



Introducing accents

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アクセントの強い言葉話す教師は、しばしば、学生を教える初期段階において、学生を自分の強いアクセントに慣れさせようとしている自分に気づく。本論は、こんな時間を最小限にするために、受容的（リスニング／リーディング）であり、産出的（スピーキング／ライティング）な方法を紹介する。この方法は、世界英語としてのアクセントに対する生徒の好奇心をかきたて、学生の苦手意識を取り払う事ができる。最終的には、学生に、今までと違った方法で話される英語に触れているという自信をつけることができる。

EFL STUDENTS in Japan are highly likely to have been exposed to Standard American English (SAE) during the course of their studies. Consequently, teachers with other accents are often forced to spend the beginning of academic terms familiarizing their students with the way they speak English. The authors of this article have witnessed this phenomenon repeatedly throughout their teaching careers given their non SAE linguistic backgrounds (Brisbane, Australia and Dublin, Ireland). However, it is possible to avoid this debilitating situation by following a series of receptive and productive exercises which can be used to raise awareness of accents and increase learners' confidence in approaching English spoken in unfamiliar accents. The procedure of the activities are as follows:

1. Introduce the concept of accent

2. Use examples of accents from the Japanese language
3. Showcase accents from around the English speaking world
4. Complete receptive listening tasks
5. Practice controlled accent production
6. End with a freer accent production exercise

The difference between dialects and accents is initially outlined using recordings of Japanese language dialects. It is impressed upon students that the ensuing material is not concerned with dialects, nor is the new teacher using a different dialect. The topic of accents is then introduced through sound recordings of Japanese language speakers. The next stage is the introduction of six select English accents (Australian, British, Canadian, Irish, Japanese, and American). Once students understand what an accent is, they are ready to undertake receptive and productive exercises.

The first activity introduces the concept of phonemes, minimal pairs, and how to use the numbered and lettered *tree* (see Figure 1). This forms the basis for the receptive part of the lesson using recordings of speakers from the USA, Australia, and Ireland. After learning about some principal characteristics of the featured accents, students attempt to differentiate accents by listening to four spoken sentences by two speakers. Controlled accent production comes next. This is essentially a variation of a mass *gap fill* exercise. In this activity, learners practice accents using given examples. Students then produce their own *phoneme tree* exercise for their partners, attempting to guide their partners to a desired letter by producing minimal pairs in a chosen accent. Accents and vocabulary can be chosen from previous receptive activities and controlled practice.

The authors have used this accent introduction approach to great effect in their classes. The

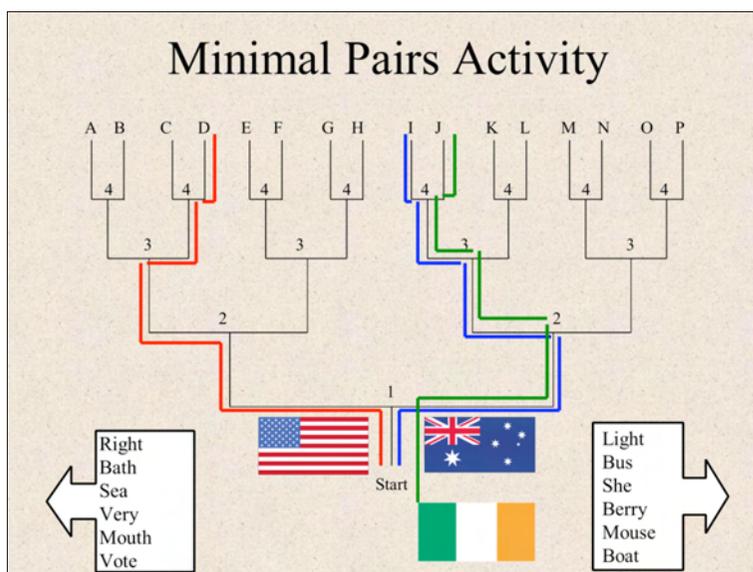


Figure 1. Minimal pairs activity with answers

receptive activities are not difficult and consequently help reduce anxiety. The controlled accent production promotes learner thinking about accents and pronunciation. During classes and the JALT2007 presentation, participants had fun throughout these activities, indicating the ultimate goal of lowering anxiety toward accents had been achieved. The easiest measure of success is seen in the dramatic decrease in time taken for learners to relax around their new non SAE-speaking teacher. An unexpected side effect

of higher learner awareness of world English accents has been the number of students who have approached their instructors out of class time and talked about the different accents they have encountered. This is especially pleasing, as these learners have spoken about how phonemes are pronounced differently in the *new* accent – further evidence that non SAE is an interesting topic. The authors feel this approach could be used as a template to create supplemental materials for introducing different accents.



Et tu, robots?: The first step toward an interdisciplinary approach

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人類の生活における科学技術面は加速的に進歩しており、未来は、我々が考えるより遙かに進んだものになるかもしれない。本論は、科学と未来社会、特にロボットやAI（人工知能）のテーマを大学の授業に取り入れた試みについての報告である。こうした授業は、学生のモチベーション・英語のスキル・クリティカル・クリエイティブな思考力を伸ばし、グローバルな問題としての技術革新における倫理的側面への認識を高めることに効果があった。また、理系の教師達との対話から、理系科目と英語の橋渡しをすることを目的として、将来的にカリキュラム共同開発の可能性を持つ共通基盤を見出すことができた。

beyond our imagination. Since computer power is growing exponentially, human-like robots will be possible in about five decades (Moravec, 2000).

Procedure

The project lasted eight weeks and was composed of the following lessons:

- An ABC News video on robot science
- A creative poster presentation about an ideal robot
- An ABC news clip on an artificial intelligence named *George*
- Viewing and discussing the science fiction film *I, Robot*
- A Financial Times article on the rights of robots

Finally, an essay on the following question was given: If scientists develop self-conscious robots that are fully integrated in society, do you think robots should have the same civil rights as humans, or should we ensure human control over robots through the legal system?

