



# The Language Teacher

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## JALT2007 Pre-Conference Special Issue

- **Plenary Speaker articles from:**  
*Ronald Carter, Paul Nation and David Beglar,  
and Amy Tsui*
- **Featured Speaker articles from:**  
*Miles Craven, Richard Day, Steven Gershon, Leo Jones,  
Curtis Kelly and Chuck Sandy, Ryuko Kubota, Charles  
LeBeau, Jeannette Littlemore, Rob Waring, Ken Wilson,  
and John Wiltshier*
- **My Share**  
*by Patrick Miller and Ben Fenton-Smith*
- **Book Reviews**  
*by Toshiyuki Takagaki and Paul A. Crane*

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The Japan Association for Language Teaching

全国語学教育学会



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## In this month's issue . . .

## JALT2007 Pre-Conference Issue

**T**HE JULY issue of *The Language Teacher* contains a selection of articles from both Plenary and Featured speakers who will be presenting at this year's National Conference.

JALT2007 will be held in Tokyo at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center November 22-25 with the theme *Challenging Assumptions: Looking In, Looking Out*.

Plenary speaker articles included in this issue are: **Ronald Carter, Paul Nation and David Beglar**, and **Amy Tsui**. Featured speakers who have contributed a paper include: **Miles Craven, Richard Day, Steven Gershon, Leo Jones, Curtis Kelly and Chuck Sandy, Ryuko Kubota, Charles LeBeau, Jeannette Littlemore, Rob Waring, Ken Wilson, and John Wiltshier**. For further information about the conference please refer to the *Pre-Conference Supplement* in this issue or you can check online at <conferences.jalt.org/2007/>.

In addition to the above mentioned articles we also feature our regular columns with My Share activities by **Patrick Miller and Ben Fenton-Smith**, and Book Reviews by **Toshiyuki Takagaki and Paul A. Crane**.

I hope you find this issue a valuable source of information regarding the variety of presentations on offer at this year's conference. I look forward to seeing you all at JALT's 33rd International Conference!

Jacqui Norris-Holt

TLT Co-Editor

**T**LTの7月号では、本年度の全国大会の基調講演者と特別講演者の原稿をご紹介します。全国大会は、11月22日から25日にかけて、東京の国立オリンピック記念青少年総合センターで行われます。本大会のテーマは、Challenging Assumptions: Looking In, Looking Outです。基調講演は、Ronald Carter, Paul Nation & David Beglar, Amy Tsui. が行い、特別講演者には、Miles Craven, Richard Day, Steven Gershon, Leo Jones, Curtis Kelly & Chuck Sandy, Ryuko Kubota, Charles LeBeau, Jeannette Littlemore, Rob Waring, Ken Wilson, John Wiltshier が予定されています。詳細については、本誌のPre-Conference Supplement をご覧ください。インターネット上の<conferences.jalt.org/2007/>.でも、ご確認できます。このほか、Patrick Miller とBen Fenton-SmithによるMy Share の記事と、Toshiyuki Takagaki とPaul A. Crane.による書評も皆さんにお楽しみいただけます。7月号で皆さんに全国大会の情報をいち早くお知らせすることを幸いに存じます。編集部一同、33回目のJALT全国大会で皆さんにお会いすることを楽しみにしております。



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Jacqui Norris-Holt  
& Ted O'Neill

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## CHALLENGING



## ASSUMPTIONS

## JALT2007

November 22–25, 2007

National Olympics Memorial Youth Center, Tokyo, Japan

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### Talk, talk, talk: Grammar and spoken English—Ronald Carter

The spoken language has been largely under-described and under-theorised within linguistics and accordingly teachers of English have lacked adequate models. Recent analysis of spoken discourse using multi-million word computerised corpora of authentic English usage is beginning to change this picture. This article focuses on some of these changes drawing on new evidence concerning the specific character of spoken English grammar. The study of spoken language also raises fundamental questions about the nature of standard English grammar and its basis in written examples, about the notion of choice in language and about materials development for the teaching of English as a whole.

言語学の分野で、口語英語は理論的に語られたり十分な説明がされることがなかったため、英語教師へのモデル提供が不足していた。最近になって、この傾向は変わりつつある。数百万にもおよぶ実際に使われている英語の用法をコンピュータを使って集め、そのコーパスを用いた談話分析が始まったからである。本論では、口語英文法の特徴に関する新たな研究結果に基づき、いくつかの変化に注目する。こうした口語英語の研究は、根本的な疑問を投げかけるものでもある。それらの疑問には、「標準英文法」の特質と文語例の中の基本に関するもの、言語における選択という概念に関するもの、英語を教えていく際の教材開発に関するものがある。

### A vocabulary size test—Paul Nation & David Beglar

This article describes the making and purposes of a vocabulary size test that will test vocabulary knowledge up to the 14th 1000 word level. The test contains 140 multiple-choice items, 10 at each 1000 word level. The test itself is freely available <[www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation/nation.aspx](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation/nation.aspx)> and <[www.lexutor.ca/](http://www.lexutor.ca/)> and can be used by teachers and researchers for a variety of purposes. Research is continuing on the reliability and validity of the test. Guidelines are provided for administering and interpreting the test.

本稿では、学習者の受容語彙知識を頻度14,000語レベルまで測定する語彙サイズテスト開発の目的と作成について述べる。テストは、1,000語単位に区切られた1-14の各頻度レベルからそれぞれ10語ずつ、全140の多肢選択項目で構成される。本テストは、<<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation/nation.aspx>> と<<http://www.lexutor.ca/>>で入手でき、さまざまな目的を持つ研究者や教師が利用できる。テストの信頼性と妥当性については、研究が続いている。テスト試行と分析のためのガイドラインが用意されている。

### Classroom discourse as a semiotic resource for EFL learning—Amy B. M. Tsui

Adopting a sociocultural perspective of learning, this presentation points out that EFL classroom discourse is a major semiotic resource that mediates the construal of reality as well as the target language. Using data from primary EFL classrooms in Hong Kong, it is argued that classroom discourse processes are intersubjective processes in which the construal of reality through a foreign language by each learner shapes and is shaped by the construal of reality and the target language by other learners. In addition, the teacher with whom students interact and all other resources such as curriculum materials and pedagogical activities mediate the learning process. Seen in this light, EFL classroom discourse is an emergent process which opens up an immensely rich semiotic space for EFL learning.

