussing how they could solve these issues were necessary steps in order to help them feel that there were actions they could take.

Despite their potential usefulness, findings in vocabulary research are not necessarily very well-shared with teachers in Japanese classrooms. Having abundant resources in bookstores does not mean that the teachers who need them are able to make use of them in their teaching. I believe that this is true of areas other than vocabulary, and that teachers in classrooms need others' support in learning about and contextualizing research findings. I hope that this paper might inspire more researchers to become aware of the potential contribution their knowledge can make to language education in this country.

References

ALC. (n.d.). *Standard Vocabulary List 12000*. Retrieved from http://www.alc.co.jp/eng/vocab/svl

ALC. (2015). *Kikutan: Basic.* Tokyo: ALC.

ALC. (2015). *Kikutan: Advanced.* Tokyo: ALC.

Browne, C. (2014). The new general service list version 1:01 getting better all the time. *Korea TESOL Journal, 11*(1), 35–50.

Chujo, K., & Oghigian, K. (2009). How many words do you need to know to understand TOEIC, TOEFL, and Eiken? An examination of text coverage and high frequency vocabulary. *The Journal of Asia TEFL, 6*(2), 121–148.

Nakata, T. (2015). Effects of expanding and equal spacing on second language vocabulary learning: Does gradually increasing spacing increase vocabulary learning? *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 37*, 677–711.

Nation, I. S. P. (2006). How large a vocabulary is needed for reading and listening? *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 63*(1), 59–82.

Nation, I. S. P. (2013). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

OECD Newsroom. (2014). Teachers love their job but feel undervalued, unsupported and unrecognised, says OECD. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/teachers-love-their-job-but-feel-undervalued-unsupported-and-unrecognised.htm

Webb, S. (2009). The effects of receptive and productive learning of word pairs on vocabulary knowledge. *RELC Journal, 40*(3), 360–376.

Tomoko Ishii is a lecturer at Meiji Gakuin University. Her interests include the research on vocabulary learning and teaching, as well as assisting secondary school teachers.

Does Dyslexia Occur Among Japanese English Language Learners?

Elton LaClare
Sojo University

Dyslexia is the most commonly diagnosed learning disability in the English-speaking world, affecting between 10 and 20 percent of the adult population of countries such as the United States, Britain, and Canada (International Dyslexia Association, 2016). While diagnosis and treatment of dyslexia focusses on the act of reading, the underlying cause of the condition is thought to be a phonological processing disorder that inhibits an individual's ability to identify separate speech sounds (International Dyslexia Association, 2002). Awareness of dyslexia has risen steadily among speakers of other languages, but for Japanese citizens and educators it remains a relatively unknown phenomenon. Differences in the orthography of languages affect reading in ways that can greatly impact the likelihood of an individual acquiring literacy (Paulesu et al., 2001). Understanding these influences is essential to ensuring the best outcomes for Japanese English language learners.

失読症は英語圏では一般的な学習障害であり、米国、英国、カナダなどでは成人人口の約10〜20%に見られる(International Dyslexia Association, 2016;.)。失読症の診断や治療は読書する行為に着目しているが、その症状の原因は、個々の言語音(speech sounds)を聞き分ける能力を妨げる音韻（音素）処理障害と考えられている(International Dyslexia Association, 2002)。他 の言語の国々においても失読症への認識は高まっているが、日本の一般人や教育者においては未だ比較的認知されていない状態である。言語の正字法における違いは流暢に読めるようになる能力に大きく影響する(Paulesu et al., 2001)。これらの違いを理解する事は、全ての日本人英語学習者にとって最善の学習成果をもたらすために重要なものとなる。

Back in the late 1990s, a case study appeared that held great interest for those who study dyslexia as it relates to second language education (Wydell & Butterworth, 1999). In it the authors told of a young man, born of English parents yet raised in Japan, who manifested an unexpected condition that baffled those tasked with making sense of it. Although he demonstrated perfect spoken fluency in both English and Japanese, he was discovered to be severely dyslexic in just one of his native tongues. In the case of English, the young man suffered from chronic problems with accurate and efficient word reading and spelling. However, this same young man had progressed through the entire Japanese education system, consistently performing above average among readers his age.

The young man's struggles with English reading struck a chord with those who had studied dyslexia across linguistic contexts. Although it had been observed that dyslexia often passed from parent to child, suggesting a genetic basis for the condition (Francks, MacPhie, & Monaco, 2002), prevalence varied significantly from one language group to the next (e.g., Everatt, Smythe, & Ocampo, 2004; Helmuth, 2001; Kornev, Rakhlin, & Grigorenko, 2010; Lindgren, Renzi, & Richman, 1985). Early research conducted in Italy and the United States reported that developmental dyslexia occurs at a considerably lower rate among Italian speakers than it does among English-speaking Americans (Lindgren et al., 1985). Subsequent studies, however, demonstrated that this disparity is almost certainly the result of an interaction effect between neurological factors and the orthographic characteristics of languages (Paulesu et al., 2001).

Differences in Writing Systems

Languages that exhibit a high degree of consistency in the way that sounds are represented by the writing system are said to possess transparent orthography. Meanwhile, languages that demonstrate weak correspondence between sounds and their graphic representations (graphemes) are referred to as having opaque orthography (Katz & Frost, 1992). Returning to the case of English and Italian, the roughly 40 distinct phonemes that make up the English language may be spelled in over 1000 different ways, while the 25 sounds that constitute Italian may be spelled in just 33 different ways (Helmuth, 2001).

In their 2001 study, Paulesu et al. tested the reading and phonological (sound processing) skills of English, French, and Italian-speaking dyslexics. While Italian subjects scored better on reading tests, they performed as poorly as English and French dyslexics on phonological processing tasks. Positron emission tomography (PET) scans of the subjects' brain activity while reading revealed reduced activation of the left temporal lobe among *all* subjects, regardless of language. The disparity in reading per-

formance between the groups, therefore, could not be explained by neurobiological factors alone. In other words, while the Italian, English and French dyslexics all suffered from the underlying *cause* of dyslexia (impaired phonological processing), the *symptoms* of dyslexia were least apparent among the Italian group. The Paulesu study suggests that the complexity of a language's orthography can affect both the severity of the symptoms of dyslexia and the ease with which the condition is diagnosed. As such, there are likely to be large numbers of undetected cases of dyslexia among speakers of languages with transparent orthographies, while mild cases of the condition may be exacerbated in languages where the orthography is highly irregular.

It is worth pausing at this point to consider the nature of the Japanese writing system. The modern Japanese writing system consists of a mixture of three different character types: *kanji*, which originate from Chinese and are logographic in nature; *hiragana*, a syllabic (or, perhaps more accurately, moraic) system of characters used primarily for native Japanese words and grammatical elements; and *katakana*, another set of syllabic characters used mostly for foreign words or names (Habein, 1984). Kanji are logograms (word pictures) that represent words or morphemes. They also map to general concepts that may or may not contribute to the meaning of the word being represented. Most kanji have at least two possible pronunciations, an *on'yomi* (based on the original Chinese pronunciation) and a *kun'yomi* (derived from native Japanese), though many have considerably more. Regarding the graphemes that make up hiragana and katakana, the majority map to syllables rather than phonemes. The notable exceptions to this are the vowel sounds /a/, /i/, /ɯᵝ/, /e/, /o/ represented in hiragana by あ, い, う, え, お (katakana ア, イ, ウ, エ, オ) and the consonant ん (katakana ン) which, depending on the context, is pronounced as either /n/ or /m/.

An obvious question at this point would be: Where along the spectrum of transparent and opaque orthographies does the Japanese writing system sit? Is it closer to Italian, with its highly regular orthography, or does it more closely resemble English, with its complex and inconsistent system of matching symbols and sounds? In the case of hiragana and katakana, they are completely regular and transparent in the ways in which they represent sound. Consider the example of the hiragana こ (katakana コ). Regardless of context, this character will always indicate the sound /ko/. Likewise, no other hiragana (alone or in combination) can be used to represent /ko/. According to the logic of Paulesu et al. (2001), reading Japanese hiragana and katakana requires accessing a relatively simple set of rules connecting sounds to their graphic representations.

The work of Paulesu et al. (2001) is invaluable for the insight it provides into cases such as that of the young man who was dyslexic in English but not Japanese. While the experience of reading differed vastly in each language, the underlying neurobiological impairment remained constant. It would be natural to think that Japanese with its three writing systems (hiragana, katakana, and kanji) poses greater challenges to literacy than English with its comparatively simple 26-letter alphabet. However, the phonological processing problems associated with developmental dyslexia disrupt the ability to dissect words into their component sounds. As such, writing systems that require readers to analyze phonemes, the smallest units of sound that differentiate word meanings in a language, are more likely to present difficulties for dyslexic readers. As Wydell (2012) puts it, the granularity of the smallest orthographic unit is coarser in Japanese than it is in English, which explains the disparity in the prevalence of dyslexia between the two languages.

The problem with the explanation provided above is that it does not account for the role of kanji in Japanese reading. The prevalence of dyslexia in logographic languages (e.g., Chinese and Japanese) has been explored in great detail in recent years, most notably in a study by Siok, Perfetti, Jin and Tan (2004), which examined the brains of Chinese readers. The work of Siok et al.(2004) revealed that peak neurological activation while reading Chinese occurs outside the region of the brain typically used when reading phonemic scripts such as English. Indeed, it appears that reading logographic languages places greater demands on areas of the brain associated with recognizing visual patterns. As such, the neurobiological impairment that disrupts literacy in the phonemic languages studied by Paulesu et al. (2001) fails to emerge as a significant obstacle to the reading of kanji and other logographic scripts.

The Challenges of Diagnosing Monolingual Dyslexia

In 2006, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) expanded provisions for special needs education for students with learning disabilities (MEXT, n.d.-c). Subsequent laws, including the Act on the Elimination of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, bolstered those protections by pledging to extend "reasonable accommodation" (Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, n.d., p. 1) in order to remove social barriers and prevent exclusion. However,

unless the acquisition of native language literacy has been severely compromised, English language learners with the phonological processing problems associated with monolingual dyslexia are unlikely ever to receive a proper diagnosis. Indeed, for native speakers of Japanese, problems with English reading are more likely to be attributed to a lack of facility with foreign languages than a recognized learning disability (Makino & Miyamoto, 2002).

Although understanding the interplay of linguistic and neurobiological factors that influence dyslexia is complex and difficult, identifying the symptoms in learners need not be. There are a number of indicators that may be observed during the course of normal classroom interactions that English language teachers can be trained to recognize. Perhaps the most important of these is prolonged and excessive reliance on kana in both encoding appropriate pronunciation and decoding English words. English language textbooks in Japan often encourage the practice of subscripting unfamiliar English words with katakana notations, ostensibly as an aid to pronunciation. Foreign names are often presented with katakana written beside or beneath, and teachers regularly use katakana to scaffold learners struggling to remember the pronunciation of difficult words. However, as learners accumulate experience in the language, they should be able to decrease and eventually eliminate their reliance on native scripts in the process of reading English. Those who cannot deserve further observation in order to determine the source of the problem.

As teachers come to know the strengths and weaknesses of their learners, they may also notice large discrepancies between an individual's reading skills and his or her listening and speaking skills. According to Olagboyega (2008), such discrepancies are predictive of reading disorders such as dyslexia and, as such, should not be overlooked. While it is true that dyslexics often perform better when tested orally (Davis, 1992), the same can be said of some who are developmentally normal in terms of reading performance. To an extent, variance between a language learner's accomplishments in different skill areas is normal. What teachers should be looking for are significant differences in performance that persist despite sufficient practice and adequate instruction.