Outcomes

Results of an evaluative questionnaire showed that creativity flourished during the poster project as many interesting robots were proposed. Second, from an interdisciplinary point of view, students enjoyed studying English in this

WITH THE technological sphere of life changing at accelerating speed, the future could be far more surprising than most of us think. Teaching and learning about the future should play an essential role for constructing a better one (Tough, 1998), though there is little sign that the true importance of studying the future is recognized in school systems (Gidley & Hampson, 2005). This paper summarizes a report on a classroom project integrating the topics of science and future society, robots, and Artificial Intelligences (AIs) in science-oriented university English classes.

Background

According to Moravec (1999), human beings have two channels of heredity: biological and cultural. Cultural information is passed down through generations from mind to mind. Moravec argues that AIs, which grow and learn from us, will become the *children of our minds*, and that we, the parents, will gradually retire as our children grow

manner because they were majoring in science. Students also noted their motivation to study was enhanced because the topic was interesting and thought provoking. Finally, through writing their argumentative essays, students had ample opportunities to look at both positive and negative aspects of technological development. Their critical thinking was sharpened and ethical awareness raised.

Common ground

Through talking with science professors, I found some common ground upon which future synergistic learning and teaching opportunities could be developed. First, the collaborative robot poster project could be referred to as a virtual real-life situation, where engineers from various fields collaboratively create new robots. In addition, science and English teachers will share a common goal of helping students become effective communicators by presenting their innovative ideas and achievements to the world in English. Finally, science and language teachers could share a common goal of raising awareness in ethical aspects of scientific development.

Conclusion

Lessons on the theme of robots and AIs were effective in enhancing motivation, English skills, critical creative thinking, and raising awareness of ethical issues regarding technological development. Students envisioned preferable futures and presented their ideas for a more sustainable future. Like the JALT2007 conference theme, *Looking in, Looking out*, looking into the classroom to think of students' needs and looking out to reach out to science professors to search for common ground was truly a valuable and enlightening experience.

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CHALLENGING



ASSUMPTIONS

Pronunciation tasks for academic study skills

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英語を用いたアカデミックスキルを養成するコースの開発に際し、筆者らは、従来の同様のコースでは、発音指導や発音の訓練が十分に行われていないと考えた。発音の訓練をすることにより、アカデミックな課題における産出的な活動と受容的なタスクでの理解を促進させることができる。本稿では、筆者らの開発した語強勢・脱発・連結・カタカナ英語・文強勢・イントネーションなどの練習を含む自然な発音を身につけるための具体的な活動と、英語のアカデミックスキル養成プログラムにおけるそれらの活用を概観する。その上で、書き取り課題のデータから、母語話者や母語話者同様の発音をする話者の発話サンプルが、学生にはどのように聞こえるかを分析する。

Pronunciation within a study skills program

University educators are increasingly recognizing the need to teach academic study skills in English. In developing such a course, we considered pronunciation as one key area often inadequately addressed in study skills curricula, despite the fact that clear pronunciation facilitates comprehension in

both productive activities (such as giving academic presentations) and receptive tasks (like listening to a lecture). Our paper outlines some activities we developed to foster greater oral and aural comprehensibility within that program. It also provides evidence of how students (mis)heard English sentences during pilot testing of these activities.

Pilot trial

Here we elaborate on the pilot test results from just one of the activities—a contextualized partial dictation exercise. Although not commonly used in communicative classrooms, dictation is widely used by Japanese teachers of oral English, and appears to be a valid means of determining student comprehension (Takeuchi, 1997). Students

are given part of a sentence and upon hearing the complete sentence, they fill in the missing word(s). This activity emphasizes the importance of pronunciation knowledge as a receptive skill. While piloting the materials, we were astounded by the extent to which our students were mishearing seemingly straight-forward utterances.

The data consist of dictation responses collected from 82 1st-year students in a general English course at a Japanese university. The test featured dictation exercises taken from throughout the course and consisted of a total of 90 items that assessed prosodic features such as word stress, elision, liaison, Japanese English, sentence stress, and intonation. Our proceedings paper contains more detailed results, but here we will focus only on word stress.

Word stress

English is a stress-timed language, whereas Japanese is syllable-timed, meaning that the stress in each word is generally consistent. Japanese learners may have difficulty hearing English words that have both stressed and unstressed syllables, such as the words in parenthesis in the following dictation task:

Yes, it (includes) a (Korean)-style lunch.

When this sentence was read to them, less than half of the participants were able to hear the word *includes*. About a third of them heard it as *is*, suggesting that they were able to pick up the first stressed syllable and the final /z/ sound, while 16% of the students made no attempt at a response.

Similar results were seen with the word *Korean*. While 44% of the students were able to identify

it correctly, many others came up with responses like *clean*, *green*, and *create*. *Korean* exists as a loan-word in Japanese, but each syllable is stressed in order to fit with the Japanese morae, making it sound something like KO-RE-AN rather than koREan. The English audio prompt had only one stressed syllable, leading some students to hear it as a one-syllable word.

Word stress plays a significant role in determining how Japanese students interpret an English utterance. Making students aware of the difference between Japanese English and native-like stress patterns of English will therefore help them develop better receptive skills.

Discussion and conclusion

Our study emerged from a perceived student need for comprehensibility within the context of an English academic study skill program. We planned a set of dictation tasks and piloted them with a group of university students, in part to ascertain the success of the activities themselves. However, in doing so it became even more apparent that there was a very real necessity for Japanese learners to understand the differences in syllable and stress-timed languages in order to process spoken English at word and sentence levels. Using dictation activities proved to be a successful means for alerting students to such prosodic differences, as well as informing educators of how their utterances were being (mis)heard.

Reference

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Moving?