### Paragons or parasites—are we failing our language learners?—Miles Craven

As educators, we like to think that we are helping our stu-

dents—helping them to learn, travel with confidence, progress in their careers, make friends, and communicate as global citizens in today's world. However, interviews with Asian students (which form the basis of this article) reveal a very different picture from the learner's perspective, one of widespread dissatisfaction at all stages of their language learning experience. So are we the paragons we think we are, or are we simply parasites, happy to make a living from language education, while failing to address students' real learning needs?

### Learning to read in a foreign language—Richard Day

This article examines intensive and extensive reading approaches to teaching reading to second and foreign language (FL) learners. It begins with a brief discussion of the nature of reading and how we learn to read. This is followed by an overview of three intensive reading approaches (grammar translation, comprehension questions and language work, and skills and strategies) and extensive reading. Next, there is an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the four approaches. The article concludes with the claim that extensive reading is the only approach that provides learners with the opportunities to become FL readers.

本論は、ESL/EFL学習者にリーディングを教えていく際の精読法と多読法について検証する。始めに、リーディングの特性と学習法について論じる。次に、3つの精読法（文法訳読・読解問題と言語に関する問題・スキルと方略）と多読法について概説する。また、これら4つのリーディング法の長所短所についても分析する。最後に、多読法によってのみ学習者が熟練したEFLの読み手になる機会を得ることが出来ると主張する。

### My daily chicken soup for the ELT soul—Steven Gershon

The *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books offer a comforting broth of stories to open the heart and rekindle the spirit for everyone, from golfers to nurses. Well, almost everyone. What about the humble ELT professional, putting in countless classroom hours of PPP, searching endlessly for that perfect text, struggling stoically to get students into pairs? What we need is our very own bite-sized, digestible doses of chicken soup to affirm, to inspire, to justify our own ELT soul. In this article I offer a week's worth of pages from my own personalized Chicken Soup for the ELT Soul calendar.

### Why don't my students enjoy working in pairs and groups?—Leo Jones

Even though pair and group work is an essential and well-established technique these days, we sometimes encounter resistance from students—and things don't always go smoothly. This article looks at some of the difficulties students may have, and suggests ways we can encourage students to enjoy working together and help them to get maximum benefit from working in pairs and in groups.

ペアワークやグループワークは、ティーチングには欠かせない定評あるテクニックだが、学習者からの思わぬ抵抗にあうこともあり、いつもうまく行くとは限らない。本論では、学習者が直面しがちな問題を取り上げ、学習者がペアワークやグループワークを楽しみ、その利点を最大限に生かすための方法を紹介する。

### Rethinking activities to incorporate theories of learning—Curtis Kelly & Chuck Sandy

Almost daily, brain studies, technological advance, and research in psychology are giving us a better picture of how

learning occurs. In concordance with this burst of research, a growing movement called brain-compatible teaching offers insights into why we need to develop teaching practices and materials that focus less on language and more on how people learn languages. In this paper, the authors discuss four brain compatible fundamentals of learning and their implications for the language classroom.

脳に関する研究、科学技術の進歩、心理学における研究が日進月歩で進み、学習がどのようにして行われているかが明らかにされてきている。それに伴い、「脳の働きに合わせた教育」という考え方が広まり、教育の実践や教材の開発を考えるようになった。従来の言語そのものに着目したものでなく、どのように人が言語を学ぶかに着目しているのである。本論では、脳の働きに合わせた4つの学習の原理を挙げ、実際の授業にどう生かすかを論じる。

## Critical approaches to language education: Focusing on race and culture—*Ryuko Kubota*

The field of second language education has made a critical turn in the past decade, problematizing ideologies, discourses, and power relations that construct established knowledge and practices. Critical inquires aim to transform the status quo of power relations and create a more just society while affirming multiple meanings and identities. The field, however, has been relatively silent on issues of race until very recently. Inquiry into racism, racialization, as well as culture, which is often used as a neutral category to talk about race, would provide language teachers and learners with more critical insight into power, social structures, and humankind.

第二言語教育の分野は過去10年間に大きな変貌を遂げた。イデオロギー、談話、既成の知識と慣習を構成する力関係に対して問題提起をしてきたのである。厳密な研究によって、意味やアイデンティティの多様性を認めるとともに、現存の力の関係を変革し、より公正な社会創造を目指している。しかしながら、人種の問題はごく最近まであまり取り上げられることはなかった。人種差別、人種区分、そして人種を語るのに曖昧なカテゴリーとしてよく用いられる文化を研究することで、力、社会構造、人類について、教師と学習者はより一層の洞察力を持つことができるだろう。

## Balancing global issues and critical thinking in the classroom—*Charles LeBeau*

The assumptions governing what we as teachers choose for content in the classroom, and how we choose to approach that content, shape the learning experience of our students. This article suggests that classroom content begin locally with the learner's interests and experience. The teacher's role then is to design level-appropriate tasks that take the topic to a global level of significance. With regard to critical thinking, i.e. how we approach content, this article argues that explicit models for language learners are necessary. Also, this article describes a simple metaphor to make critical thinking a concrete, visual experience for the language learner.

教師が授業にどのような授業内容を選択するか、そして、その内容にどのようにアプローチするかという前提条件が、生徒の学習経験を形作る。本論は、授業内容は学習者の興味と経験に沿った身近なものから始める事を勧めている。教師の役割は、まず、学習者のレベルに合った課題を取り上げ、高いレベルまで持っていけるようにデザインすることである。この場合のクリエイティブ・シンキングである授業内容へのアプローチについて、本論は、学習者のために明確なモデルが必要であると主張する。そして、クリエイティブ・シンキングが言語学習にとって具体的に視覚に訴えるものになるような簡単なメタファーを説明する。

## Helping Japanese language learners to use figurative language—*Jeannette Littlemore*

In English, figurative extensions of word meaning are common; we talk about key issues, the foot of the page, and breaking promises. In this article I describe a short study,

conducted with a Japanese colleague, to assess the effectiveness of two different techniques for promoting figurative language production and understanding in Japanese university EFL students: attribute matching and gestalt training. Attribute matching training led to a significant improvement in the student's ability to understand and produce figurative language. Gestalt training made no difference. The implications of the findings are discussed.