Strephosymbolia, the practice of reversing letters (e.g., using *b* in place of *d* and *vice versa*), is often posited as a hallmark of dyslexia (Lilienfeld, Lynn, Ruscio, & Beyerstein, 2010) even though it is observed in dyslexics and non-dyslexics alike (Cornell, 1985). Recent research by Blackburne et al. (2014) into the neural correlates of letter reversal suggests that the ability to "distinguish between typical and reversed letters may develop slowly" (p. 1) which helps to explain the lingering uncertainty as to whether or not dyslexics manifest a selective propensity for the trait. In all contexts, including English language teaching, one ought to be wary of using letter reversals as a rough and ready diagnostic of dyslexia. It is possible, likely even, that the practice is the result of simple confusion or a lack of experience with the written forms of the language. Learners of Japanese may find it helpful to recall their early struggles differentiating the katakana マ/ma/ and ム /mu/.

Teachers whose learners manifest symptoms similar to those outlined here will no doubt wonder about an appropriate course of action. Even for those with expertise in recognizing monolingual dyslexia, it is often difficult to differentiate genuine impairment from a lack of knowledge and experience with English (especially at low levels of proficiency). Nonetheless, there are a number of simple field tests that reduce the influence of language knowledge (or lack thereof) on a learner's performance.

Because the etiology of monolingual dyslexia resides in the phonological processing area of the brain, the most effective diagnostic tools are those that require the subject to identify, differentiate, or manipulate units of sound (Torgesen & Mathes, 2002). Examples of such tasks include: phoneme identification, phoneme isolation, phoneme blending, and phoneme segmentation, among others. These tasks isolate sound processing capabilities from word knowledge, which is essential for the reasons outlined above. In order to assess phoneme identification skills, the tester reads a set of three words (e.g., *fix*, *fall*, *fun*) and asks the subject to identify the sound (phoneme) that is common to all three (/f/). Concerning phoneme isolation, there are two types: initial and final. Initial phoneme isolation requires the subject to pronounce the phoneme that comes at the beginning of a word spoken by the tester. Final phoneme isolation involves pronouncing the phoneme at the end of a spoken word. For example, if the tester speaks the word *bin*, the subject would be expected to respond with /b/ in the case of initial phoneme isolation and /n/ in the case of final phoneme isolation. The last two phonological processing tasks, phoneme blending and phoneme segmentation, are those which dyslexics are likely to find most challenging. Phoneme blending requires the subject to form a word by combining the individual phonemes spoken by the tester. For example, if the tester pronounces /b/ /e/ /d/, the subject would be expected to respond with the

word 'bed'. In the case of phoneme segmentation, the tester would speak a complete word (e.g., *name*) and the subject would respond with /n/ /æ/ /m/.

It is important to keep in mind that the tests described above cannot, on their own, confirm or exclude a diagnosis of monolingual dyslexia. Indeed, as Coulson et al. (2013) report, phonological deficits are also observed among non-reading-disabled Japanese English language learners of low proficiency. At best, such tasks are capable of identifying learners with poor phonological awareness who require remediation or accommodation of one form or another.

Reasonable Accommodation

Developmental dyslexia is a chronic condition with a neurobiological basis. Although its symptoms may be alleviated through medical, educational, or technological interventions, the causal roots of the condition remain stubbornly intact. In the absence of a cure, our attention should turn to reducing the disadvantage incurred by those living with dyslexia. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), of which Japan is a signatory, stipulates that "reasonable accommodation" (2006, p. 4) be extended to those with disabilities in order to meet the objectives of inclusive education. The CRPD defines reasonable accommodation as "necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments… to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms" (p. 4). However, the decision of which accommodations will be made and how they will be implemented is something to be determined by the individual signatories. What seems certain is that no action will be taken on the issue of monolingual dyslexia in Japan without pressure from those closest to the problem, namely teachers, parents, and the learners themselves. As successive governments introduce measures aimed at enhancing English language education, such as the Global 30 program (MEXT n.d.-a) and the Super Global High School Program (MEXT n.d.-b), there is a real risk that those with monolingual dyslexia will be even further disadvantaged. More than ever, Japan requires highly informed, knowledgeable teachers and policy-makers willing to act in the interests of those struggling with this particular disability.

Conclusion

Meara, Coltheart, and Masterson (1985) were among the first in the field of English language teaching to draw attention to the possibility that a learner with apparently normal first language reading skills could experience significant difficulties acquiring literacy in English. Although they correctly attributed the phenomenon to the orthographic complexity of English, the exact etiology of monolingual dyslexia remained unclear until advances in neuroimaging enabled greater scrutiny of the neurobiological factors involved. Research efforts made in the past decade have gone a long way to filling the gaps in our understanding of developmental dyslexia and other reading disorders. However, there is a great deal that remains unknown, especially concerning the challenges faced by readers of non-alphabetic scripts. If it is true that the symptoms of dyslexia are aggravated by the opaque orthography of the English language (and, by contrast, eased by the orthographic regularity of hiragana and katakana) then it is certain that a percentage of Japanese learners of English will fail to acquire second language literacy due to factors that cannot be addressed either by existing classroom practices or the current suite of policies related to English education in Japan. Greater awareness of the issue of monolingual dyslexia among language teachers is a vital first step in bringing this issue the attention it deserves.

References

Blackburne, L. K., Eddy, M. D., Kalra, P., Yee, D., Sinha, P., & Gabrieli, J. D. E. (2014). Neural correlates of letter reversal in children and adults. *PLOS One*, *9*(5), 1–15. http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0098386

Cabinet Office, Government of Japan. (n.d.). Establishment of "Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities". In *New Developments in Policies for Persons with Disabilities*. Retrieved from http://www8.cao.go.jp/shougai/english/annualreport/2014/pdf/s1.pdf

Cornell, J. M. (1985). Spontaneous mirror-writing in children. *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, *39*, 174–179. doi:10.1037/h0080122

Coulson, D., Ariiso, M., Kojima, R., & Tanaka, M. (2013). Difficulties in reading English words: How do Japanese learners perform on a test of phonological deficit? *Vocabulary Learning and Instruction, 2*(1), 56–63. doi: 10.7820/vli.v02.1.coulson.et.al

Davis, R. D. (1992). *Test for dyslexia: 37 common traits*. Retrieved from https://www.dyslexia.com/about–dyslexia/signs-of-dyslexia/test-for-dyslexia-37-signs/

Everatt, J., Smythe, I., Ocampo, D., & Gyarmathy, E. (2004). Issues in the assessment of literacy-related difficulties across language backgrounds: A cross-linguistic comparison. *Journal of Research in Reading, 27*(2), 141–151.

Francks, C., MacPhie, I. L., & Monaco, A. P. (2002). The genetic basis of dyslexia. *Lancet Neurology*, *8*, 483–90. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1474-4422(02)00221-1

Habein, Y. S. (1984). *The history of the Japanese written language*. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press.

Helmuth, L. (2001). Dyslexia: Same brains, different languages. *Science*, *291*(5511), 2064–2065.

International Dyslexia Association. (2016). *Dyslexia basics*. Retrieved from https://dyslexiaida.org/dyslexia-basics/

International Dyslexia Association. (2002). *Definition of dyslexia*. Retrieved from https://dyslexiaida.org/definition-of-dyslexia/

Katz, L. & Frost, R. (1992). The reading process is different for different orthographies: The orthographic depth hypothesis. In R. Frost & L. Katz (Eds.), *Orthography, Phonology, Morphology, and Meaning* (pp. 67–84). Amsterdam: Elsevier North Holland Press.

Kornev, A. N., Rakhlin, N., & Grigorenko, E. L. (2010). Dyslexia from a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspective: The case of Russian and Russia. *Learning Disabilities – A Contemporary Journal*, *8*(1), 41–69.

Lilienfeld, S. O., Lynn, S. J., Ruscio, J., & Beyerstein, B. L. (2010). *50 great myths of popular psychology: Shattering widespread misconceptions about human behavior*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Lindgren, S. D., de Renzi, E., & Richman, L. C. (1985). Cross-national comparisons of developmental dyslexia in Italy and the United States. *Child Development*, *56*(6), 1404–1417.

Makino, R. & Miyamoto, S. (2002). Gakushu shogai ji ni mirareta eigo gakushu ni okeru konnan no kentou: Eigo gakushu ni oite mirareta ayamari kara [A study on difficulties in English language learning with students with learning disorders: Focusing on the mistakes made in English language learning]. *Japanese Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *11*(2), 158–170.

Meara, P., Coltheart, M., & Masterson, J. (1985). Hidden reading problems in ESL learners. *TESL Canada Journal*, *3*(1), 29–36.

MEXT. (n.d.-a). Global 30 project: Establishing university network for internationalization. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/en/policy/education/highered/title02/detail02/sdetail02/1373894.htm

MEXT. (n.d.-b). Outline of super global high school program. Retrieved from http://www.sghc.jp/en/

MEXT. (n.d.-c). Special feature 1 efforts in education rebuilding. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpac200601/001/003.htm

Olagboyega, K. W. (2008). The effects of dyslexia on language acquisition and development. *Scientific and Technical Reports of Faculty of Engineering and Resource Science, Akita University*, *29*, 23–27.

Paulesu, E., Démonet, J.-F., Fazio, F., McCrory, E., Chanoine, V., Brunswick, N., Cappa, S. F., Cossu, G., Habib, M., Frith, C. D., & Frith, U. (2001). Dyslexia: Cultural diversity and biological unity. *Science*, *291*(5511), 2165–2167.

Siok, W. T., Perfetti, C. A., Zhen, J., & Tan, L. H. (2004). Biological abnormality of impaired reading is constrained by culture. *Nature*, *431*, 71–76.

Torgesen, J. K. & Mathes, P. G. (2002). Assessment and instruction in phonological awareness (2nd ed.). Florida department of education division of public schools and community education bureau of instructional support and community services.. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED473732.pdf

United Nations. (2006). Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf

Wydell, T. N. (2012). Cross-cultural/linguistic differences in the prevalence of developmental dyslexia and the hypothesis of granularity and transparency. In T. Wydell & L. Fern-Pollak (Eds.), *Dyslexia – A comprehensive and international approach*. (pp. 1–15). Rijeka: InTech. Retrieved from http://www.intechopen.com/books/dyslexia-a-comprehensive-and-international-approach/cross-cultural-linguistic-differences-in-the-prevalence-of-developmental-dyslexia-and-the-hypothesis

Wydell, T. N. & Butterworth, B. (1999). A case of an English-Japanese bilingual with monolingual dyslexia. *Cognition*, *70*, 273–305. doi: 10.1016/s0010-0277 (99) 00016-5

Elton LaClare is an associate professor at Sojo University in Kumamoto, Japan. For several years he has been investigating monolingual dyslexia among Japanese learners with an emphasis on diagnosis and remediation. His research is supported by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research provided by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS).


Torrin Shimono & James Nobis

TLT Interviews brings you direct insights from leaders in the field of language learning, teaching, and education—and you are invited to be an interviewer! If you have a pertinent issue you would like to explore and have access to an expert or specialist, please make a submission of 2,000 words or less.