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Using a CMS, Moodle, in campus-based teaching

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対面授業にテクノロジーを組み込む Blended learning が高等教育において広がりを見せており、多くの教育機関や教員が、CMS (course management system) を利用した教室でのコンピュータ活用を始めている。CMSは、対面でのやりとりを伴わない遠隔授業にも、大学での授業の補習の場としても利用できるが、教員はどうすればCMSを最も効果的に活用できるだろうか。本稿では、2人の教員が、クラス内の学力格差や学生の動機づけといった課題に取り組むために、どのようにオープンソースのCMSであるMoodleを語学の授業に組み込んだかについて説明する。紙媒体の教材と比べたときのCMSの利点を明確にしなが、学習経験の質を高める活動について説明する。加えて、オンライン情報の整理や時間管理など、CMSの利用に関わるスタディ・スキルの指導についても考察する。

BLENDED LEARNING, integrating technology into face-to-face classes, is increasing throughout higher education. Many institutions and instructors are incorporating computers into the classroom with a course management system (CMS). However, how can teachers use a CMS most effectively? This paper describes how the authors, two teachers at a small college in Japan, integrated an open source CMS called Moodle into their language classes.

After considering motives and methods for blending class materials, Moodle was chosen for several reasons. First, Moodle includes tools for language learning, such as a blog, forum, chat, glossary, quiz, journal, and lesson. Second, grades, student information, outside resource links, and media files can be managed in one place. Finally, teachers can track student participation, revealing which resources are being utilized and which students need further guidance.

Incorporating blended learning with a CMS

One benefit of using a CMS is to accommodate students of all levels. Moodle helps instructors offer more choices of activities and resources than paper-based materials. For example, teachers can begin by creating basic tasks focusing on common learning objectives. Additional exercises of review for lower level students may then be added as well as incrementally difficult tasks for advanced learners. Ultimately, everyone is encouraged to stay focused on objectives.

Another benefit of Moodle is to enhance materials with multi-media and learning objects. Visual

materials can include color images in the CMS as well as links to other learning objects, such as virtual tours. Audio files can provide additional support for learners. Also, helpful pop-up hints are easy to insert, providing students with immediate assistance. With a linked glossary, learners can navigate directly to a vocabulary term from other modules and resources.

Providing learning opportunities outside the classroom is another asset of a CMS. For example, one class avoided the difficulty of coordinating everyone's schedule for a group museum tour when the students were allowed to choose any date within a three-week period for an independent visit. Then students were required to share their experiences and feelings about the tour in Moodle's forum module.

Increasing students' abilities to communicate through computers and providing opportunities to use English outside the classroom for building personal relationships can be accomplished with a CMS. For example, Moodle offers instant

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10/11 - U11 Office Equipment

- Part 2: Howを使った疑問文
- Part 3: 手順の説明
- Part 7: 取扱説明書・注意書き
- 🗿 Grammar: 形容詞と副詞

- Review 01
- Vocab 1 ★☆☆
- Vocab 2 ★☆☆
 - Part 2 ★☆☆
- Part 3 ★☆☆
- Grammar ★☆☆
 - Part 5 ★☆☆
 - Part 7 ★☆☆
 - Vocab 3 ★☆☆

🗿

- Adverb or Adjective? ★☆☆
- Word Forms ★☆☆

3

10/18 - U12 Entertainment

- Part 3 娯楽・レジャー

Figure 1. Choosing activities

messaging, chat, blog, and forum options. These tools help learners and instructors connect with each other at any time as they allow for asking questions, expressing personal opinions, and exchanging information away from the face-to-face classroom.

Coordinating activities

When using a CMS, there are several ways to provide support for students who may have difficulty with the variety of activities and learning objects. First, scaffolding activities on paper handouts to mirror those in the CMS creates an easy-to-follow layout of what to do. Second, make guidelines for how students should choose activities in the CMS. For example, in Figure 1, the indented activities are optional, while all others are required, and the number of stars indicates the level of difficulty. Third, consciously assign smaller steps when building up to a larger project.

Fostering autonomy

There are features throughout Moodle that help students become independent learners. For example, the immediate feedback in the quiz and lesson modules provides students with instant results, and teachers can include specific explanations in this feedback. Additionally, if allowed, students can attempt a quiz multiple times. Learners can also independently view the scores of completed assignments as well as see which tasks need to be done.

Conclusion

When the technology provides materials or media that cannot be readily made available in handouts, overheads, or other traditional materials, there is a lot to be gained from incorporating a CMS into face-to-face classes. This incorporation also meets the needs of classes with a large range of skills and abilities.



LMS-based EFL blended learning: Blackboard vs. Moodle

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ASSUMPTIONS

本稿は、2007年春学期に東京地域の2大学で行われたLMSベースのブレンド型授業(Blackboard Academic Suite 7.1 and Moodle1.7.2)に関する比較研究を報告する。両コースは、各2クラス(計4クラス)で、情報科学の基礎英語(ESP)およびアカデミック・イングリッシュ(EAP)をコンテンツとし、授業はいずれも15週だった。両コースは比較研究のため、同一の授業設計を旨とし、LMSの使用法も統一した。LMSは、授業内では同期的な口頭によるインターアクションに重きを置き、授業外では非同期的なライティングによるインターアクションに使用した。学期終了時にブレンド型コースデザイン・オンラインインタアクション・LMSのユーザビリティに関する学生の評価調査を行った。分析の結果、本研究の授業設計においてはBlackboardよりもMoodleのユーザビリティが高かった。また、LMSの操作性の高さ・学生のオンラインインタアクションへの参加率・通常授業に対するブレンド型授業の評価の高さの間にプラスの相関があった。

THIS PAPER reports on a comparative study of two Learning Management Systems (LMS), *Blackboard* and *Moodle*, in blended courses that were provided by the author in the Tokyo area in spring 2007. The purposes of the study were to examine how blending face-to-face and LMS instruction affected students' course evaluations and if different LMSs affected participation in online interaction. To answer these

questions, semi-identical courses were designed to compare possible differences in what Blackboard and Moodle contributed to teaching and learning effectiveness. This comparison is unusual because Blackboard is a US-based commercial interface requiring institutionally paid license fees, whereas Moodle is freeware developed collaboratively by Dougiamas in New Zealand and can be run on a private server.