英語には本来の語義を発展させた比喩的表現が多く、key issues, the foot of the page, breaking promisesなどの言い回しがある。日本人の同僚との共同研究で、2つの異なる訓練法（属性合わせとゲシュタルト・トレーニング）が、EFL環境での日本人大学生の比喩的表現の理解と産出に、どのような効果を与えるかを測定した。属性合わせでは、学習者による比喩的表現の理解・産出に、統計的に有意な改善点が見られた。ゲシュタルト・トレーニングでは、変化は見られなかった。最後に、本研究が示唆することを述べる。

## Bringing extensive reading into oral communication classes—*Rob Waring*

This article shows how discussions can be introduced and managed using Extensive Reading in an oral communication class.

## Turning passive students into active learners—*Ken Wilson*

A lot of learning is passive—students have to spend a lot of time listening to the teacher and/or reading a text. Exercise material is particularly passive. There is nothing wrong with some passive learning—in fact a percentage of our students probably prefer studying this way. However, when a lesson becomes too passive, the ability of students to actually benefit diminishes rapidly. This article will present some ideas about how to turn passive lessons into active ones. We will look at the most common aspects of a passive lesson—teacher presentation of new language, reading passages, and exercise material—and look at ways to get students more involved. I will aim to prove my main thesis—learners retain more of what they are taught when they are actively involved in the learning process.

学習形態のほとんどは受動的である。つまり、学習者は、教師の言うことに耳を傾けているか、テキストを読んでいるかに多くの時間を費やしているのである。練習問題は、特に受動的である。こうした受動的な学習は、決して悪いものではなく、実際に、そうした学習法を好む学習者もいるのである。しかしながら、授業が受動的になりすぎると、実際の学習者の能力を伸ばす力は急速に落ちていく。本論は、授業を受動的なものから能動的なものに方向転換するアイデアを呈示する。受動的な授業に多く共通するいくつかの側面（教師による新しい言語、リーディング用テキスト、練習問題などの提示の仕方）に注目し、学習者をもっと積極的に授業に参加させる方法に着目する。本論では、学習者は、学習過程に積極的に参加するときに、教えられたことを覚え、自分のものにするということを明らかにする。

## Shadowing plus: Stepping stones to fluency—*John Wiltshier*

This paper sets out to explain the merits of peer-shadowing classroom activities as one way to help students improve their fluency and also to explain the differences between shadowing and audio-lingual listen and repeat. Previous work on shadowing by other researchers is reviewed. Then the unique characteristics and focus of five varieties of shadowing are introduced. The differences of each variety of shadowing are briefly explained. The second half of the article highlights features of peer-shadowing classroom activities. These features are compared to audio-lingual listen and repeat activities to show how peer-shadowing is different.

# Talk, talk, talk: Grammar and spoken English

**Ronald Carter**

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Sponsored by Cambridge University Press

**Keywords:** spoken English, grammar, corpus, language teaching

## Writing

For many centuries dictionaries and grammars of the English language have taken the written language as a benchmark for what is proper and standard in the language, incorporating written and often literary examples to illustrate the best usage. Accordingly, the spoken language has been downgraded and has come to be regarded as relatively inferior. What is written and what is literate is accorded high cultural status. Even dramatic performances are often valued and studied primarily as written text. Even when spoken language has been preserved, it is in the form of a transcribed *text* which, as we can see below, is often laid out in such a way as to highlight and to discredit its *formless* character.

## Speaking

Perhaps the greatest single event in the history of linguistics was the invention of the tape recorder, which for the first time has captured natural conversation and made it accessible to systematic study. (Halliday, 1994, p. xxiii)

The spoken language has also been largely under-described and under-theorised within linguistic science. Examples of language for analysis have been based on the assumption that language consists of sentences and that, because of the essentially detached and context-free nature of written texts, context can be more or less removed from the equation. Until the advent of the disciplines of discourse analysis and pragmatics in the

80s and 90s, the history of linguistics in the twentieth century has been largely a history of the study of detached written examples with many of the characteristic features of spoken discourse dismissed as peripheral.

## The speech-writing continuum

There are of course several links between speech and writing. There are many written messages such as text messages on mobile phones, emails, or communications in computer chat rooms which work in a manner closer to spoken language. And most formal, public speeches, for example, are carefully crafted, written-to-be-spoken texts, even if they are often written to sound spontaneous and natural. Generally, different models have grown up for analysing spoken and written language and it is widely agreed that there is no simple, single difference between speech and writing (see Halliday, 1989; Carter & McCarthy, 2006).

## Computer corpora

In the latter part of the twentieth century there were very rapid advances both in audio-technology and in the development of tape-recorders and there are now extensive collections available of people from different backgrounds speaking in both formal and informal contexts. Major collections of such data are called corpora. The data collected on tape are transcribed and made computer-readable so that very fast and sophisticated computer programmes can then identify the most common structures alongside the actual contexts in which they are used.

Inevitably, the presence of such forms causes difficulties for our descriptions of English grammar and leads to questions about what it is now possible to call *standard* English, for such forms are standard in so far as they are used standardly by all speakers even if (for the reasons given above) these same forms do not appear or only very rarely appear in standard published grammars of English (see Carter & McCarthy, 1997, 2006).



## A sample stretch of talk

The following example shows some of the kinds of units frequently encountered in a spoken corpus. Problematic areas for a traditional grammar are italicized:

[Speakers are sitting at the dinner table talking about a car accident that happened to the father of one of the speakers]

Speaker 1 I'll just take that off. *Take that off.*

Speaker 2 *All looks great.*

Speaker 3 [laughs]

Speaker 2 Mm.

Speaker 3 Mm.

Speaker 2 I think your dad was amazed wasn't he at the damage.

Speaker 4 Mm.