Email: interviews@jalt-publications.org

Colleagues! Welcome to the July/August edition of TLT Interviews. For this issue we bring you a delightful discussion with author, editor, and teacher trainer, Dorothy Zemach. Dorothy has eighteen years of experience teaching ESL and is the founder of Wayzgoose Press (http://wayzgoosepress.com). She has extensive knowledge in the publishing field and has also written around two dozen books for large ESL publishers such as Macmillan. After her plenary talk for JALT 2017, she sat down and talked to Adam Murray, Ed.D., an experienced educator in his own right. Adam has been teaching English as a Foreign Language to Japanese university students for almost a decade and is currently teaching at Miyazaki International College. His research interests are listening instruction, materials development, and assessment. He is currently the coordinator of the JALT Materials Writers Special Interest Group. He can be reached at <amurray@edu.miyazaki-mic.ac.jp>. So without further ado, to the interview!

An Interview with Dorothy Zemach

Adam Murray

Miyazaki International College

Adam Murray*: How did you get started in textbook writing?*

Dorothy Zemach: I was teaching classes at Sumitomo Electric in Osaka using a good introductory-level textbook, the first edition of *Business Venture* (Oxford University Press). While I was using it, I kept a variety of notes on a few typographical errors and general observations. During a meeting with my OUP representative, I mentioned my notes. This led to Robert Habbick setting up a meeting with the commissioning editor of the series, Cristina Whitecross who offered a small sum of money for my list of typos. She told me that the authors were hard at work writing the second edition of the student's book as well as a workbook and were too busy to write the teacher's guide. She asked if I was interested in writing the teacher's guide. I accepted, and this how I became involved in commercial publishing.

Can you tell us a little about your writing career?

In 1997, I returned to the United States to teach ESL classes first at Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant, and then at the American English Institute at the University of Oregon. As you may know, working as an ESL language teacher in the United States does not pay well. For this reason, I became more involved with both textbook writing and editing. At first, I did part-time editing for Cambridge University Press, and in 2003, I accepted a full-time job there as a Senior Development Editor, though I telecommuted from Eugene. Then in 2006, I left to go freelance and began writing books again as well as editing.

What was your first textbook project?

Lewis Lansford, a former colleague from Sumitomo Electric who moved first to Longman and then went freelance, was managing a project for Macmillan and contacted me to see if I'd be interested. This led to writing *College Writing: From Paragraph to Essay* in 2003. This was the starting point for a series of four textbooks; that book in fact changed its title in the second edition and is now called *Writing Essays: From Paragraph to Essay*.

Could a similar approach to getting started in textbook writing be taken today?

Ah, that's an interesting question, particularly now. Sometimes, a similar approach can still be used. Because a publisher assumes a great deal of financial risk when committing to a textbook, they prefer to work with someone that they have developed a working relationship with. In other words, they "like to deal with the known." Publishers want to deal with reliable writers who can consistently meet deadlines. So for those who want to get started, establishing a reputation as being dependable is the first step. Approaching an editor from one of the publishers at an international conference such as JALT or TESOL and asking about contributing to an ongoing project is one way. You can prove your reliability and ability by working on supporting

materials (e.g., tests, workbooks, teacher's manuals, and videos). After you've become known, opportunities to write textbooks will arise. However, in recent years, large publishers have moved away from having writers at any stage make significant contributions to a book's syllabus and general approach. Increasingly, authors are given tight briefs and asked to carry out directions. That comes with a corresponding move away from royalties for authors to flat fees for writers.

What are the major forms of publishing these days?

The three major forms of publishing are: (a) traditional publishing; (b) micropress and small press publishing; and (c) self-publishing. As the name suggests, traditional publishing involves working with large publishing companies such as Macmillan and Cambridge University Press. A micropress or small press could be considered an independent press and could be as small as a couple of authors working together. My company, Wayzgoose Press, would be considered a micropress. BTB Press and Atama-ii are Japan-based micropresses. The third and final form of publishing is self-publishing.

Could you share with us your predictions about the future of textbook publishing?

I think alternatives to traditional publishing will continue to grow in popularity. For various reasons, an author could approach a micropress or even self-publish. A good example of this is niche printing. An author may have a concept for an audience that is too narrow to be attractive to a traditional publisher, but with lower overheads and higher royalties, a self-publisher could make money on a title that a large publisher could not.

Your workshop on self-publishing at JALT2016 was well-attended. There seems to be a lot of interest in self-publishing.

Self-publishing can be attractive to authors for several reasons:

- niche materials (that will not sell to a large number of people),
- more control over content,
- higher profit margins per book, to
- unable to print with a publisher

There have been a number of advances in print-on-demand technology (and in the number of services). It is now possible for an individual author to use this technology to provide reasonably-priced textbooks for even a handful of students. Of course, self-publishing is self-*publishing*, not just printing. In exchange for higher royalties—typically, 70% of the cover price for self-publishing versus 6-10% of net-to-publisher profits for traditional press publishing—the individual author must pay out of his or her pocket for editing, proofreading, cover design, layout, and formatting, and they must handle sales and marketing.

Ebooks continue to grow in popularity. In fact, some professional development books are only available as ebooks. Some of the popular services for publishing and selling ebooks are Amazon, Apple, Kobo, and Google Play. "One-stop shopping" services such as Draft2Digital and Smashwords distribute to most of these outlets.

Amazon's Createspace is, in my opinion, the cheapest and easiest-to-use option for creating print-on-demand paperbacks, which will then be available through Amazon Japan, distributors such as Book Depository, and they can also be ordered by any bookstore, institution, or individual.

Could you share an example of something that is more appropriate for self-publishing than for traditional publishing?

Well, an ELT example is *English for Scammers*, which I wrote with Chuck Sandy. It's actually a genuine, full-length textbook on writing business emails, complete with exercises and a final exam, but all the examples are from our spam folders. So these are examples of what not to do, from which we extract the rules and give advice for good correspondence. But a traditional publisher wouldn't touch something with that much humor or that sort of approach. That's not necessarily because publishers don't appreciate humor or different approaches, but they need to be reasonably sure they'll sell a certain number of books in order to cover their production expenses. So they go for the safe bets. For me, though, the investment was only time. And while it's not my best-selling book, it remains one of my favorite ones I've written, and I'm very pleased with the content.

What are some of your concerns about the industry?

There are several disturbing trends, particularly with some of the large traditional publishers. In the past, management, editorial, and even sales and marketing consisted almost entirely of former educators. However, in recent years, management positions (and others) have been filled with business people who have no experience in the field of education or language. Naturally, this lack of experience can lead to misconceptions.

Additionally, I'd like to see publishers fight back against the pressure to be giving away so much for free and charging only for the student book. That was possible in the past when the only ancillary was an answer key, an audioscript, and a few teaching suggestions. But these days, publishers also give out teachers' books with midterms, finals, and unit tests, placement tests and exit tests, workbooks, student websites, teacher websites, CD-ROMS, and more. These materials are certainly not free for the publisher to create, though. So the cost gets passed on to the student book, the one piece it's figured that everyone will buy.

But as student book prices climb, students stop buying new books—they might share books, buy used books, or simply pirate copies. If teachers suspect their students aren't buying the text, they move to open source materials or create their own. The publishers make less money, and in a panic, they raise their prices, and at the same time, lower author royalties. In the time I've been authoring books, I've seen royalties move from 10-12% to 8% to 6% to 2.5% to 0%.

I can't speak for every author, but I can speak for myself and for those authors I network with. When a project no longer pays what we consider to be a fair amount for the work we put in, we don't write that book. There's almost always someone who will take on a project, but those projects that don't pay well attract less experienced authors. Since I've also been working for the past decade as an editor, I can see a decline in the quality of drafts that come to me. And sometimes there isn't time or money in the budget for editors to fix everything.

I worry too about the push to digital. One of the large publishers, in fact, announced a few years ago, that they were dropping print for ELT titles entirely. They've since back-pedaled on that, but there's still a concerted push to get teachers and students ensconced in a learning management system. I write, publish, and read ebooks; I'm certainly not anti-digital. But for teaching, I think a great number of students and teachers alike prefer print. They might like digital enhancements or ancillaries, but ones that support a core print product. Might that change in ten years? It might. It might not. But the first questions should be "*What's the easiest to teach from?" "What's the easiest to learn from?"* The pedagogy should drive the technology not the other way around.

But with digital products, as with other ancillaries, I'd like to see publishers charge users what they cost—at least to the point where authors can still be paid fairly. If keeping a 10% royalty for authors means a product costs so much that no teacher will buy it, then I'd say, don't make that product. The solution is not to make something affordable by underpaying the people responsible for creating it.

[JALT PRAXIS] MY SHARE


Steven Asquith & Nicole Gallagher

We welcome submissions for the My Share column. Submissions should be up to 600 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

Hello, and welcome to the July/August edition of My Share, the column devoted to introducing innovative and stimulating classroom ideas to TLT readers. In the previous issue, Steven kindly introduced me as the new co-editor. I am excited to be a part of My Share as reading the ideas of other educators always reminds me of the immense creative potential of teaching in the language classroom. It's a pleasure to be able to work with the many authors of this column alongside Steven.

In this edition, we bring you three ideas that can be adapted to a variety of different contexts and are sure to stir the imaginations of your students. First, Casey Bean offers a lesson on writing English haiku in the classroom to encourage individual expression. As many students are familiar with Japanese haiku, writing their own English haikus would be an interesting challenge. Second, Chris Nicklin imparts a novel idea of using edited movie trailers found on YouTube to examine movie genres with students. This fun illustration of genre could be used to inspire discussion, research projects, or many other class activities. Finally, in Mikiko Sudo's classroom task, learners scan English websites on their smartphones in order to research interesting facts about sports. By setting time limits, the activity offers opportunities for students to practice reading information quickly. Enjoy reading!

- Nicole Gallagher

English Haiku Competition

Casey Bean
Kanazawa Institute of Technology
caseyb@neptune.kanazawa-it.ac.jp

Quick Guide

- Keywords: *poetry writing, haiku*
- Learner English Level: *High beginner and above*
- Learner maturity: *Junior high school to adult*
- Preparation time: *10 minutes*
- Activity time: *1 hour*
- Materials: *Haiku introduction, syllable practice, and haiku template worksheets (see Appendices), B5 paper, paper voting ballots or candy (small chocolates or hard candies)*

Poetry writing is an activity that provides students the opportunity to use English in a way that traditional English classes may not allow. Furthermore, writing haiku in English casts a traditional Japanese craft in a whole new light for most Japanese students. In this activity, students will compete to create the best English haiku and illustration about their favorite season, although many other topics can also be substituted. It starts with an introduction of haiku history, themes, and structure, and a worksheet to practice counting syllables in English. Students use an easy-to-follow template to write their haiku, making this an enjoyable activity even for lower-level students. Finally, students read each other's poems and vote for the best one.

Preparation

Step 1: Prepare a haiku introduction and syllable practice worksheet for each pair/group, and a haiku template and sheet of B5 paper for each student (See Appendices A – C).

Step 2: Prepare ballots or candy to use for voting.

Procedure

Step 1: Put students in groups or pairs so they can help each other answer the questions. Give them 5 minutes to complete the haiku review worksheet (guessing the answer is OK). Check answers orally.

Step 2: Show students how to count English syllables by clapping each time they hear a vowel sound (the number of claps equals the number of syllables). Give the groups/pairs 10 minutes to complete the syllable practice worksheet. Check answers orally.

Step 3: Students will now work alone. Distribute and explain the haiku template. Emphasize that students must think of their own sentences for their haiku and not just copy the example sentences on the worksheet. The template is as follows:

- 1st Line: *Favorite season/time of day/weather*
- 2nd Line: *Activity you like doing in that season*
- 3rd Line: *Your feeling when you do that activity*

Example:

A hot summer night
Watching fireworks on the beach
They are beautiful

Step 4: Give students 15 minutes to write a draft of their haiku. Have students raise their hand when they are finished. Check their haiku for spelling/grammar mistakes. Modern haiku are often more free form, so teachers do not have to be too strict about following the 5-7-5 syllable pattern. While students are writing, the teacher can circulate through the class to answer vocabulary questions and look for spelling/grammar mistakes.