Prior to the present study, a literature review discovered that even though reports comparing LMSs are abundant, few studies comparing Blackboard and Moodle examined teaching and learning effectiveness or focused specifically on language education. Most comparative studies were conducted in the US and New Zealand and reported a higher level of usability and student satisfaction with Moodle. In addition, research conducted in a Japanese university context could not be found. As a result, the present study aimed

to target Japanese university students and look further at how differences between the two interfaces affected perceptions of learning and appreciation of blended course design.

In the study, courses taught by the author at two different universities had a semi-identical design and incorporated LMS usage for comparative purposes. The courses also featured synchronous oral interaction as well as asynchronous written interaction in English during classes. The LMSs were used exclusively for weekly announcements from the instructor, weekly presentation of the course materials, delivery of audio

content, and bi-weekly short assignment forum discussions.

A post-course questionnaire survey was conducted, focusing on student evaluations of the blended course designs, online interaction, and LMS usability. The results indicated a preference of Moodle over Blackboard, perhaps due to its inherent support for a social-constructivist model of learning. In other words, in course designs seeking to increase interaction among students, Moodle may support the learning outcomes better than interfaces espousing different learning theories or other administrative foci.

CHALLENGING



ASSUMPTIONS

Motivation and the awareness of JTEs as L2 users

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本稿は、日本の私立高等学校で行われた実地研究プロジェクトの報告である。日本人英語教師 (JTEs) へのインタビュー・授業観察・生徒へのアンケートを通して、英語がこの学校でどのように教えられ、どのように使われているかという最初の調査が行われた。その結果、JTEsと生徒の両方が「英語を話すことに対して評価されること」への恐れを感じていることが明らかになった。これは、大学入学試験のための教育であること、実際英語がほとんど授業で使われていないという状況に原因があることを示している。この問題を改善すべく、英語母語話者の教師による授業の一つ「ゲスト・インタビュー・シリーズ」に、学校のJTEsを第二言語ユーザーとして招いたところ、生徒はこの授業に積極的に興味を表した。また、JTEsに対しては、第二言語ユーザーとしてのイメージを強く持っていることが分かった。これらの結果は、JTEsが十分に活用されていないリソースであり、第二言語ユーザーが「生きたモデル」としての働きをすることによって、生徒をより積極的に授業に参加させる可能性があることを示唆している。

“WHY DON'T students like using English in the classroom? Why don't Japanese teachers use English with them?” Such questions led me to examine the situation in the high school where I work. As an oral communication teacher, I wouldn't be able to change the whole system, so what could I do?

In this action research project, the first step was to investigate the teaching of English in the school through classroom observations, student questionnaires, and interviews with Japanese teachers of English (JTEs). From the observations, it was clear that English was minimally used at school. This was partly due to the translation-based teaching method employed by the JTEs. A key finding of the questionnaire was a distracting

native speaker focus among students, one that “obscured the distinctive nature of the L2 user and created an unattainable goal for L2 learners” (Cook, 1999). Consequently, students rated their language learning success and prospects poorly and expressed a general self-consciousness when speaking English, especially in front of peers.

In the interviews, JTEs suggested that the more difficult high school texts and the influence of university entrance exams were the main reasons a translation-based method was used. They also felt pressure to cover the material fully and keep classes test-specific. Interestingly, the JTEs also felt self-conscious speaking English with other Japanese people. Most said they had rarely heard other JTEs speak English.

I wanted to address the problem of low English use inside and outside the classroom at the school. In my view, as long as English use was considered an unusual event, it would continue to be a source of anxiety and self-consciousness for students and teachers alike. By having role models - Japanese people speaking English well - the students could be encouraged to change their attitudes towards English. These role models could not be native speakers, but people who had achieved success by starting from the same place the students had.

My long-term objective was to alter the culture of English use at the school and make speaking English a normal event. As a first step, I decided to invite JTEs into my class as interview guests. The main goals were:

- Motivating students by exposing them to Japanese role models with good L2 skills
- Raising the profile of JTEs as L2 users

The idea of doing interviews came from research done on the effect of near-peer role models Murphey (1998). The procedure followed three simple steps:

1. Students write questions for the JTEs
2. The NESTs (native English speaking teachers) ask JTEs the questions
3. Students perform written tasks based on the JTEs answers

Step 1 was done in the class preceding the interviews, giving the JTEs a chance to prepare. Step 2 was completed informally, with seating rearranged to create a talk-show atmosphere. For the final step, students wrote three things they had learned about the JTE, plus one further question they'd like to ask.

Written feedback by the students indicated increased motivation and an improved status for the JTEs as L2 users. They included a number of comments similar to these:

I thought she's great at English. I want to become fluent, too.

I was happy to hear Suzuki-sensei speak English for the first time. (name changed)

High school JTEs can have a strong influence on their students by assuming the position of role model language users instead of leaving spoken interaction to NESTs. NESTs, for their part, can easily implement the three steps outlined above to help develop the potential of their Japanese counterparts as role models.

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ASSUMPTIONS

ギリシャ神話の *musicas* に端を発して、音楽と言語を関連付けた文献は多い。その相互関連性については、幼児期の言語習得に関する研究・認知心理学・脳科学などの研究分野で実証されている。さらに、第二言語習得の領域においても、Music-linguistic approach を含む自然主義の立場や コミュニカティブ・アプローチの側から、EFL 教室で果たす音楽の重要な役割に関心が集まっている。しかしながら、EFL のリスニング・スピーキング教育における音楽の有効性については定かではない。日本人学習者にはリスニングが不安を高めるとの研究例もある。音楽の導入が、学習動機の高い日本のEFL環境の問題に対処する鍵になるかもしれない。本研究では、特に、リスニング・タスク実施時における学習者が持つ不安の軽減に果たす音楽の効果、音楽が学生の英語学習一般に与える影響について調査した。調査結果からは、音楽に教育的な道具としての可能性があることが分かった。教育的道具としての音楽の可能性については、より包括的な研究が必要である。

BEGINNING WITH its origins as *musicas* in Greek mythology, there is a long, well-documented link between music and language. The three key components of verbal

interaction (words, body language, and intonation) correspond directly with the three classical elements of music (verse, dance, and melody) (Del Campo, 1997, in Mora, 2000). Studies of early childhood language acquisition (Mora, 2000) as well as cognitive psychology and brain research offer further evidence of the interconnectivity between music and language. However, it is arguably in the teaching of EFL listening and speaking that music holds the greatest pedagogical potential as both these skills require processing of prosodic features of language such as intonation, pitch, rhythm, dynamics, and timber. Furthermore, evidence suggests that EFL listening provokes high anxiety among Japanese language learners, thereby creating a need to reduce

anxiety and increase success (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope in Koba, Ogawa, & Wilkinson, 2000). Because of its power to alleviate many forms of anxiety and increase positive associations in general, music could be key to addressing this and other pressing issues in the Japanese EFL context, such as low motivation. Despite this, however, some are resistant to the idea of using music as a pedagogical tool, thereby forgoing a promising opportunity to positively influence student achievement.