Speaker 2 It's not so much the parts. It's the labour charges for

Speaker 4 *Oh that. For a car.*

Speaker 2 Have you got hold of it?

Speaker 1 Yeah.

Speaker 2 *It was a bit erm.*

Speaker 1 Mm.

Speaker 3 Mm.

Speaker 2 *A bit.*

Speaker 3 That's right.

Speaker 2 I mean they said they'd have to take his car in for two days. And he says All it is is s= straightening a panel. *And they're like*, Oh no. It's all new panel. You can't do this.

Speaker 3 *Any erm problem.*

Speaker 2 *As soon as they hear insurance claim.* Oh. Let's get it right.

Speaker 3 Yeah. Yeah. *Anything to do with*

Speaker 1 *Wow.*

Speaker 3 *+coach work is er+*

Speaker 1 Right.

Speaker 3 *+fatal isn't it.*

Speaker 1 *Now.*

[CANCODE data (1)]

Here we may observe the following general phenomena:

- Punctuation is marked by the taking of turns rather than by a transition from one sentence to another. These turns are not neat and tidy, however. The speakers regularly interrupt each other, or speak at the same time, intervene

in another's contribution or overlap in their speaking turns.

- The speakers *co-construct* each other's discourse. There is backchannelling (*Mm; Yeah*), in which speakers give supportive feedback to each other.
- There are aborted or *incomplete* structures (*It was a bit erm... A bit.*) Incomplete structures can be collaboratively completed by others or simply left as understood (*That's right*).
- This conversational extract involves more than two speakers. But the same features of conversational management apply whether the talk be multi-party or two-party.

The notion of sentence does not apply easily to the data.

- There are indeterminate structures (is the second *Take that off* an ellipted form of *I'll just take that off*? Is it an imperative? Is *All looks great* well-formed? What is the status of *And they're like*?). *Like*, for example, appears to function here to mark direct speech.
- Ellipsis is common (*fatal, isn't it?*). Ellipsis occurs when words are omitted because it is assumed that they can be understood from context or from shared knowledge between speaker and hearer.
- There are phrasal utterances, communicatively complete in themselves, but not sentences (*Oh that, For a car, Any problem*).
- There are *subordinate* clauses not obviously connected to any particular main clause (*As soon as they hear insurance claim*).
- There are words whose grammatical class is unclear (*Wow, Now*) For example, *now* seems to be organisational or structural, functioning to close down one section of the conversation and to move on to another topic. Such discourse markers connect one phase of the discourse with another.

These phenomena, normal in everyday talk, raise questions about the nature of basic units and classes in a spoken grammar. There is by no means a simple answer to these questions, but one's stance towards them can have major implications for what is considered correct or acceptable in a grammar. External evidence points us towards a socially-embedded grammar, one whose criteria for acceptability are based on adequate communicability in real contexts, among real participants. It is evidence that cannot simply be dismissed as ungrammatical; only a decontextualised view of language would sanction such a view.



## Basic forms of spoken grammar

Here are some of the most common examples of specifically spoken grammar forms. They are not selected at random but on the basis of an examination of the extensive computer corpora of spoken English outlined above. They are standardly spoken by users of British English throughout different regions, occupations, and contexts of use by speakers of different ages, gender and social class, and occupation. The examples cited here are taken from the 1 billion word Cambridge International Corpus (CIC):

- forms which are termed *heads*. They occur at the beginning of clauses and help listeners orient to a topic:

*The white house on the corner*, is that where she lives?

*That girl, Jill, her sister, she* works in our office.

*Paul*, in this job that he's got now, when *he* goes into the office *he's* never quite sure where he's going to be sent.

*A friend of mine, his* uncle had the taxi firm when we had the wedding.

*His cousin in Beccles, her boyfriend, his* parents bought *him* a Ford Escort for his birthday.

- forms which are termed *tails*. They occur at the end of clauses, normally echoing an antecedent pronoun and help to reinforce what we are saying:

*She's* a very good swimmer *Jenny is*.

*It's* difficult to eat, isn't it, *spaghetti?*

*I'm* going to have steak and fries, *I am*.

*It* can leave you feeling very weak, *it* can, though, apparently, *shingles*, can't it.

- *Ellipsis* in which subjects and verbs are omitted because we can assume our listeners know what we mean:

Didn't know that film was on tonight. (*I*)

Sounds good to me. (*It, That*)

Lots of things to tell you about the trip to Barcelona. (*There are*)

A: Are you going to Leeds this weekend?

B: Yes, I must. (*go to Leeds this weekend*)

Ellipsis in spoken English is mainly situational, affecting people and things in the immediate situation.

- *Discourse markers* where particular words or phrases are normally used to mark boundaries in conversation between one topic or bit

of business and the next. For example, items such as *anyway, right, okay, I see, I mean, mind you, well, what's more, so, now*. Thus, people speaking face to face or on the phone often use *anyway* to show that they wish to finish that particular topic or return to another topic. Similarly, *right* often serves to indicate that a speaker is ready to move on to the next phase of business.

*Anyway*, give Jean a ring and see what she says.

*Right, okay*, we'd better try to phone and see what they have to report.

The ordering of elements in the clause is likely to be different in spoken and written texts because of the real-time constraints of unrehearsed spoken language and the need in speech for clear acts of organisation and topicalisation, for, in other words, a kind of punctuation of speech. Discourse markers, for example, *can*, as it were, signal the start of a new paragraph.

- *Vague language* which includes words and phrases such as *thing, stuff, or so, or something, or anything, or whatever, sort of*. Vague language softens expressions so that they do not appear too direct or unduly authoritative and assertive. When we interact with others there are times where it is necessary to give accurate and precise information; in many informal contexts, however, speakers prefer to convey information which is softened in some way, although such vagueness is often wrongly taken as a sign of careless thinking or sloppy expression. A more accurate term should therefore be *purposefully vague language*.
- *Modal expressions*: In most standard written grammars modality is described mainly in terms of modal verbs (e.g., *may, might, can, could, must, should, ought to*). In spoken English, however, the picture is more varied and modal expressions play a part in making sure, in particular, that utterances don't sound too assertive or definite. Like vague language these modal expressions can also help to soften what is said. They include words and phrases such as: *possibly, probably, I don't know, I don't think, I think, I suppose, perhaps*. For example: [Students talking to each other in a group. They all know each other well and are talking informally about how they have changed since coming to university.]