Step 5: After checking a student's haiku, give him/her a B5 paper to write the final draft. Set a time limit to prevent students from taking too much time.

Step 6: Students vote for the best haiku based on both the quality of the words as well as the illustration. Arrange the haiku at the front of the class or on desktops. Give each student a voting ballot or a piece of candy to place on their favorite haiku. The winner is the student who receives the most ballots/candy. Time permitting, students can read their haiku to their classmates.

Conclusion

Haiku writing is a good way to shake up the normal flow of your English class by challenging students to try a type of writing that they likely are not familiar with in English. Students embrace the opportunity to express themselves creatively, enjoy reading the work of their classmates, and are motivated by the element of competition.

Appendices

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

Using YouTube to Discuss Genre

Christopher Nicklin
Rikkyo University
c.nicklin@rikkyo.ac.jp

Quick Guide

- Keywords: *Speaking, genre, YouTube, movies*
- Learner English level: *Pre-intermediate and above*
- Learner maturity: *University and above*
- Preparation time: *5 minutes*
- Activity time: *60 to 90 minutes*
- Materials: *Computer with internet access, connected to a large screen or projector*

The following set of activities involving the use of edited movie trailers can be used to encourage discussion about conventions of different genres. In the first trailer, a horror movie has been edited to seem like a family drama. In the second trailer, a romantic comedy has been edited to seem like a horror movie.

Preparation

Step 1: Check the video links to make sure that they work and familiarize yourself with the material.

- Video 1: *The Shining Recut*, HD
- Video 2: *Sleepless in Seattle* (psychological horror redux)
- Video 3: *The Shining* (1980) - Trailer
- Video 4: *Sleepless in Seattle* - Trailer

Procedure

Step 1: Briefly introduce the word *genre* and give a simple example, such as *science fiction*, and provide a famous example, such as *Star Wars*. As a warm-up exercise, assign the class into pairs and give them two minutes to write down as many genres as they can think of.

Step 2: Elicit examples from pairs and write them on the board as a word cloud. Ask each student to provide an example of a movie that fits the genre to make the meaning of each example word clearer.

Step 3: Introduce *Video 1* by asking students to watch the clip and answer the following questions: *what is the name of the movie?, what is the genre of the movie?, and what makes you think that the movie is an example of that genre?* Show *Video 1* and then give the pairs as much time as they need to answer the three questions.

Step 4: Repeat Step 3 using *Video 2*.

Step 5: Ask each pair to report their answers to the rest of the class. Inevitably, most students will discuss why *The Shining* is a family drama, and why *Sleepless in Seattle* is a horror movie.

Step 6: Reveal to the class that they were all wrong! Tell them that *The Shining* is a horror movie, and *Sleepless in Seattle* is a romantic comedy. Show them *Videos 3* and *4* and talk about how different modes of communication, such as music, lighting, and framing, can affect meaning.

Step 7: Assign one of the genres listed on the board to each pair. Ask them to make a list of what they would expect to see and hear in a typical trailer for a movie of that genre.

Step 8: Have students use their smartphones to watch trailers and report their findings regarding their assigned genres' conventions to the class.

Conclusion

Discussing genre in English was something that most of the students I taught had never done before, and it provided them with ideas and vocabulary that they could use in other English classes. These exercises can be used to help students think about communication multimodally, and could also be followed up with activities involving the production of roleplays or videos using genre conventions.

References

Chapman, G. [TheLateGrahamChapman]. (2012, September 8). *The Shining Recut, HD* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://youtube.com/watch?v=6s40Q6ODSI8

Irvin, J. [Jacob Irvin]. (2012, October 27). *Sleepless in Seattle trailer (psychological horror redux)* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://youtube.com/watch?v=aFBrhTkR6Kk

MrAris67. (2012, April 18). *The Shining (1980) trailer* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://youtube.com/watch?v=1G7Ju035-8U

Sony Pictures Home Entertainment. (2014, June 28). *Sleepless in Seattle - Trailer* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://youtube.com/watch?v=-Lj2U-cmyek

Sports Trivia Game

Mikiko Sudo
Soka University
msudo@soka.ac.jp

Quick Guide

- Keywords: *reading quickly, skimming, scanning*
- Leaner English level: *Pre-intermediate and above*
- Leaner maturity: *High school and above*
- Preparation time: *10 minutes*
- Activity time: *50-60 minutes depending on class size*
- Materials: *Whiteboard, markers, pencils, blank cards, cards with sports names*

Reading quickly is one of the most useful skills for English learners' academic success. Although many practice materials are available, students occasionally get tired of ready-made passages and questions in these materials. It is therefore important to find novel ways to interest students, while also enhancing their speed reading skills. In the game I devised, students should quickly find interesting pieces of information with different degrees of helpfulness about a particular sport. These are then used as clues for the other players who try to guess the sport. By working as a team in a fun and competitive environment, students will actively read, scan, and communicate in class.

Preparation

Step 1: Make one copy of the worksheet (Appendix A) for each group.

Step 2: Make one blank card for each group.

Step 3: Make one card with one sport name for each group.

Procedure

Step 1: Divide the class into groups of four. Name them Group A, B, C, etc.

Step 2: Give each group the worksheet, a card with the name of one sport, and a blank card.

Step 3: Using their smart phones, tell students to scan online encyclopedias (e.g., Fact Monster; Simple Wikipedia; Wikipedia) for five interesting facts about sport. They can basically copy the information on the worksheet, but they should number the facts from 5 (the most challenging; 5% of the class probably know it; values 5 points) to 1 (the most helpful, 80 % of the class probably know it; values 1 point). Explain rules one and two on the worksheet. Students complete Step 3 in 10-15 minutes.

Step 4: Tell them they will later vote for the best group that presents interesting information in the most effective order. Each vote equals one point. In addition, groups also get points for correct answers. Once all the points are tallied, the group with the most points wins.

Step 4: Students complete Step 3 in 10-15 minutes.

Step 5: Draw a point chart on the board. Give 10 points as a starter.

Step 6: One student from Group A reads their sentences aloud.

Step 7: Ask players to raise their hands if they know the answers so that you can record their trivia points (5-1) on the board. Players write the name of the sport and their points on the blank card, put it face down, and refrain from touching it.

Step 8: When all trivia facts are read, each group shows their answer cards. If their answers are correct, they get the points corresponding to the trivia number. If their answers are incorrect, they lose the same amount of points.

Step 9: Repeat the same procedure for all groups.

Step 10: Ask students to write the name of the best group on the worksheets and collect them. Read the votes aloud and give each group their points.

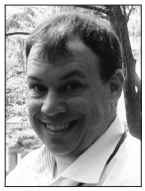
Step 11: Tally up the points and congratulate the winners.

Conclusion

In a limited amount of time, students should find trivia facts and discuss their level of usefulness and appropriateness as hints. Such tasks will enhance students' speed reading skills and cognitive skills. This game fills the classroom with laughter and excitement. It is easily adaptable to suit any topic with students of all levels.

Appendix

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



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

Having a Blast with a Computer-Mediated Information Gap Task: *Keep Talking & Nobody Explodes* in the EFL Classroom.

Robert Dormer
Evan Cacali
Manuel Senna
Kwansei Gakuin University

The potential of information-gap tasks to enhance the language learning experience is broadly acknowledged (Willis & Willis, 2007), and recently the added value of technology-mediated task-based approaches has been highlighted (Thomas & Reinders, 2010), as well as the role of synthetic immersive environments (Sykes, 2014). *Keep Talking & Nobody Explodes*—a commercially produced video game available for both Windows and Apple iOS—has proved extremely effective as a technology-mediated activity, providing both ample opportunity for strong, student-led, task completion (Skehan, 1996), with a clearly-defined outcome (Ellis, 2003): for students to avoid exploding!

How it Works

Keep Talking & Nobody Explodes is best played with two teams, who have to communicate effectively through sharing of the information necessary to defuse a bomb. One team takes charge of the bomb using either a PC or a tablet. The bomb is three-dimensional, and requires thorough inspection (see Figure 1). The bombs can consist of three to 12 independent modules, each requiring a unique solution. All of the solutions demand quick and accurate exchange of information with another team, who has sole access to the manual containing all the required defusing information (See Figure 2). The modules' communication requirements vary widely, including memorising number sequences, negotiating mazes, cutting wires in a correct order, and exchanging chains of code words. In the authors' classroom context, learners are majoring in science and technology subjects, so the activity provided useful practice in using technical vocabulary such as grid references in a time-pressured, accuracy-focused environment. The range of skills required across the different modules is quite broad, and few teams are successful at their first attempt. The authors' strategy was to let the students play the game once and then add in some scaffolding activities. This approach dealt with the students' wish to explore the bomb, and allows them to understand that they need to prepare if they are to beat the game.

Figure 1. The Bomb.

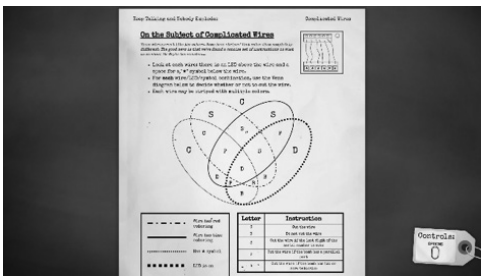


Figure 2. The Manual (example page).

Scaffolding Initial Levels

Although the game was not designed for EFL/ESL contexts, the manual does not contain particularly complicated vocabulary. Nonetheless, it contains a lot of information that students will need to familiarise themselves with. With this in mind, the authors used the manual for timed scan-reading exercises with some classes, which helped students build reading speed and confidence (Chang, 2010). Another strategy was to assign a single module excerpt per individual or group, where they would identify and translate difficult parts to digitally annotate on a PDF for the class to use as their manual. The first three default levels in the game are always exactly the same and use the simplest three modules. The authors devised worksheets and a video showing one of these levels being played to guide the students into the game. The video and worksheets, as well as other resources, are available at <https://goo.gl/QEzYhW>. Initially, the students were provided with a set of simple expressions that are useful for the game in general such as asking about remaining time, requesting repetition, and expressing confusion. Depending on the level of the students, translation was requested, or comprehension checked. Additionally, a Module Identifier Page was provided, which allows the bomb team to quickly communicate as to which kind of modules they have when the bomb first appears (see Figure 3).

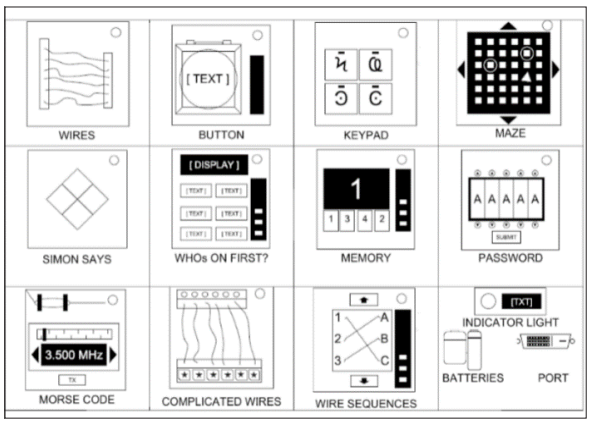


Figure 3. Module Identifier Page showing module types.