With this background in mind, a small scale study was undertaken which examined the following three research questions:

1. Can music increase positive attitudes towards learning English?
2. Can music decrease learner anxiety in EFL listening tasks?
3. Is there a link between musical ability and English proficiency?

The one-semester study was conducted with two groups of university EFL students, one beginner, one advanced. Musical listening activities were implemented weekly, and student attitudes were measured by means of pre- and post-treatment questionnaires.

The findings indicated a small but noticeable increase in students' enjoyment of learning English, perhaps attributable to a lowering of the affective filter (Krashen, 2003) and the associative power of music (Bancroft, 1985). Regarding learner anxiety, the results were inconclusive. A possible explanation could be the difficulty level of the activities selected, particularly those requiring precise listening as opposed to easier, less stressful, *essence listening*. For this reason, listening tasks must be carefully selected to avoid losing their affective advantage. Compounding the problem may have been the idea among many Japanese students that, "No pain equals no gain." If so, students may have felt that anxiety-producing listening tasks were good for their language development. Regarding the third research question, further study is needed to establish a direct connection between musical ability and English proficiency as both groups rated their singing ability as low. Although this may be due in part to the Japanese tendency towards humility.

Although results were mixed, the power of music to evoke emotion and inspire feeling is key to its potential for instilling positive associations

with learning English and reducing anxiety in relation to listening tasks. Important questions about the potential of music as a pedagogical tool in the EFL classroom and the need to capitalize on well-documented links between music and language were also raised. Further comprehensive investigation of this topic would be very worthwhile, not only because of the pervasive impact of music on students' lives, but also because of its potential for offering "learning gain without pain."

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– PAC7 at JALT2008: TIP #67 –

"Networking—preparing in advance!"

Think about two or three people you'd like to meet in person at the conference. They could be veteran teachers, innovators in education, well-respected writers, or active local chapter members you've always wanted to get to know. Then make a plan to meet them; everyone knows that networking is a key part of the conference and most "good" people are especially open while they're there. You may be able to meet them beforehand at the JALT Forums!

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Should research paper writing be taught at Japanese universities? YES!

David Kluge & Matthew Taylor, Kinjo Gakuin University

本稿では、最初に、日本の大学で英語の研究論文の書き方を教える必要性について論じる。次に、研究論文の書き方に関連して、日本の大学における英作文教育の現状を述べる。特に、現在の日本の大学の「英作文教育のカリキュラム」と「セミナーで必要とされる研究論文」に焦点をあてる。最後に、日本の大学教育での基本的な研究論文の書き方に関する科目を提案する。

DECLINING ENROLLMENT due to changing demographics, and a focus on career preparation or utilitarian needs assessments have thrown the necessity of teaching research paper writing into question at Japanese universities. Simultaneously, many writing teachers may not necessarily lament this development, having often found students ill prepared, even on a very basic level, for the complex task of writing research papers. Nevertheless, we assert that teaching research skills is an essential part of university writing curricula.

Academic vs. ESL writing instruction

A review of the relevant research is given in the online paper. It supports the present view that writing based on a source text is an important academic skill, that content-based writing is considered an effective way for teaching writing, and that content-based writing in the teaching of academic writing is superior.

The case against research paper writing instruction in Japanese universities

In an attempt to answer questions on the necessity of research paper writing instruction for the Japanese context, a short survey was sent in 2007 to local Japanese university English program administrators (of which eight responded), inquiring about the requirements of their departments and the attitudes of the program administrators towards research paper writing instruction. The following list encapsulates the gist of their comments:

- *The teaching of research paper writing is difficult.*
- *Students do not like research paper writing and research paper writing instruction.*
- *Students prefer speaking to research paper writing instruction.*

- *Students, when they have the choice, prefer writing research papers in Japanese.*
- *Students will probably never write another research paper.*
- *There are other writing genres that would be more practical to teach them than research papers.*
- *There is not enough time in a curriculum to teach all kinds of writing.*

Benefits of teaching research paper writing in Japanese universities

We acknowledge but do not agree with the opinions outlined in the previous section and feel that many benefits of teaching research paper writing either negate or outweigh such objections. In our view, research paper instruction:

- *Prepares students for department requirements*
- *Trains students in patterns of academic discourse*
- *Prepares students for study abroad*
- *Trains students in rhetoric and critical thinking*
- *Teaches students to gather information, evaluate, organize, format, and present information in an academic manner*
- *Introduces students to higher level, specialized vocabulary and sentence patterns*
- *Gets students to read a variety of sources*
- *Teaches students the connection between reading and writing*
- *Motivates students to practice typing and word processing skills*
- *Is part of a well-rounded college education*
- *Gives students a sense of accomplishment*

Writing curricula in Japan: A sample

The informal survey of eight university writing programs mentioned above revealed that although a research paper is required for seminars or graduation theses, very few of the universities actually teach students how to write them. See the online version of this article for the results of the questionnaire and a discussion of the results.

A proposal for a basic research writing course for Japanese university programs

The authors propose an academic writing curriculum for Japanese university programs that includes basic academic writing and ends with beginning and advanced research paper writing.

Conclusion

Since Japanese university departments often require students to write a research paper, students should be taught how to do it. Yet, beyond this, the teaching of research paper writing has compelling merits of its own and should be a valued part of the university curriculum.