A: But you don't notice so much in yourself, do you? *I don't think so, on the whole*.



B: *I don't know. I definitely feel different from the first year. I don't think I look any different or anything.*

A: *You're bound to keep changing really, all your whole life, hopefully.*

B: *I don't know, I think it's probably a change coming away, I suppose.*

- Modal expressions help to encode shifts in stance toward what we say. They are a particular feature of the face-to-face nature of spoken communication. So, an utterance may start definitely but is then softened before the utterance is completed or an utterance starts tentatively and then becomes more definite before being softened again.

*I suppose it must be sort of difficult to phone or whatever.*

*I feel they maybe should resign really.*

*We maybe ought to perhaps have a word with him about it?*

## Conclusion

It would, of course, be a mistake to assume, however, that these forms of grammar, though common in spoken English, are exclusive to spoken English. For example, the relative immediacy of forms such as email communication, advertising copy, and some notes, letters, and memos means that informality is often the preferred style and that a relative symmetry of relationship is deliberately constructed by such choices.

At the present time there may also be a broader cultural explanation for the phenomenon of spoken forms entering written discourse. At the beginning of the 21st century discourse has become more democratic. As society has become less formal and ceremonial in such domains as dress and social behaviour, so too has the language changed to more informal and symmetrical modes. People speak to each other more as equals and it is inevitable that they should also increasingly write to each other in similar ways, especially in contexts such as advertising or email communication where it is important not to talk down to someone.

This paper has attempted to prepare some ground and to offer material for discussion. It argues for the importance of greater knowledge about grammar and that such knowledge should go beyond single written sentences. It would be naïve to suggest that the forms of grammar described here represent the whole story by any means. For example, in discussions of spoken grammar how far is it possible to proceed without more detailed information about intonation

and tone of voice? And the data presented here offers an interesting challenge for the teaching of spoken English between corpus and classroom (O'Keeffe, McCarthy, & Carter, 2007), as well as raising broader ideological questions concerning the place of native speaker language in the classroom, issues to be considered in a plenary entitled *Spoken English: Written English: Challenging Assumptions* and other papers at the 2007 JALT conference. Analysis of spoken language is thus still in its infancy. But things are moving fast and, supported by new technologies, will move even faster from now on.

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publications with regard to this article are: *Exploring Spoken English* (Cambridge University Press, 1997) and *Cambridge Grammar of English* (Cambridge University Press, 2006) (both with Michael McCarthy) and (with David Nunan) *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* (Cambridge University Press).

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# A vocabulary size test

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**Keywords:** vocabulary testing, vocabulary size, assessment, proficiency

**T**HE VOCABULARY Size Test was developed to provide a reliable, accurate, and comprehensive measure of a learner's vocabulary size from the 1st 1000 to the 14th 1000 word families of English. There are several reasons for wanting to measure a non-native speaker's vocabulary size. One reason is to see how close the learner is to having enough vocabulary to be able to perform certain tasks such as read a novel, read newspapers, watch movies, and listen

to friendly conversations. There is now data on the vocabulary sizes needed to perform such receptive tasks (Nation, 2006) and this indicates that learners need to have a vocabulary close to 8,000 word families to do this. This assumes that proper names do not need to be known. Table 1 summarises the data from Nation (2006) showing the vocabulary sizes needed to reach 98% coverage of various kinds of text. When a learner has 98% coverage of a text, adequate unassisted comprehension is possible (Hu & Nation, 2000).

The goal of around 8,000 word families is an important one for learners who wish to deal with a range of unsimplified spoken and written texts. It is thus helpful to know how close learners are to this critical goal.

A second reason for measuring vocabulary size is to be able to chart the growth of learners' vocabularies. There is virtually no information on how quickly non-native speakers' vocabularies grow. Measuring this requires a test capable of measuring a large range of vocabulary sizes both longitudinally and across a group of learners.

A third reason for measuring vocabulary size

is to be able to compare non-native speakers with native speakers. Such comparisons could be useful in comparing rates of growth in second language learning settings (Do non-native speakers increase their vocabulary knowledge at a faster, slower, or similar rate to native speakers?) and in determining if there is a threshold, as suggested by the 98%

**Table 1. Vocabulary sizes needed to get 98% coverage (including proper nouns) of various kinds of texts**

Texts	98% coverage	Proper nouns
Novels	9,000 word families	1-2%
Newspapers	8,000 word families	5-6%
Children's movies	6,000 word families	1.5%
Spoken English	7,000 word families	1.3%

coverage figure, where further increase brings no noticeable effects on comprehension, reading pleasure, or reading speed.

### Other existing tests

The Vocabulary Levels Test (Nation, 1983; Schmitt, Schmitt & Clapham, 2001; Beglar & Hunt, 1999) is currently widely used to determine whether learners need to focus on high frequency words, academic words, or low frequency words. It is a diagnostic test that looks at separate slices of a learner's vocabulary (the 2nd 1000, the 3rd 1000, the 5th 1000, the Academic Word List, and the 10th 1000). There is no Academic Word List section in the Vocabulary Size Test and words from the Academic Word List can be found from the 1st 1000 to the 10th 1000 of the Vocabulary Size Test. The Vocabulary Size Test has a different purpose. It is not a diagnostic measure like the Vocabulary Levels Test, but is a proficiency measure used to determine how much vocabulary learners know.

Teachers and researchers have felt the need for a more comprehensive test of vocabulary size, and this has been reflected in attempts to fill the gaps in the Vocabulary Levels Test (at the 4th 1000, and 6th to 9th 1000 levels) through estimates of knowledge in these gaps by extrapolating from the scores on each side of the gap, for example using a learner's 3rd 1000 and 5th 1000 scores to estimate what the 4th 1000 might be.