Next, to help learners acclimatise to the crucial process of translating the tables, diagnostics, and other information in the manual into efficient questions, a worksheet was designed around the Wires Module (see Figure 4). Since the game requires the bomb team to describe a wide range of visual elements, and especially as the aim is for students to create their own linguistic strategies for overcoming the task, a simple worksheet was used, which was based around describing the symbols used in the Keypad Module (see Figure 5).

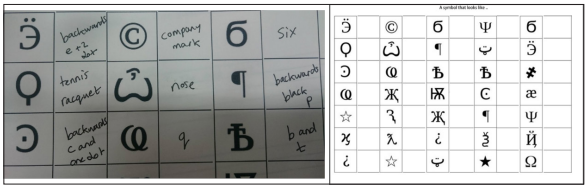


Figure 4. Wires Module Question Activity.

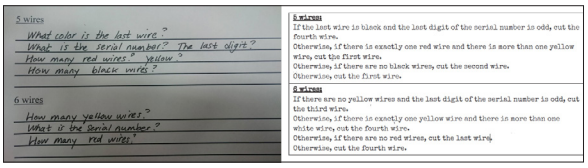


Figure 5. Keypad Module.

Later Levels

Beyond the first few levels, the difficulty increases quite sharply as the game progresses. An approach that worked for the authors was to challenge the groups to proceed as far as possible in the allotted time, with three rules: full sentences must be used, strict division of the bomb/manual members must be maintained, and only English can be used. However, the students were encouraged to have practice runs for difficult levels, where they could contravene any or all of these rules in order to figure out the language they needed. Using a large whiteboard positioned behind the team, the students constructed their own questions, systems, and approaches to solve the task. When they were ready, they could attempt to pass the level whilst adhering to the three rules. This self-scaffolding approach was an effective strategy for helping the students deal with the increasing difficulty of levels and reflects a strong, student-centred, task-based approach as recommended by Skehan (1996).

Student Reception and Feedback

Most of the classes in which the activity was used were surveyed anonymously. Of the 209 responses, all reported that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the activity was enjoyable, and all but a single respondent indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that it was useful for their general English development. However, responses were more mixed regarding the question, "Do you feel that this activity is relevant to your development

of English for your major?" In this instance, almost 15% of respondents (38) indicated that they disagreed or neither agreed nor disagreed. One possible explanation might be learners not linking the development of task-orientated, problem-solving language to their current and future scientific contexts. Accordingly, future implementations might benefit from directly addressing the target skills, and their potential transference, in the introductory sessions. Finally, among the 17 respondents who chose to submit optional comments, seven mentioned the difficulty of the game, and four suggested the worksheet preparation was uninteresting and/or unnecessary. As with all activities, teachers may want to consider student level when they choose which activities or worksheets to use.

Conclusion

This article has outlined the use of a commercial video game in freshman and sophomore Science majors' EFL classes. As has been shown, the game constitutes an effective, technology-mediated, information gap activity that can facilitate opportunities for student-led resolution. Although not designed for EFL/ESL contexts, the authors' experiences have shown that this activity can be a positive addition to communication classes through various scaffolding activities. *Keep Talking & Nobody Explodes* has a lot of other potential uses. The authors have used it in lieu of traditional, semi-structured communication class speaking tests, as a basis for writing instructional-process paragraphs in writing sessions, and as a fun break in-between other projects. While *Keep Talking* is certainly a useful resource as it is, teachers may also wish to design modules that meet their own learners' specific needs. Links to materials described in this article as well as some other worksheets, the game, manual, and sources for getting started with designing your own modules, are available at the links below.

Further Suggestions

There is already a vibrant modding community, where the code of the program is open to the public who are able to design their own modules. Many of the modules designed by the community are specifically for educational contexts, and there are even tutorials that completely explain the process of designing tailored modules.

Links

Game and Manual website: <http://keeptalkinggame.com/>

Modding Tools: <https://github.com/keeptalkinggame/ktanemodkit>

Steam Workshop: <http://steamcommunity.com/app/341800/workshop>

References

Chang, A. (2010). The effect of a timed reading activity on EFL learners: Speed, comprehension, and perceptions. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 22*(2), 284-303.

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford, UK: Oxford Applied Linguistics.

Skehan, P. (1996). A framework for the implementation of task-based instruction. *Applied Linguistics, 17*(1), 38-63.

Sykes, J. (2014). TBLT and synthetic immersive environments. In M. Gonzalez-Lloret & L. Ortega (Eds.), *Technology-mediated TBLT: Researching technology and tasks* (pp. 149-182). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Thomas, M. & Reinders, H. (2010). *Task-based language learning & teaching with technology*. London, UK: Continuum.

Willis, D. & Willis, J. (2007). *Doing task-based teaching*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Editor's Note: *The above article provides a new approach to incorporating a technology-based activity to gamify your classroom. No doubt there were many more exciting and innovative ideas discussed recently at the JALTCALL 2017 Conference in Matsuyama and the PanSIG 2017 Conference in Akita, as well as other similar events. If you have a technology-related activity or tool that you want to share with the readers, please submit your idea to the editor at the email address in the header above. Through collaborating and sharing, we can all keep our classes Wired!*

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.*

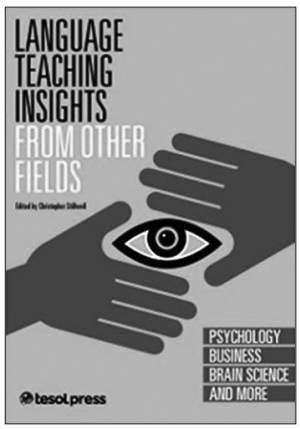
Email: reviews@jalt-publications.org • Web: http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/book-reviews

This month's column features Bruce Lander's review of Language Teaching Insights from Other Fields: Psychology, Business, Brain Science and More *and Arthur Lauritsen's evaluation of* 4000 Essential English Words 1-6.

Language Teaching Insights from Other Fields: Psychology, Business, Brain Science and More

[Christopher Stillwell. Washington, US: TESOL Press, 2015. pp. 177, ¥7,448. ISBN: 978-1942223481.]

Reviewed by Bruce Lander, Matsuyama University



Stillwell has gathered 15 current educators in the field of EFL and ESL who relate their past personal experiences in an array of professions to the modern-day language teacher. Several of these educators you may know well, with current Japan-based authors such as Marc Helgesen, Steven Quasha, Robert Murphy, and Luke Carson providing a chapter each. *Language Teaching Insights from Other Fields*: *Psychology, Business, Brain Science and More* is the second in the series, the first book had a similar title that focused on a different set of professions (Stillwell, 2013).

In a similar fashion to the first book in the series, this text offers an in-depth account of how those past experiences can help practitioners plan lessons, build on pedagogical practices and help teachers develop professionally. The author of each chapter provides several tips or suggestions that can relate to their profession now as a foreign language teacher. Each of these tips provide invaluable insight into how the skill sets of other occupations are interlinked to both the theory and practice of foreign language education. The book is divided up into four different parts: (a) Getting students invested in learning; (b) planning an effective course; (c) expanding the teacher's toolbox; and (d) enhancing teacher effectiveness.

In the first chapter of this book, Stillwell, the author and main editor of the series, makes the first analogy between teaching and what he learnt as a vacuum cleaner salesman. Metaphors to understand teaching through the experience of other occupations continue throughout the book, and in almost every chapter a new metaphor is introduced. This first one suggests that whatever a salesman sells, despite what you may feel about the product (i.e. your class goals and objectives), you must always trust what you sell and introduce it with confidence, pride and appeal. Following the metaphor of your teaching style as a product, Hendrickson suggests that as teachers we should identify our core message from an early stage and acknowledge how it can differentiate you from other teachers.

One of the most profound messages that emanates in the early chapters is the principle of active learning. Robert Murphy introduces his innovative concept of *NeuroELT* which describes how studies in neuroscience may help to shed light on understanding foreign language acquisition. Murphy also provides other pieces of valuable advice that can help to keep students active. He suggests that we can captivate our audience by interchanging class plans to stimulate thinking and activate learning styles that may not normally be used. What these things do, according to Murphy, is help free teachers and students from potential ruts, foster a more social atmosphere, and increase learning across the board (Wilson & Conyers, 2013). Every chapter in this book also provides a reference list of further readings.

This book provides many inspirational words of advice and suggestions. For example, a parallel is

drawn to marketing and teaching, and the harsh reality that students, as the customers, constantly compare teachers and classes as they would when shopping, and make internal judgements about which product they favour. Here the author declares that just like in the business marketplace, education is continually changing and evolving, and suggests that teachers improve their pedagogy by adopting new innovative ways to motivate students. Perhaps to maintain customer satisfaction teachers could include elements of surprise, intrigue, humour, and confidence building in every lesson (Smith, 2011). Throughout this book there are rational observations and remarks that make you think "that's so true." One such assertion was that our students will forget anything, from textbooks, bags, stationary and notebooks, but rarely if ever, will they forget their phones. As teachers, if we can harness this trait by establishing some form of language exchange through the mobile platform then we can subtly shift the consumer's conception of the tasks at hand from onerous and time-consuming to fun and engaging.

I think the premise behind *Language Teaching Insights from Other Fields*: *Psychology, Business, Brain Science and More* is very simple: There is a lot to learn from skills developed in other professions. This book is an excellent opportunity for current practicing teachers to contemplate their pedagogical approaches and provides countless examples of how you can improve and develop as a teacher. For this price, however, you would expect a volume twice or three times this size. Other than that, this is an excellent read. I would recommend this title for a teacher-training course, or for pedagogical studies at advanced undergraduate level or the early stages of a postgraduate course.

References

Smith, M. (2011). *The new relationship marketing: How to build a large, loyal, profitable network using the social web*. New Jersey, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

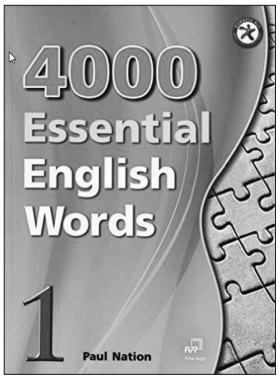
Stillwell, C. (2013). *Language teaching insights from other fields: Sports, arts, design, and more*. Washington, DC: TESOL Press.

Wilson, D. L. & Conyers, M. (2013). *Five big ideas for effective teaching: Connecting mind, brain, and education research to classroom practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

4000 Essential English Words 1-6

[Paul Nation. Japan: Compass Publishing, 2009. p. 195. ¥1,922. ISBN: 978-1-599-66402-6.]

Reviewed by Arthur Lauritsen, Momoyama University



4000 Essential English Words is a 6 volume series of textbooks that focus on vocabulary from the word frequency list. Each textbook has 30 units that fit easily into two 15-class university semesters. Units feature 20 words each, selected not exclusively from but closely following both the Academic Word List (AWL) and the General Word List. Starting with definitions and examples of the chosen 20 vocabulary words, this is followed by two pages of multiple choice style questions designed to have students recycle and reuse learned vocabulary. Each six-page unit finishes with a short story based upon the featured vocabulary. In addition, the book has online material, including downloadable audio recordings and online video clips for supplementary practice.

Perhaps while considering this book it is important to pause and talk about the importance of vocabulary and the role vocabulary places in the successful English language student. Research evaluating student ability to comprehend text found that only at 98% text coverage of unknown words "most learners [are able] to gain adequate comprehension" (Nation, 2006, p. 61).