CHALLENGING



ASSUMPTIONS

Accountability and variety in extensive reading

Ben Fenton-Smith, Kanda University of International Studies

多読が第二言語習得に効果があることは広く認識されているが、教室での実施において最適な方法であるかについては同意に至っていない。授業での持続的黙読の利点はこれまでに述べられているが、理論的にも実用的にも適当ではない場合もある。本稿は、その理由を簡潔に述べ、不適切なアウトプット・アクティビティーを回避することについて検討する。学生に既読の内容を表現させること、多読授業の単調な反復を回避することが、多読教材開発に不可欠な要素である。教材の具体的な例を挙げ、どのような教材が、創造性・自由・多読の成功の要素である楽しさを壊すことなく、学生の評価をすることができることを示す。

FEW ENGLISH language teachers would disagree that Extensive Reading (ER) is an effective way of improving learners' L2 proficiency. But there is less agreement on the best way(s) of implementing it in the classroom. Current orthodoxy insists on a simple plan: have students read. In the words of Day and Bamford (1998), "Ideally, ...no post-reading work should be required, the act of reading being its own reward. Students read and that is all" (p. 140). Mason (2005) goes further, claiming that output activities result in insufficient reading and that "an excessive amount of speaking and writing actually detracts from students' ability to speak and write" (¶ 5). This is driven by the belief that input is what counts in language acquisition: output activities merely get in the way.

This presents ELT instructors with a dilemma. How do you formulate grades for ER without having students perform assessment tasks? On the one hand, experts tell us that output activities are bad. On the other hand, our administrative overseers tell us to evaluate students' work and reduce it to an A, B, or C. It is the teacher's lot to

take on the (often idealistic) wisdom of researchers, synthesize it with the (often draconian) demands of administrators, and come up with a plan that does justice to those that matter most: the learners. This paper is an attempt to map out a middle path for ER instructors.

To begin with, I argue that ER teachers need to be freed of the notion that all output activities in class are bad. EFL students, for example, have precious few opportunities to speak the target language, given it is predominantly not used in the society around them. Many EFL programs therefore adopt a comprehensive skills approach: one where speaking/writing pervades all language classes regardless of lesson foci. Secondly, reading ceases to be a solitary activity when it is used as the basis for pair/group activities. Reading for the classroom community - having the chance to share ideas and feelings - adds purpose and motivation. Thirdly, output activities give students opportunities to recommend books to each other. Students know best what students like, and face-to-face book discussions are the best forum for exchanging information about subject matter, level of difficulty, and generational relevance.

If we accept the above, the next question is one of materials design: what kinds of output activities might be suitable for ER in the classroom? This is where the twin themes of accountability and variety become central. We need activities that make students accountable for what they

have read, ones that allow the instructor to make judgments about the students' reading efforts. On the other hand, we do not want to impinge on students' motivation and enjoyment, as these processes are essential to successful ER. To ensure that students remain stimulated, we must design materials that are not repetitive and encourage both critical thought and creative response. It is important that students do not, for example, simply fill in a standard book report every week, since such a task would eventually be perceived as a chore or mere assessment exercise.

The final section of this paper therefore showcases a series of ten activities that meet the two criteria of accountability and variety. These activities require students to reflect in written

form in the first instance, but can also be used as a springboard for book discussions. It is argued that an ER course can benefit greatly from a large bank of creative tasks, working on the hypothesis that non-repetitiveness dovetails with high student interest.

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Does vocabulary-training software support neuro-compatible vocabulary acquisition?

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本稿では、語彙トレーニングに関して、心的辞書・忘却・間をおいた繰り返し・キーワード記憶術の言語学や心理学における研究成果について再考する。また、数多くある語彙トレーニング・プログラム用ソフトウェアの中から5つを取り上げ紹介する。これらの5つのプログラムは全てコンピュータを用いたフラッシュカード・システムを取り入れている。jMemorizeはPCとマッキントッシュで用いることができる。ProVocはマルチメディアの面で優れているが、作動が可能なのはマッキントッシュのみである。これらの2つのソフトウェアとTeachMaster (PCのみで作動可能)は全てフリーウェアである。受賞ソフトウェアvTrainは教育機関においては無料で用いることができ、Mylörnはフラッシュカード500枚までは無料で使用できる。これらの全てのプログラムは、間をおいた繰り返しを実施することで忘却の回避を試みている。MylörnとTeachMasterは、連語・同等・上位・同義といった心的辞書における関連性を考慮した項目を提供している。脳研究の成果を取り入れた研究が増えつつあるが、これらのプログラムの効果は未だに十分に証明されてはいない。

FOR THOSE new to vocabulary-training software, this report is an accessible introduction to its basic principles, advantages, and shortcomings. For teachers already familiar with such software, additional justification, inspiration, and viewpoints on its use are presented from linguistic and psychological perspectives. This paper reconsiders the following four points in conjunction with vocabulary training programs:

- *Mental lexicon*: Aitchison's *Words in the Mind* (2003) is the major source for citations, naming,

and giving examples for the different links that exist among vocabulary entities.

- *Forgetting*: A serial learning experiment can be carried out, similar to the one Ebbinghaus did in his classic treatise on memory back in 1885.
- *Spacing effect*: Dempster (1988) is quoted in connection with this phenomenon, where the retention (and learning) is better if there are larger time intervals between repetitions.
- *Keyword method*: For mnemonics, the keyword method demonstrates how a mental detour (two successive mental links connecting L1 and L2 target words through a keyword) can help to remember an L2 target word when a single mental route (a direct mental link between L1 and L2 word pair) is not yet available.

From the numerous vocabulary-training programs currently available on both the Macintosh and Windows platforms, five are introduced in this paper. All programs utilize flashcard methodologies, mostly based on the *Leitner* system. *jMemorize* runs on both PCs and Macs. *ProVoc* has good multimedia features but runs only on the Mac. These two and PC-only *TeachMaster* are

freeware. The award-winning *vTrain* is free for educational institutions, and *Mylörn* is free for up to 500 flashcards. While all of these programs utilize spaced repetition and thus fight forgetting, only *Mylörn* and *TeachMaster* offer specific entries that mimic the links of our mental lexicon, such as collocation, coordination, superordination, and synonymy. Since this report was originally written, some of these programs have been updated. In the latest version of *TechMaster*, for example, comments and synonyms are now separate entries. *ProVoc* has been discontinued, and although it can still be downloaded, it is no longer being maintained or developed.