Meara and Jones (1987, 1990) developed a computerized vocabulary size test (*the Eurocentres Vocabulary Size Test 10ka*) based on the first 10,000 words of Thorndike and Lorge's (1944) frequency count. They used a yes/no item type with one non-word item for every two real words. The non-word items were nonsense words which were used to measure the reliability of the learners' answers. Their test consisted of ten 1000 word levels.

The Vocabulary Size Test differs from the Eurocentres test in several important ways. It uses a different test format, multiple-choice compared with the yes/no format of the Eurocentres test. It puts the tested word in a short non-defining context, and it is based on a different set of word frequency lists from the Thorndike and Lorge lists. The Vocabulary Size Test is also freely available to teachers and researchers.

### The source of the words used in the vocabulary size test

The development of the Vocabulary Size Test has been greatly helped by the development of the

fourteen 1000 BNC word lists (Nation, 2006). The lemma-based Thorndike and Lorge (1944) and Leech, Rayson, and Wilson (2001) counts are not suitable for measures of receptive vocabulary size because the more inclusive word family is a more appropriate unit for such a receptive measure. The word family is more appropriate because learners beyond a minimal proficiency level have some control of word building devices and are able to see that there is both a formal and a meaning relationship between regularly affixed members of a word family. There is also increasing evidence that the word family is a psychologically real unit (Nagy, Anderson, Schommer, Scott, & Stallman, 1989; Bertram, Baayen, & Schreuder, 2000; Bertram, Laine, & Virkkala, 2000).

The word family unit used in the fourteen 1000 BNC word family lists (available for free download from <[www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation/nation.aspx](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation/nation.aspx)> along with the Range program) is set at level 6 of Bauer and Nation's (1993) scale of levels. This is a very inclusive definition of a word family making some families very large. However, level 6 only includes bases which are free forms. For example, *romance* and *romantic* (both in the 5th 1000 level) could not be members of the same family because their base is a bound form, not a free form. In addition, all of the family members at level 6 meet the criteria of regularity, frequency, productivity, and predictability used in developing the word family levels.

The word lists used to choose and sequence the test items differ from those described in Nation (2006). The lists in Nation (2006) were based on the whole 100,000,000 token British National Corpus. It was clear from this study that the largely formal written nature of the British National Corpus strongly affected the high frequency levels, meaning that items like *cat*, *hello*, *sun*, *worse* occurred in the 4th 1000 rather than at a higher frequency level. Similarly there were very formal words like *civil* and *commission* occurring in the 1st 1000 words. As a result the first twelve 1000 word lists were revised using word family range and frequency figures from only the 10 million token spoken section of the British National Corpus. This resulted in a more sensible ordering although the changes were not large. The Vocabulary Size Test is based on this spoken corpus ordering and the lists available from <[www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation/nation.aspx](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation/nation.aspx)> are the lists based on the spoken corpus.

Although it may seem a little strange to use a spoken corpus-based ordering for a test of written receptive knowledge, it was felt that the spoken



ordering more closely represented the order in which the intended test-takers might learn the words. Frequency of occurrence however is only one factor, although a very important one, affecting order of acquisition.

### The nature of the Vocabulary Size Test

The Vocabulary Size Test samples from the most frequent 14,000 word families of English. The test consists of 140 items (ten from each 1000 word level) (see the Appendix). Here is a sample item from the 5th 1000 word level.

1. miniature: It is a **miniature**.
  - a a very small thing of its kind
  - b an instrument for looking at very small objects
  - c a very small living creature
  - d a small line to join letters in handwriting

The Vocabulary Size Test is a measure of written receptive vocabulary size. In order to answer the items, the test-takers have to have a moderately developed idea of the meaning of the word. This makes it a slightly more difficult test than the Vocabulary Levels Test (Schmitt, Schmitt, & Clapham, 2001), because the correct answer and the distractors usually share elements of meaning.

1. innocuous: This is **innocuous**.
  - a cheap and poor in quality
  - b harmless
  - c not believable
  - d very attractive-looking

The multiple-choice format was chosen:

- 1 to allow the test to be used with learners from a variety of language backgrounds.
- 2 to control the level of difficulty of the answers. That is each item attempts to tap roughly the same degree of knowledge of a word.
- 3 to make marking as efficient and reliable as possible.
- 4 to make learners demonstrate knowledge of each item.

The test words were all put in a simple non-defining context. Research by Henning (1991) has shown that the use of such a context is a desirable

feature. This is probably because it indicates the part of speech of the word, orients the test-taker to view it as an item of language use, and provides a little extra associational help in accessing the meaning.

The items measure receptive knowledge of vocabulary. That is, the learners are provided with the word form and have to access the meaning of the word. They need to have a moderately developed idea of the meaning of the word in order to be able to choose it from the four options. The Vocabulary Levels Test by contrast has distractors which are not related in meaning or form to the tested word, and thus in the Vocabulary Levels Test learners can get the answer correct if they have a small amount of knowledge of the word. The Vocabulary Size Test is thus a little more demanding than the Vocabulary Levels Test.

The fourteen levels of the test are a way of organising the items in the test so that the test begins with the items more likely to be known. It is not necessary to make learners sit all fourteen levels when the test is used with elementary or intermediate learners, but they should sit a few levels beyond their present level. This is because frequency level is not a perfect indicator of which words are likely to be known. Frequency level is strongly related to the likelihood of a word being known (scores at each level drop as a learner progresses through the test), but there are other factors involved in knowing a word and frequency counts can give differing results depending on the size and nature of the corpus used. In other words, a learner with a vocabulary size of 3,000 words is likely to know some words beyond this level and is likely not to know some words within this level.

### Making the multiple-choice test items

The choices were all written using a restricted vocabulary. For the first and second 1000 sample, only words from the first 1000 of West's (1953) General Service List were used. As far as possible, the words in the definitions were of higher frequency than the item being defined, but for the highest frequency items, this was not always possible, for example, there was no possibility for defining *time* except with words of lower frequency (e.g., *hours*). For words in samples from 3000 upwards, the defining words were drawn from the first 2000 of West's General Service List. Occasionally it was necessary to use some other

item, but the frequency of the defining word and the item were always checked in the British National Corpus, and the defining word was always significantly more frequent than the item being defined. An example of this is *haunt*, where it was necessary to use *ghost* in the definition.