Nation uses the idea of meaning-focused input to teach the 20 new vocabulary words presented at the beginning of each chapter. Meaning-focused input involves attention to new vocabulary, followed by a thoughtful process of repeated attention with examples that are all simple and readily understood, and occur in multiple settings (Nation, 2007, p. 6).-

Nation uses stories in the style of Graded Readers (GRs) to enable students to learn vocabulary in a story setting. Stories are such an integral part of language learning and "research shows that most people increase their vocabulary by reading"

(Laufer, Meara, & Nation, 2005, p. 4). Also the use of stories lends real world authenticity to the textbook.

Traditionally, textbooks that focus on vocabulary as part of their curricula, have tended to organize units according to themes (e.g., cars, sports, cooking, etc.), while Nation centers units on stories. *4000 Essential English Words* uses GR, while the more traditional textbook avoids any storytelling, and their instruction of vocabulary stays safely within the confines of traditional rote language learning.

In criticism of *4000 Essential English Words*, it might be worth noting that there is a certain *forced* aspect to the narrative. Some of the comprehension questions are awkward. Take this question on page 124, which asks students to choose the correct definition of *reflect*. The textbook offers 4 options, and two of the answers fit squarely into the definition of *reflect*.

a. to tell someone what to do
b. to think about something
c. to damage something very badly
d. to send back an image

Vocabulary in the GR stories is likewise clumsy at times. Consider this passage on page 60: "The little girl started to cry... Finally the emotion was gone." Instead of "finally the emotion was gone" a more natural expression could have been used to suggest that the girl collected herself and was ready to move on. The stories in this book are full of phrases that are just slightly off-kilter, which is understandable considering the nature of the writing process. Vocabulary is the destination while the story is just the vehicle.

Another possible criticism would be the quality of stories presented in the book. 'The Starfish' on page 60 is just a rehashing of the "can't save all the starfish but can save this one" starfish story. Other stories are based on tales from mythology (*the First Peacock*, p. 66) or loosely based on fairytales (*The Best Prince*, p. 48). Although adequate, the stories lack well-crafted storylines and use of phrasing that native English speakers have come to expect in their literature.

Another aspect of *4000 Essential English Words* that might be difficult for in-class use is the lack of speaking activities. However, in the case of a trial of 3 classes of 30 university-level students, the textbook provided well-designed homework material. Each chapter has a readily understandable layout that is simple enough for students to comprehend, engage with, and enjoy.

In summary, *4000 Essential English Words* is a textbook that focuses on vocabulary acquisition. In the market of vocabulary textbooks it is less formal than others and lacks the rigidity of traditional vocabulary textbooks. The lack of speaking exercises may prove to be a negative for some instructors, but the book proved ideal as homework to supplement an ESL class.

References

Laufer, B., Meara, P., & Nation, I. S. P. (2005). Ten best ideas for teaching vocabulary. *The Language Teacher, 29*(7), 3-6..

Nation, I.S.P. (2006). How large a vocabulary is needed for reading and listening? *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, *63*(1), 59-82.

Nation, I.S.P. (2007). The four strands. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 1*(1), 3-6.

Recently Received

Steve Fukuda & Julie Kimura

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 the column editors 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 July 31. Please make queries by email to the appropriate JALT Publications contact.

Books for Students (reviewed in *TLT*)

Contact: Julie Kimura — pub-review@jalt-publications.org

! Building TOEIC® Skills — Janzen, A. Seoul, Korea: Seed Learning, 2017. [3-level course focusing on vocabulary, grammar, reading, and listening skills incl. mini and practice tests, transcripts, and audio CD].

Classroom English — Sellick, A., Bury, J., & Yoshida, S. Tokyo: Shumei University Publishing, 2016. [Bilingual classroom English handbook for English teachers].

** English Listening and Speaking Patterns* — Bennett, A. E. Tokyo: Nan'un-do, 2017. [3-level systematic aural and oral fluency course incl. student's audio CD, teacher's manual w/ teacher's CD-ROM].

! Final Draft — Lambert, J (ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016. [3-level academic writing skills course incl. teacher's manual and online practice].

Gateway (2nd edition) — Spencer, D. UK: Macmillan Education, 2016. [7-level course incl. workbook, teacher's book, digital book, test generator, Macmillan Sounds app, and online practice].

Listening Express — Pilgrim, J. UK: Compass Publishing, 2017. [3-level listening course for intermediate and advanced learners in secondary school incl. vocabulary and sentence building mobile application].

** NTV News 24 English* — Tsuka, A., Kinshi, K., & MacDonald, K. Tokyo: Eihosha Publishing, 2017. [15-unit 4-skills course based on news articles and video clips incl. student book DVD and teacher's manual].

Power Reading — Nation, P., & Malarcher, C. UK: Compass Publishing, 2016. [3-level reading course using the 4-strands approach incl. student book CD, downloadable MP3, online practice, and word, unit, and review tests].

Reader's Forum — Knudsen, J. Tokyo: Nan'un-do Publishing, 2017. [4-level reading course incl. student audio CD, classroom CD, and teacher's manual].

Science for Fun — Hattori, K., Yamashita, J., Hasegawa, Y., & Perkins, R. Tokyo: Kinseido Publishing, 2017. [15-unit course using articles from American science magazines for children incl. audio CD, teacher's manual with passage translations, dictation sheets, and word tests].

! Serious Fun: Engaging Academic English — Jensen, J. C. Seoul, Korea: Global Stories Press, 2016. [12-unit course for the intermediate learner incl. teacher's manual w/ quizzes and extra activities].

** Speak It Up* — Veenstra, J, & Romanko, R. Tokyo: Sanshusha Publishing, 2017. [15-unit speaking course based on tasks incl. student audio CD, downloadable teacher's manual, and classroom audio MP3s].

Top-up Listening (2nd edition) — Cleary, C., Holden, B., & Cooney, T. Tokyo: Abax, 2014. [3-level listening course incl. student audio CD, teacher's notes, and online practice].

! Which Side are You on? Forming Views and Opinions — Flaherty, G. Tokyo: Seibido, 2017. [15-unit 4-skills debate course incl. teacher's manual and audio CD].

** Writing for Fluency and Accuracy* — Boon, A. Tokyo: Cengage Learning, 2017. [12-unit writing course w/ 2 review units based on 6 paragraph types incl. teacher's manual].

Books for Teachers (reviewed in *JALT Journal*)

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

Language Teaching and the Older Adult: The Significance of Experience — Gomez, D.R. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2016.

Second Language Research: Methodology and Design (2nd edition) — Mackey, A., & Gass, S. New York, NY: Routledge, 2016.

The Usage-Based Study of Language Learning and Multilingualism — Ortega, L., Tyler, A., Park, H.I., & Uno, M. (Eds.) Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016.

[JALT PRAXIS] TEACHING ASSISTANCE

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

For this issue's Teaching Assistance *I asked foreign language learners and graduate students to share their opinions about the roles of teaching assistants.*

Teaching Assistants

David McMurray

The International University of Kagoshima

The task of planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling classroom environments is best handled by an instructor in charge of a class. The tasks of language teachers (T) at universities can be supported by different kinds of teaching assistants. Retired teachers and business professionals are sometimes recruited on a part-time contract basis as Remedial Teachers (RT). Graduate students can be hired as Teaching Assistants (TA) to support the instructor-in-charge teach in the classroom, prepare lesson plans, and discuss ways to improve future classes. Student Assistants (SA) are usually university juniors or seniors hired to provide support to their younger peers. Learning Assistants (LA), who are often the same age as the students in the classroom, can be asked to volunteer to act as native language tutors and sit alongside foreign language learners.

A debating class is an example of a teaching situation in which these different team members can work to provide synergy. In my Business English course, 50 to 80 students learn to negotiate and debate during a 15-class semester. On my own, it would be difficult to efficiently select teams of four students, set up the tables, chairs, microphones, timers, and create a list of topics for debate, let

alone gather data, coach, judge, and teach necessary grammatical forms of speech to the students. But a TA could determine suitable topics and serve as M.C. and timekeeper. SAs could coach debate teams and an LA could sit on a team to assist students. An RT could assist students after class with research, and also help check grammar and vocabulary. Then, I could be free to judge the teams and keep an eye on the audience in the classroom (see figure one).

Figure 1. A regular classroom in which T, TA, SA, and LA work together to teach debating skills.

Currently the continuum of teaching faculty salaries slides down from the highest paid professor to associate, assistant, lecturer, researcher and on down to the lowest paid position of LA. The SA makes approximately one tenth the hourly salary of a professor. It is not inconceivable for students in a large class to have access to support from a paid T, RT, TA, SA and LA. With the creation of these lower paid helpers, teachers might be worried about their own worth to students. When I asked students what they thought I do in class as a class professor, they informed me that: "Professor taught me technical knowledge of language" and "Professors are experts in a particular field of study." Knowing that students do value my expertise, I felt I could keep on teaching business English and setting up debates and other task-based activities.

The Teacher (T)

The professor holds the traditional place of authority at the head of the class with the responsibility to create syllabi, select textbooks, assign exams and determine grades. The instructor in charge of the university class is better positioned than administrators to manage the tasks of the assistants to make the classroom team function efficiently. It is recommended that the selection of teaching assistants be made by the instructor in charge of the lesson with the final decision made by the administration. The teacher can manage their class by keeping an eye on attendance, ensuring SAs carry out a social function with peers, checking that the TA keeps focused on the lesson and the classroom equipment, as well as identifying students who are ahead and who are struggling and in need of an RT.

Figure 2. A debate setting in which the T plays the role of judge.

Learning Assistants (LA)

Students respond to students. Hiring Japanese-speaking university students to tutor international students of the same age can instill enthusiasm, energy, and sociability on the university campus. University students make great part-time employees in these capacities.

Figure 3. International students on a debating team.

Student Assistants (SA)

SAs help me as an instructor, but their primary goal is to help freshmen students feel comfortable studying at the university level. Students respond to older students, which is called the *sempai* effect. Hiring students who are one or two years older can make for more communication links between students of different ages. SAs can be hired from the ranks of

university juniors and sophomores. Two different SAs explained their attitudes towards their roles as an SA, saying, "I am an SA for first grade university students. I am happy to be an SA. SAs give advice to help students succeed and not drop out of school. I am paid for 120 minutes per class." Another SA said, "I am an SA for a PC class. I directly teach students to use basic computer software such as Power Point, Excel, and Word. I am paid for 90 minutes per class. I am also an SA for a physical education class. I support the teacher."

According to students in my class who are helped by SAs, one student said that, "SAs only help students with their lifestyle. SAs are close to my age." A second student informed me, "SAs are university students." I was also told, "SAs are friendly." A third student claimed, "SAs help students to learn school rules."

As well as aiming at helping a lesson to be more productive for freshmen students, the SAs can develop communication and coaching skills. In addition to receiving guidance from the instructor in charge, regular training seminars can help develop their abilities to be assistants. After learning the basic rules of education assistance and discussing the basics of communication skills students can deepen their understanding about the role and responsibilities of the SA. Holding SA workshops six times each semester with a concluding conference can round out opportunities for professional development. In a study by Koch and Takashima (2016) it was found that SAs also need in-the-classroom training. Some crucial moments in a lesson required more than the presence of one teacher and an SA. For example in their class some students were unable to cope, and the teacher and SAs' instinctive responses were to come to their aid—unbeknown to them, they were generating even more stimuli. The Occupational Therapist, who was acting as an assistant, noticed this and went on to instruct the SAs rather than the students or the teacher.

Figure 4. SAs assist teams to debate in English.

Teaching Assistants (TA)

Teachers' aides and TAs include non-professional personnel or graduate students who support teachers in providing instruction to students. The role of the TA is usually decided by the professor, the teacher (T) in charge of the class. Teaching aides refers to professional personnel directly involved in teaching students. The T usually selects who will fill the position, and this is often a seminar student or researcher who majors in the topic to be instructed. To be successful, the T and TA need to create a productive teaching partnership.