This report holds benefits for instructors and autonomous learners alike. Teachers can become more responsible for telling students not only what to learn, but also for showing them how to learn efficiently and why the methods work. For autonomous learners, the report highlights advantages of the reported software, mainly the systematic and spaced repetition of items guaranteed by built-in time stamps and watchdogs. These features remind learners on program start which items should be repeated, thus creating a continuous incentive for regular study. Readers should

not expect a final answer to the question posed by the title. However, partial answers about the incorporation of neurological research findings in vocabulary learning programs can be found.

In summary, this report provides an overview on some theoretical aspects of vocabulary learning and vocabulary training software. In its final part, classroom application hints for language instructors (such as introducing the keyword method and other concepts) and autonomous learners (such as working with flashcards for maximum benefit) are listed.

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CHALLENGING



ASSUMPTIONS

The use of pocket electronic and printed dictionaries: A mixed-method study

Chiho Kobayashi, Tenri University

本研究では、日本人大学生による電子辞書の使用状況を印刷辞書の使用状況と比較した。また、学生の電子辞書・印刷辞書に対する印象、これらの辞書がその使用方法に及ぼす影響について考察した。研究方法は、これらの課題について、量的および質的に探求した。学生は、自分の電子辞書に対する印象、電子辞書、印刷辞書の使用状況についてのアンケートに解答した。数人の学生はフォローアップ・インタビューを受け、辞書の使用状況について、さらに詳しい質問を受けた。学生は、電子辞書と印刷辞書のそれぞれが他方ない利点があると認識していた。それぞれの利点が、電子辞書と印刷辞書の検索頻度の違い、辞書の機能・特色の使用方法的の違いを作り出しているようである。

DURING THE past decade, the capability of electronic dictionaries (EDs) has increased greatly. As EDs have advanced technologically, their popularity among L2 learners has grown steadily, to the point where sales of EDs have exceeded those of printed dictionaries (PDs) in Japan.

As EDs have increased in popularity, studies have been conducted to examine how they are used among L2 learners (Bower & McMillan, 2007), as well as what impact they have on L2 learning (Koyama & Takeuchi, 2003). However, the relative advantages of EDs versus PDs are still inconclusive. In particular, given that most previous studies were quantitative, more research using qualitative methods is needed. The goal of this report was to comprehensively understand students' use of EDs and PDs through a mixed qualitative and quantitative methodology. Specific areas of ED and PD usage addressed were:

- Frequency and purpose
- Perceptions

- Word look-up

This research into dictionary usage was comprised of three studies. In Study 1, conducted in 2004, 279 Japanese students at three universities completed a questionnaire. In Study 2, a follow up also conducted in 2004, twenty-two students were selected from the Study 1 participants and were interviewed. In Study 3, which took place in 2007, 97 Japanese university students not associated with the previous studies completed a questionnaire. The results of this final study were included in this paper in order to indicate changes that had occurred since the previous studies were conducted.

The results confirmed that EDs are widely used among Japanese university-level learners of English. The majority of students owned an ED, and those who owned one tended to use it exclusively even though they also owned a PD. Furthermore, many students consulted the ED multiple times a week. Surprisingly, the ED percentage of ownership did not change greatly in the three years between the first and third studies. Moreover, the percentage of students who reported using both PDs and EDs depending on their needs remained stable. These unexpected findings suggested persistent demands for PDs.

PDs and EDs were perceived to have distinct strengths and weaknesses. EDs offered advantages in areas such as search speed, portability, functionality (jump, idiom search, example search), and the ability to access multiple dictionaries in one device. On the other hand, the quality and quantity of information was cited as the major disadvantage of EDs. Since recent ED models contain full versions of their PD

counterparts, such perceptions were probably only subjective impressions, due in part because the small screens of EDs make it troublesome to retrieve detailed grammatical and usage information (Koyama & Takeuchi, 2003).

In contrast, PDs were perceived to be superior to EDs in such areas as the ability to make notations, the quality or quantity of information, the ease of use, and the availability of illustrations. These advantages, which sharply contrast with the disadvantages of EDs, may be the reason for the continuous demand for PDs discussed above. Preferences for either type of dictionary were related to differences between ED and PD users in the way they looked up words, how often they used a dictionary, their preferred methods for notating information, their desires of using different types of dictionaries, and their needs for other various functions and features.

In conclusion, EDs and PDs appear to benefit students differently. This suggests that rather than encouraging the use of one type or another, teachers should advise students how to use them wisely, each according to their strengths.

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Using lexical and task-based approaches for speech fluency development

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何十年もの間、日本の英語教育では語彙力・文法・翻訳力が中心となっている。この事実は、日本の教育システムや入試の波及効果のようである。その結果、この偏った指導法は、コミュニケーション力の育成をしてこなかった。このギャップを埋めるべく、筆者は日本人大学生を対象に質的研究を行った。この研究では、スピーチの流暢さの発達のための、語彙中心の指導法とタスク中心の指導法がどのように効果的であるかを調べ、被験者が2つの指導法をどのように感じたかについても探った。28人の学生

は、語彙中心の指導法とタスク中心の指導法に基づいた1ヶ月の英会話コースに任意で参加した。彼らの流暢さの発達は、コースの始まる前・中間・コース終了後の3回のインタビュー・テストによって測られた。データによると、タスク中心の指導法は、ある被験者群の流暢さの発達には著しい効果があった。しかし、語彙中心の指導法は流暢さの発達には効果がほとんど無かった。筆者は、このような結果を得た理由と被験者の両指導法に対する見解を述べる。

FOR DECADES, English instruction in Japan has centered on vocabulary, grammar, and translation skills- a washback effect of Japan's educational system and entrance exams. Consequently, this unbalanced pedagogy has not fostered communication skills. In an effort to close this gap, I conducted a qualitative study with Japanese university students, investigating how effective the *lexical approach* and *task-based instruction* (TBI) were for fluency development and how students perceived the two language teaching approaches. 28 students voluntarily participated in a one-month oral English course based on the lexical approach and TBI. Their fluency development was measured through three interview tests administered before, during, and after the instruction. All interviews were recorded to assess speech samples with respect to their flow and comprehensibility. The yielded scores for flow and comprehensibility were added and used as data to see how fluency changed over the treatment period. The results indicated that task-based lessons contributed to remarkable fluency development for a group of subjects; however, the lexical approach seems to have affected development only a little.