Each item was put in a non-defining context. All the definitions were then required to be substitutable in the context sentence. The contexts were chosen to reflect the most frequent environments for the item. Thus with *instance*, it was clear that the very high frequency of this arose from the phrase *for instance*, and so this was used as the context. Where the plural of an item was significantly more frequent than the singular, the context was made plural (e.g., *standard*). The part of speech chosen for the item was also a reflection of the highest frequency environment. A lot of care was put into making the distractors so that they were genuine choices and they were carefully checked in pilot testing.

### Interpreting the test results

Because there are ten items at each 1000 word level, each item in the test represents 100 word families. If a test-taker got every item correct, then it is assumed that that person knows the most frequent 14,000 word families of English. A test-taker's score needs to be multiplied by 100 to get their total vocabulary size up to the 14th 1000 word family level.

Because the test is a measure of *receptive* vocabulary size, a test-taker's score provides little indication of how well these words could be used in speaking and writing. In addition, although vocabulary knowledge is the most important factor affecting the readability of a text (Klare, 1974), a test-taker's score is only a rough indication of how well a learner can read.

The greatest value of the test will be in measuring learners' progress in vocabulary learning. The most frequent 14,000 words of English along with proper nouns account for over 99% of the running words in written and spoken text (Nation, 2006). Although adult native speakers' vocabularies are much larger than 14,000 words, these 14,000 words include all the most important words.

Initial studies using the test indicate that undergraduate non-native speakers successfully coping with study at an English speaking university have a vocabulary of around 5,000-6,000 word families. Similarly competent non-native speaking doctoral students have around a 9,000 word vocabulary. At present data is being gathered to assess the reliabil-

ity and validity of the test. The test is available at <[www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation/nation.aspx](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation/nation.aspx)> and <[www.lex tutor.ca](http://www.lex tutor.ca)>.

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### Appendix

The appendix can be viewed online at <[jalt-publications.org/tlt/resources/2007/0707a.pdf](http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/resources/2007/0707a.pdf)>



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## JALT2007 • PLENARY SPEAKER

13

# Classroom discourse as a semiotic resource for EFL learning

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Sponsored by JALT

**Keywords:** classroom discourse, sociocultural theory, semiotic resource, mediational tools

**S**OCIOCULTURAL THEORY (SCT) and social theory of learning see learning as fundamentally social rather than individual, the relationship between the learner and the social world as dialectical rather than dichotomous, and learning as mediated by cultural artifacts (Vygotsky, 1978; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Classroom discourse studies based on the input-output information processing model have been criticized as predicated on a conduit metaphor of communication and the classroom is seen as a context for providing linguistic input to learners who then process the input and incorporate it into the interlanguage systems inside their heads. This model, a number of scholars have argued, represents an impoverished and a reductionist view of L2 learning (Atkinson, 2002; see Lantolf & Appel,

1994; Lantolf, 2000). This paradigm shift has led to a reconceptualization of language, context, and learning in profound ways. In EFL classrooms, the learners, the teacher, and the context in which learning takes place are dialectically related and they are constitutive of what is being learned.

Within the SCT research paradigm, classroom discourse has been reconceptualized as an important resource that mediates learning in the classroom. In EFL classrooms, classroom discourse is an even more important resource because it is all at once the mediational tool for and the object of learning. Donato (2000) points out that instructional conversations are relevant to language

learning because they capture a wider range of communicative and cognitive functions in pragmatically rich contexts and they socialize students into language learning. In my presentation, I argue that the importance of classroom discourse goes beyond that. Drawing on Halliday's (1978) notion of language as a social semiotic and Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of learning as participation, I argue that EFL classroom discourse is a major semiotic resource for the construal of

reality as well as the target language. Halliday (1993) sees learning as a social process and language as social semiotic. He points out that:





When children learn language, they are not simply engaging in one type of learning among many; rather, they are learning the foundations of learning itself. The distinctive characteristic of human learning is that it is a process of making meaning—a semiotic process; and the prototypical form of human semiotic is language. (p. 93)

In other words, when children learn a language, they are construing reality through construing a semantic system in which reality is encoded. Their *acts of meaning* should not be just taken as they are but as “instances of underlying systems—systems of meaning potential” (Halliday, 2004, p. 6, original emphasis). Hence, as an EFL learner learns the target language, he or she is simultaneously construing reality and learning how reality is construed in the target language. On the basis of this, I argue that classroom discourse processes are intersubjective processes in which the construal of reality through a foreign language by each learner shapes and is shaped by the construal of reality and the target language by other learners as well as the teacher with whom they interact as well as all the other resources which mediate the learning process, including the curriculum materials, pedagogical activities, and so on. Seen in this light, the importance of classroom discourse goes beyond capturing a wider variety of speech and cognitive functions: It is an emergent process which opens up a semiotic space that is immensely rich and affords opportunities for learners to appropriate these resources for meaning making as they participate in the construal of reality and the semiotic systems in the target language (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Studies of elementary foreign language classrooms have shown that despite the limited proficiency of the learners in the target language, instructional conversation was as rich a mediating resource as any other (Donato, 2000). In this presentation, data from a research project on learner interaction in primary EFL classrooms in Hong Kong will be used. The data consist of classroom discourse produced by children as they complete a group task of writing a story ending.

In the following section I will present an analysis of some excerpts for illustration. In order to understand the data, I will briefly outline the context of the data.

### Context of classroom discourse data

The data was collected from a Grade 6 primary EFL classroom where the children were mostly

from working class families. The teacher adopted a task-based approach to story writing and the task took several lessons to complete. She told the class a story about why there was a change of seasons. The children were given story pictures in sequence, introducing four characters in the story: The Goddess of the Earth; Polly, the Goddess' daughter; the God of the Underworld; and the God of all Gods. The story went as follows:

The God of the Underworld fell in love with Polly. He knew that he could not marry Polly and so he kidnapped her. In the Underworld, Polly did not eat anything because if she did, she could never leave the Underworld. The Goddess of the Earth was very unhappy and stopped taking care of the plants and the plants started to die. People were very unhappy because there was no food and they asked the God of all Gods to help. And so the God of all Gods told the God of the Underworld to send Polly back to Earth. However, when they were talking, Polly ate three strawberries, thinking that nobody could see her. Because of this, after nine months, the God of the Underworld came to take Polly away. And the Goddess of the Earth stopped taking care of the plants again. This is why we have summer and winter.