During interviews with students who worked as TAs, it was reported that they sometimes experienced classroom management problems and wished they had more time to discuss the lesson plan with the professor in charge of the class. TAs noted that, "it takes time for some students to realize that their English is in fact good enough to be understood and to believe in themselves from the bottom of their hearts." Kawamura (2016) stated that, "typically TAs set up the electronic equipment and move desks, chairs and whiteboards for a particular language teaching activity," (p.32) but they also, "summarize and create supporting teaching materials to help the students to understand the lesson at hand." Realizing that TAs should not deviate from the way the class is conducted by the teacher, a TA explained that sometimes, "it seems important to me to speak in Japanese to build the confidence of some students."

Figure 5. TA (center of photo) guiding two teams to debate in English.

The students I spoke to told me, "TAs are graduate students. TAs know many things about the course." They also told me, "TAs find study materials for students." "TAs support teachers and students." TAs prepare equipment for the classroom." While TAs are vital sources of support for teachers,

knowing how to manage them can be tricky. According to Kawamura (2016), TAs can have beneficial but also negative effects on student motivation in college-level courses.

Pedagogical concerns of large classes can be met by establishing student-centered approaches. With the help of a TA who can guide learning activities, the T can provide opportunities for pair work and group work. Therefore, having a TA in the class can promote learner autonomy.

Extracurricular Language Instructors (RT)

The building of confidence and trust is important to elicit communication between students in a remedial education program. Students receive remedial instruction from instructors or graduate students, who are not mainstream teachers. The lessons are given as a kind of scaffold or sheltered learning environment.

An extracurricular language instructor (RT) let me know that some students perk up when asked to talk about traveling abroad. I used this advice to encourage them to speak up when they attended my regular classes. I also heard that some students seemed reluctant to even move a pencil. But when these students were seated beside friends they did speak to one another in the target language.

The ultimate goal of extracurricular teaching is to keep students attending classes in a regular class environment rather than have them drop out. If university students find that they have not been sufficiently prepared during their high school years to succeed in gateway courses, RTs can help them outside the mainstream curriculum. Remedial education can help students who are underprepared for college-level classes, but nonetheless neither want to drop classes nor drop out of the university. Retention rates are highly improved by the efforts of retired teachers, part-time teachers, and graduate students.

The RT lowers the standards set for normal classes to help students learn at a slow, comfortable pace. Iwazume (2016) claimed that as an RT, "I am not pushing students to study faster and faster, I am trying to pull them along gently in tandem with their mainstream professors" (p. 29). No final examination is given in her remedial class, nor are students asked to take TOEIC or other measures that assess student skills. At the university where she studies English Education at the graduate level, a remedial education program was constructed for freshmen students as a single semester pathway into Mathematics, English, and Japanese language courses. These three subjects were identified by career development administrators as essential skills required in most careers in Japan. Iwazume (2016) found that the low-achieving students in her class tended to confide their concerns to her first rather than to classmates or teachers in the faster moving "gateway courses" of the regular curriculum.

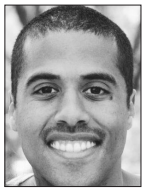
In conclusion, a teacher with large classes could inform the department head or university administration that hiring SAs and TAs can help to improve the quality of classes. Organizing an effective team of teaching assistants seems to be a good first step toward helping underperforming students. A second step could be bringing in RTs who can provide remedial education to students identified as likely to drop out because of difficulties keeping up with peers in larger classes. Offering extra assistance in English can also prove popular with parents who ask for support in guiding their offspring towards a more promising career. The tasks of planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling classroom environments can be overwhelming, but with careful implementation of a team of assistants classroom management can be achieved. Managing the tasks of the classroom assistants to make the team efficient can achieve productivity goals desired by university administrators. More importantly, it appears to improve student engagement and learning.

References

Iwazume, N. (2016). Teaching assistance: Extracurricular English instructors on campus. *The Language Teacher, 40*(5), 28–29.

Kawamura, Y. (2016). Teaching assistance from TAs. *The Language Teacher, 40*(6), 31–33.

Koch, J. & Takashima, R. (2016). The power of an educator: Occupational therapist team. *The Language Teacher, 40*(3), 26–32.

Vikki Williams and Charles Moore

Writers' Workshop is written on a collaborative basis with the members of the Peer Support Group (PSG). In each column, topics are shared that provide advice and support for novice writers, experienced writers, or nearly anyone who is looking to write for academic purposes. If you would like to inquire about submitting a paper for review, or are interested in joining the PSG team, please contact us using the following information.

Email: peergroup@jalt-publications.org • Web: http://jalt-publications.org/psg

Advice For Novice Academic Writers

Charles Moore

Saito Keiai Kindergarten

In this month's column, several points of advice are presented for writers preparing an article for peer-reviewed journal submission. These suggestions are aimed towards writers that do not have much experience in writing for publication, and are points that should be kept in mind when putting one's hard-worked research into writing.

Organize Your Research in a Relevant Order

This seems like common sense, but novice writers can tend to organize their research in an order that is not necessarily logical to the reader. Do not feel that you have to be constrained by organizing all of your writing in chronological order, as this is not always the case (Kamat, n.d.) in academic articles. What is more important is ensuring that your argument fits together in a logical way that can be easily understood, and all of the research steps that are necessary for comprehension by the reader are included. A biologist at the University of Copenhagen once wrote a tongue-in-cheek article giving 10 points on how writers of scientific articles can bore their readers. His sixth point was, "Omit necessary steps of reasoning. Communication with ordinary people is just far too time-consuming" (Sand-Jensen, as cited in Wang, 2007, para. 8). This is written in a satirical sense, but the principle is very applicable to academic writing. Academic writers are writing for those outside their field, as well as for professional peers that share common research interests. In other words, be sure to write in a way that someone who has no prior knowledge of your field can read your article for the first time and understand your argument. This should be the level of clarity and organization for which you are aiming.

Receive Multiple Sessions of Feedback from Peers

The importance of constructive peer-feedback for one's writing cannot be overstated. This is something that is needed not only near the end of completion of one's paper, but also throughout the entire writing process. Having your paper reviewed by a colleague only once will not allow for adequate feedback on the multiple issues that need to be addressed during your writing. Even for experienced reviewers on the Writer's Peer Support Group (PSG) team, giving wide-ranging feedback covering various topics is difficult to do through only one review. Consider these statements by Beaufait, Edwards, and Muller (2014) regarding a paper's peer-review process, "In the beginning stages of the process, grammar and style will not be checked. However, writers are encouraged to submit subsequent versions to the PSG, so as papers progress, more sentence-level issues can be addressed" (p. 339). Articles need to have multiple reviews so that various issues can be addressed.

Receiving multiple peer-reviews can especially benefit those who are writing in their second language, because sentence-level issues (e.g., grammar errors, spelling issues) can be frequent due to writing outside of one's own native language. When the paper is submitted for outside peer-review, correcting these sentence-level issues can often take up most of the reviewer's time and effort, and this takes time away from other issues to be addressed, such as feedback on the quality of the research method and design in the paper. A more effective strategy would be for the writer to have a friend or close colleague correct their sentence-level issues before sending the paper out for peer-review, so that the peer-reviewer can adequately evaluate the content of the paper, and give helpful feedback to the writer.

Write a Straightforward "Methods" Section

The purpose of your methods section is to simply inform the reader of the methods you used for gathering research. The writing should be clear, concise, and linear where possible. Also, although

it is stylistically and subjectively at the discretion of the writer, it may help your argument sound more objective if the passive voice is used when describing the methods used (Fisher, Jansen, Johnson, & Mikos, n.d.).

Organization, as always, is also very important when describing your research methods. An easy mistake for inexperienced writers to make is to not clearly segment the "Methods" section. The three primary sub-sections are (a) "The subjects or participants", (b) "The methods used to gather information", and (c) "How the methods were implemented" (McMillan, 2008, pp. 20-21). Under these three headings you should be able to fit everything related to the research methods that you used, and it will streamline your data so that the reader can easily grasp the content. Try to stay away from making your methods section sound too professional or over-educated; instead focus on making it clear and easily understood.

Presentation matters

"It should be noted that manuscripts that are successfully submitted to a journal for publication have three main components: (1) overall idea, (2) execution of the work, and (3) presentation of the work." (Fisher et al., n.d., para. 2). Having a relevant research idea and well thought out research methods are paramount to creating an article that a journal will accept for publication, but the presentation of your work is also important. If your paper has a quality research idea and execution of research, but the writing quality and organization have problems, it could lead to your manuscript being ultimately rejected.

A disorganized or inadequate structure can also work against you when submitting your work for publication. If you are having trouble organizing your research into a logical and cohesive structure, it is probably best to search for a basic model to adhere to as you write. An example would be Columbia University's (n.d.) guide, "Writing a Scientific Research Article". Another would be *The Writers' Workshop* prior article, "Making a Working Outline: The Basic Organization of a Paper" (Ockert, 2015). Using a structured reference as a guide when putting together your writing can drastically cut down the time it takes to organize and put your research into writing.

Conclusion

In this short article a few tips were given for helping writers prepare their manuscripts for journal submission. It is perhaps prudent to think of academic journal writing as an art in itself, and to remember that there are a lot of different aspects that go into the creation of an article to make it worthy of publication, not only the quality of the research itself. With a bit of patience and fortitude, and a commitment to continually crafting the skill of academic writing, aspiring writers have great opportunities to lead successful careers in publishing their work.

If you would like to have your writing reviewed and receive constructive feedback, please check the information listed on the Writer's Peer Support Group's page <http://jalt-publications.org/psg>. The key to academic writing, just as many things in life and profession, is diligence and effort. Best of luck for the journey!

References

Beaufait, P., Edwards, L., & Muller, T. (2014). Writing for academic publication: Participation and collaboration. In R. Chartrand, G. Brooks, M. Porter, & M. Grogan (Eds.), *The 2013 PanSIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 339-346). Nagoya, Japan: JALT. Retrieved from <http://pansig.org/publications/2013/pansig2013proceedings.pdf>

Columbia University (n.d.). *Writing a scientific research article: Format for the paper*. Retrieved from <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/biology/ug/research/paper.html>

Fisher, J. P., Jansen, J. A., Johnson, P.C., & Mikos, A.G. (n.d.). *Guidelines for writing a research paper for publication* [PDF document]. Mary Ann Liebert, Inc. publishers. Retrieved from <https://www.liebertpub.com/media/pdf/English-Research-Article-Writing-Guide.pdf>

Kamat, P. (n.d). *How to write an effective research paper* [PDF document]. University of Notre Dame. Retrieved from <http://www3.nd.edu/~pkamat/pdf/researchpaper.pdf>

McMillan, J.H. (2008). *Educational Research: Fundamentals for the consumer*. Boston, M.A.: Pearson

Ockert, D. (2015). Making a working outline: The basic organization of a paper. *The Language Teacher, 39(4),* 36-40.

Wang, L. (2007, September 10). *Top 10 tips for sleep-inducing scientific writing*. Newscripts. Retrieved from <http://cen.acs.org/articles/85/i37/Newscripts.html>

Charles Moore is an International English Instructor at Saito Keiai Kindergarten in Osaka. He holds a Master's degree in TESL from Concordia University. His research interests include extensive reading, extensive listening, and vocabulary acquisition strategies.