Implications for utilizing the lexical approach

Several subjects reported that listening to good English speaking classmates and the instructor was helpful in recognizing new, accurate collocations. This result confirmed that raising awareness of lexical items, especially collocations, is an effective way to enhance existing lexical knowledge (Woolard, 2000). In addition, teaching collocational competence was well worth the effort since "good quality input should lead to good quality retrieval" (Hill, 2000, p. 54). Having learners interact with each other for exposure to new expressions was a productive and effective source of language input.

Another implication for teaching lexical items was to make the most of what students already know (Lewis, 2000). Students came to realize there were many ways to convey similar messages, and that single words collocate with other words in a tremendous number of ways. Native English speakers daily use a limited number of words in a limitless number of ways, so extending students' existing knowledge is productive and practical (Hill, 2000). This is something Japanese teachers need to do more of to build fluency in their students.

Implications for utilizing task-based instruction

A most significant feature of task-based lessons is the pre-task phase, which is "non-obligatory but serves a crucial role in ensuring that the task performance is maximally effective for language development" (Ellis, 2003, p. 243). This idea was reflected in comments by subjects who had tried brainstorming to obtain information- doing so allowed them to successfully complete the tasks.

Because of this study's research focus, I repeatedly told the subjects not to be afraid of making mistakes, but rather to pay more attention to the meaning of their messages. As a result, many students reported they had changed their thinking on grammatical errors. In addition, some initially less competent students increased their amount of speech production.

Practically speaking, it would be quite difficult for many Japanese teachers to switch suddenly to a task-based curriculum. Grammar and translation skills should be taught as they are now. However, incorporating tasks with an aim of facilitating the internalization of grammar may be one way of incorporating TBI into common grammar/ translation teaching methodology, providing a smooth and natural reshaping of English lessons in Japanese schools.

Conclusion

Japanese teachers at all levels need to provide students with more lesson time for meaningful interaction. By doing so, students' existing declarative English knowledge will be transformed into more practical and fluent communicative ability.

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Learner voices: Reflections on secondary education

Joseph Falout, Nihon University; Tim Murphey, Kanda University of International Studies; James Elwood, Tsukuba University; Michael Hood, Nihon University

EFL(外国語としての英語教育)の学習環境で英語を学ぶ大学生440人に、中学校や高校時代の英語学習の中での好き嫌いについて、何が役に立ち、何が役に立たなかったと感じるかについてを尋ねた。集計したデータを質的・量的に分析し、得られた結果は2002年に行った調査結果と比較した。それらの結果については、研究協力者の分析も取り入れられた。本稿では、授業中の重要性や実践方法をどのように変えるべきかについて言及しており、すべての教育機関における教員への示唆を与えている。

THIS STUDY is a large-scale follow-up to Murphey (2002), where learners were asked to write open-ended letters of advice to junior high school (JHS) and high school (HS) teachers. The participants of these two studies learned English under two different Ministry of Education guidelines called the *Course of Study*, issued in 1994 and 2003 respectively (MEXT, 2003), the latter of which contained stronger emphasis on communicative ability.

The questionnaire at the heart of this study had two separate sections, each designated for comments to JHS or HS teachers. The questions asked students what they liked and did not like, what helped or did not help, and what suggestions they had for their teachers. Comments were first separated into three major categories: positive experiences, negative experiences, and wants, then further divided into subcategories and quantified. The data tables were analyzed by the participants in small groups during class, and their analyses provided insights for this study.

In soliciting learner voices, the present study draws on Dewey's (1910) concept of reflective thinking. The four phases of reflective thinking are experience, description, analysis, and intelligent action. Dewey stressed that reflection includes the responsibility to take action. We asked our learners to reflect upon and describe their experiences in secondary education, analyze the results, and make meaning of their own conclusions. Likewise, as we reflected upon and analyzed their experiences, we were transformed in terms of our classroom views and practices. In this way, learners' individual experiences contributed collectively to the analysis, leading to the insights of this study. EFL learner needs were found in three general categories: greater consistency, more communication, and better teaching.

Greater consistency

There was a drop in positive comments and an increase in negative comments from JHS to HS. This revealed that the current educational system has JHS catching learner interest in EFL with songs and games while HS prepares learners to pass university entrance exams with a heavy focus on grammar-translation. Interest generated in JHS gets disrupted by teacher-centered, depersonalized, and de-contextualized classes in HS.

More communication

When analyzing the results, learners recognized that learning contexts matter, and that there is a relationship between communication and motivation. Overwhelmingly, the majority expressed a desire for more chances and time to practice oral communication skills and less time on grammar. This finding mirrored that of the original study (Murphey, 2002) despite the stronger push for communicative competence under the Course of Study 2003.

Better teaching

Our data ranked "Teachers (Japanese)" as the top negative experience. Students said that teachers need to improve their teaching if they expect students to improve. Many reported boredom and particularly requested more enthusiasm and less teacher-centered classrooms. Also in disfavor were teachers who were overly strict or who often shouted when angry.

Conclusions

We believe the reflective thinking of educational experiences in this study increased learners' investment, interest, and agency in their own education. Seeking their fresh perspectives enabled us as teachers to reflect upon our classroom practices and make positive changes. We found that while EFL teachers in Japan are concerned about learner silence, ironically what learners want most in the classroom is to communicate. It