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

Dealing With Negativity at Work

Dear TLT,

Recently I've been feeling a bit down about teaching English in Japan. My job is okay overall, and there are no big problems. However, there are a few colleagues that really get on my nerves. They keep whining and complaining about their job and life in general in this country. We get on okay, so there is no big problem there, but their constant negativity is a real drag. I could use some cheering up, so I'd love to know: What do you love about teaching English in Japan?

– Sad in Shizuoka

Dear Sad,

Thanks so much for writing in. Sorry to hear you're feeling down at your job these days. Yes, colleagues acting out in negative ways is really hard to deal with. Even though it may not be a big problem, it's still quite a drag on your morale. Your question about what we love about teaching English in Japan signals that you're on to one of the key methods for dealing with office negativity—focus on positive things and remind yourself of what is right and good about your situation. As big fans of teaching English in this country, we'll have more to say on this in a moment. However, we'd like to start by commenting a bit on the underlying issue your letter brings up—how to deal effectively with negativity in the workplace.

First, there is a lot of good information out there on the web on this topic. Try googling *how to deal with office politics* and you'll come across a lot of well-written advice. In our view, when encountering gossip or other negativity from your colleagues, it's best to be firm, compassionate, and patient. When it starts to fly, be firm and resolute in your non-participation. Be aware of what you say and how you say it and try your best to not feed into the gossip, spread any rumors, or make harsh judgements. A great way to do that is to pretend there are no secrets, that anything and everything said in the workplace is a matter of public record, well-known to all. In other words, remain above board at all times. If you imagine the person folks are whining about is actually there with you, how would this change the way you interact? If you would not say something to someone's face, do not under any circumstances say it when they are not physically present.

While this *just-say-no-to-gossip* policy is fine in theory, things get really hard when you know your colleagues well and generally get along with them, as you point out in your letter. We've had great friends at work who just can't stop themselves from whining about this or that, and it's really hard to know what to do in those moments. Here is where compassion plays an important role. It may help to remember that when people talk badly about something or someone else, they are really just trying to vent bad personal feelings. Or perhaps they have some other life stresses, such as family problems, financial worries, or health issues. There are lots of reasons why people engage in negative behaviors such as gossip or rumor mongering—we just have to look at ourselves to know this is true. So, be compassionate with yourself when you do this, and don't hold the negativity your colleagues traffic in against them. If possible, try to listen carefully to what they say and gently redirect the conversation back to them. For example, if they are complaining about the department head's latest decision or are whining about how lazy and uninterested the students are, see if you can get them talking about themselves instead. Yes, it's hard to know what to say when, and you won't always get it right, but if you really listen hard with compassion, somehow you'll find the right words when you need them.

Next, you really need to be patient with folks. Life is stressful, and we all have issues we're dealing with. Many of us are living in a foreign country away from family and friends. Some people feel isolated and sad when removed from things that are happening back home. News, whether good or bad, can be a source of stress when people learn about developments they are missing. In addition, there will always be something at work we don't like,

some student who underperforms, or some other problem that pushes our buttons. Patience is about staying present and consistent with your non-participation and compassion. In other words, it's not like one good conversation with someone is going to change the world—you need to keep at it. Over time, the more you're able to rise above interpersonal conflicts, remain positive, and avoid getting sucked into arguments, the higher your integrity will grow. Strive to remain professional at all times and keep the students' well-being constantly at the forefront of all your interactions. The more you do that, the better things will get.

Now, on to your main question: What do we love about teaching English in Japan? Well, again, that's an excellent question! Where do we begin? Apart from some of our dear colleagues, from whom we've learned and shared a lot, we really enjoy the freedom we have over our classes. We can teach in ways we enjoy, use whatever textbooks we want, and assess performance in ways we believe in. Not all workplaces allow this sort of freedom, so we definitely count our blessings here. We also have some really great students. These beautiful young people are a joy to be around and teach. We feel grateful to be a part of their lives in a small way and feel honored and humbled with the opportunity to teach them some useful skills. We have seen a lot of students struggling with English due to the harsh grammar-translation/entrance exam system here, and while this is undoubtedly hard, there is an upside. This situation means that at least some students, when suddenly finding themselves in a communicative classroom with an emphasis on having fun as well as studying, are so amazed that they think you're the best teacher ever—and what teacher would ever want those feelings to change? There's nothing more rewarding than students who tell you at the end of the year how they used to dislike English but now they like it because of your classes. There's also a healthy level of student respect for teachers in Japanese society. We have rarely had seriously disruptive students in Japan, and we have never felt in danger for our safety. We know that if a class was a bit difficult, it was our fault as much or more than our students'. All in all, we know we are very lucky to always go to work happy and come home happy, even when we're tired or generally feeling grumpy. We feel very fortunate that we get paid to do something that's so much fun. Although many people are on fixed-term contracts (including many of us), compared to teaching EFL in many countries, we enjoy reasonable stability and are well-paid, so the lifestyle in Japan is really relatively stress-free, all things considered.

So, Sad, we could go on, but we'll wrap it up here. It is our firm belief that no matter how hard things can be at work, there is always something good to focus our attention on. However, it does take practice to tune our minds to picking up on positive things. It's a skill we all need to cultivate. Think of it as your personal gardening project, and try to take a few moments during each day to appreciate something, no matter how small. In the end, the keys to a successful work experience boil down to two simple bits of advice: follow the *Golden Rule* (treat others the way you want to be treated) and stop once in a while to smell the roses (develop an attitude of gratitude). That's basically it!

Those are a few ideas from us, but what about you? If you're on Facebook, please check out the JALT Publications page and let us know what you are grateful for about teaching English in Japan, or give us your tips for staying positive amidst negativity in the workplace. We all have a lot to learn, so we'd love to hear from you!

[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

Teachers Helping Teachers

The Teachers Helping Teachers Special Interest Group (THT SIG) has been active since 2004 and was officially formed in 2008. It grew out of the efforts of the late Bill Balsamo, who at the time was president of Himeji JALT. Bill never visited a country he didn't like. And for Bill, this meant thinking about "how can we collaborate together to help teachers?"

The first THT event was in Bangladesh in 2005 and since then THT trips have been made to Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

A Typical THT Trip

A typical THT trip involves Japan-based teachers volunteering their time to go to a selected country and making two or three presentations usually on teaching techniques that are appropriate for the audiences. These range from elementary teachers to university teachers, with various levels of training and expertise. The one thing they all have in common is a desire to learn more about teaching. Traditionally, our teacher-training conferences, seminars, and workshops exhibit practical, student and teacher-friendly approaches to language education that are informed by current research in the field. Occasionally there are opportunities for volunteer teachers to observe classes and even teach a class or two. Volunteers normally pay for their travel and lodging while visiting the countries. Some teachers have also brought their family and their Japan-based students, who have also participated in the programs. The Vietnam and Kyrgyzstan programs have also had Japanese language teachers participating along with English teachers.

Current THT Countries (listed alphabetically) with their country coordinators:

- Bangladesh - Patrick Dougherty, Steve Cornwell
- Kyrgyzstan - Brent Jones, Roger Palmer
- Laos - Chris Ruddenklau
- Myanmar - Kevin Ryan
- Nepal - Randall Bollig, Catriona Takeuchi-Chalmers
- Vietnam - Michael Furmanovsky, Joe Tomei, Carlos Budding

Bangladesh

The Teachers Helping Teachers/Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association (THT/BELTA) 11th Annual Conference on Language Education will be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from September 21 to 22, 2017.

Kyrgyzstan

THT Kyrgyzstan 2017 Conference, Seminar & Workshop is scheduled for September 7 to 16. Four separate events will be held in the capital Bishkek and the cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad. The theme this year is "Paths Toward Successful Language Learning."

Laos

THT Laos programs are normally held in February and March. THT Laos offers support for teachers, trainee teachers, and students in elementary schools, high schools, teachers training colleges, colleges and at the National University of Laos. In the past THT participants have also been able to participate in Laos TESOL.

Myanmar

The Myanmar program holds multiple workshops over the course of six weeks (tentatively scheduled for August 5 to September 12, 2017). The workshops last four days and cover the basics of Communicative Language Teaching theory and practice. If time allows, there is an additional day to visit classes for observations or to do a demonstration lesson.

Nepal

The first official THT Nepal program was held February 24 to March 5, 2017, starting with the Nepal English Language Teachers Association (NELTA) Conference and continuing with a full slate of workshops for Nepali high school and university teachers.

Vietnam

The 12th annual THT in Vietnam was held March 22 to 24, 2017, at Hue University College of Foreign Languages. With school in session we were able to expand our activities and do some guest-teaching of undergraduate classes followed by our usual seminars and co-presentations with graduate students.

The THT Journal

THT also publishes a journal, the *Teachers Helping Teachers Journal*, an anonymously peer-reviewed journal comprising research articles, reports, and lesson plans. Submissions of a practical nature (including lesson plans and activity ideas) are particularly welcomed. While it is not a requirement that the submissions be directly related to a presentation at a THT event, please note that the readership of the Journal is both THT members and the populations we serve in our THT locations, so submissions that address the needs and interests of that broader population are especially welcomed. If you are interested in submitting or volunteering, contact the journal editor, Pat Dougherty at pdougherty@aiu.ac.jp

For more information about THT and its programs email us at thtjalt@gmail.com

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
  -語学の学習と教育の向上を図ることを目的としています
- Almost 3,000 members in Japan and overseas
  - 国内外で約 3,000名の会員がいます

http://jalt.org

Annual International Conference

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

http://jalt.org/conference

JALT Publications

- *The Language Teacher*—our bimonthly publication
  - 隔月発行します
- *JALT Journal*—biannual research journal
  - 年2回発行します
- JALT Postconference Publication
  - 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

http://jalt-publications.org

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、試験と評価、教材開発 等。

http://jalt.org/main/groups

JALT Partners

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

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

Membership Categories

All members receive annual subscriptions to *The Language Teacher* and *JALT Journal*, and member discounts for meetings and conferences. *The Language Teacher*や*JALT Journal* 等の出版物が1年間送付されます。また例会や大会に割引価格で参加できます。

- Regular 一般会員: ¥13,000
- Student rate (FULL-TIME students of undergraduate/graduate universities and colleges in Japan) 学生会員(国内の全日制の大学または大学院の学生): ¥7,000
- Joint—for two persons sharing a mailing address, one set of publications ジョイント会員 (同じ住所で登録する個人2名を対象とし、JALT出版物は2名に1部): ¥21,000
- Senior rate (people aged 65 and over) シニア会員(65歳以上の方): ¥7,000
- Group (5 or more) ¥8,500/person—one set of publications for each five members グループ会員(5名以上を対象とし、JALT出版物は5名ごとに1部): 1名 ¥8,500

http://jalt.org/main/membership

Information

For more information please consult our website <http://jalt.org>, ask an officer at any JALT event, or contact JALT's main office.

JALT Central Office

Urban Edge Building, 5th Floor, 1-37-9 Taito, Taito-ku, Tokyo 110-0016 JAPAN

JALT事務局：〒110-0016東京都台東区台東1-37-9
アーバンエッジビル5F

t: 03-3837-1630; f: 03-3837-1631; jco@jalt.org

Joining JALT

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.

The Language Teacher welcomes submissions of materials concerned with all aspects of language education, particularly with relevance to Japan

Currently, we are seeking material for:

- Feature Articles
- Readers' Forum

. . . and the following columns:

- TLT Interviews
- My Share
- Young Learners
- TLT Wired
- Book Reviews
- Teaching Assistance
- The Writers' Workshop
- Dear TLT

For more information on submitting, please visit our website:

http://jalt-publications.org/tlt

To submit material, go to:

http://jalt-publications.org/content