After telling the story, the teacher introduced a number of guided activities to ensure that learners were familiar with the characters of the story and the sequence of events in the story. She then asked them to write an alternative ending to the story. She also guided the students by asking them to decide first of all whether their story ending was happy or sad.

### Classroom discourse and semiotic systems

In this section, I will present one excerpt from a group discussion that will be presented in my keynote presentation. The group decided to write a happy ending and the final draft that they produced is as follows:

The God of the Underworld didn't listen to him. So the God of all Gods made him into a pig. Then Polly went back to the earth. Her mother felt very happy. So they started taking care of the plants again. This is why we have a lot of rice and vegetables to eat.

[Excerpt 1.1]

S1: The end of the story is a happy ending or unhappy?

S3: Happy.  
 S2: You want happy?  
 S3: I want happy.  
 S1: Very happy.  
 S2: I want very sad (laughs)... You want very happy?  
 S4: Yes.  
 S2: And you? (pointing at S4)  
 S1: Yes...  
 S2: So happy.

In the excerpt we can see that the teacher's instruction to decide on a happy or sad story ending provided the starting point for the collaborative discourse. This scaffolding from the teacher, or *guided participation* (Rogoff, 1990), served the important function of making the task manageable for young EFL learners. Instead of having to work with an open set of choices, they only needed to work on a system of two choices—happy or sad. This generated a decision-making process where all members were asked to indicate their preferences and the majority view was accepted. This selection shaped the subsequent discourse. As Rogoff points out, the process of guided participation is characterized not only by the adult structuring the children's roles and participation, but also children shaping the interaction by seeking involvement and demanding support from the adult and their peers. In the remaining discourse, we can see that a network of semantic systems emerged as each learner tried to establish the intersubjectivity with other participants in the construal of reality.

[Excerpt 1.2]

S3: I want he die.  
 S2: I want it too.  
 S1: Yes, we can... (verbalizing the first part of the sentence provided in the story) but he didn't listen...  
 S2: Yes, he didn't listen... and the God kill him...  
 Ss: (correcting S2) The God of all Gods... didn't listen.  
 S2: (rebutting) No, didn't listen.  
 S3: The God of the Underworld didn't listen to him.  
 S1: Yes, yes, Underworld.  
 Ss: (spelling out) u-n-d-e-r-w-o-r-l-d.  
 S1: Didn't listen... listen to him.  
 S3: So...  
 S2: So... the God of all Gods.  
 S1: The God of all Gods... The God of the... u-n-d-e-r. Underworld...  
 S3: (correcting S1) The God of the Underworld you have write already.

Ss: ...  
 S1: The God of all Gods.  
 S2: Kill him.  
 S1: Kill him.  
 S2: But I want...  
 S3: Yes kill him.

*Note.* Ss indicates more than one student talking at a time.

In these lines, the choice of a happy ending opened up a semiotic space in which the group explored how the God of the Underworld could no longer have power over Polly so that she could go back to the Earth again. S3 suggested that the God of the Underworld should die and this was agreed to by S2 and S1. S4 was silent and taken as consenting. S2 proffered the idea that the God of all Gods killed him and S1 and S3 concurred. However, we will see from Excerpt 1.3 that this suggestion opened up another system of meaning potential for S1.

[Excerpt 1.3]

S1: Oh no, no, it's not very good. I think the God of all Gods make him into a ghost, uh ... a ghost?  
 S3: Uh. (biting her finger, thinking)  
 S1: Make him into a ghost.  
 Ss: (thinking)  
 S3: Uh... make him, make him to be a people.  
 S2: Yes, yes, people, and he can't do something to her.  
 S1: Oh! I know, I know. Make him into a snake, a dog, or a fish.  
 S2: Pig.  
 S3: Yes, pig.  
 S1: A pig. Cow or pig?  
 S2: Cow. (laughs)  
 S1: So the God of all Gods make him into a cow... pig... cow...  
 S2: Cow or pig?  
 S3: Make him to be a cow.  
 S1 & S2: Into... into...

Turning the God of the Underworld into a ghost, suggested by S1, is an instance of the system of supernatural beings: A ghost is a lesser supernatural being than a god. The option of keeping the God of the Underworld alive but turning him into a lesser supernatural being opened up for S3 the possibility of denigrating him by turning him into a natural being, that is, a human being. This was immediately taken up by S2 who not only supported this option but also provided

the reason for his support (*he can't do something to her*). This suggests that for S2, the choice of human being was made over ghost in a system of meaning of natural and supernatural beings. The choice of a human being opened up for S1 the further choices of non-human beings, such as snake, dog, or fish which have even less power. The choices of non-human beings proffered by S1 consisted of higher (dog) and lower (snake, fish) living things. The choice of turning the God of the Underworld into a reptile or a fish rather than a dog could have been selected as a more severe form of punishment, if they were construed as choices in a system of order of living thing. Interestingly, S2 suggested *pig* instead. In Chinese culture, pigs carry a negative connotation and are often used as a metaphor for laziness. Cows symbolize hard work and turning a person into a cow means that one has to work hard for the rest of one's life after death and is considered also as a form of punishment. In other words, we see that the choices that were proffered and debated were interpreted as instances in a system of forms of punishment which are culturally rooted.

## Conclusion

The analysis shows that the systems of meaning that emerged in the discourse were instantiations of a complex network of meanings which was co-constructed by the learners. The processes of co-construction were shaped by a story that they had heard. The guidance provided by the teacher enabled them to participate in the discourse and negotiate meanings and the linguistic and sociocultural repertoire of each group member. In other words, the learners' participation in the meaning making process shaped and was shaped by the group's collective effort to make sense of a task, the real world as well as the fantastic world of the fairy story. Each contribution from the learner was a strategic move made in the emerging discourse in response to what he or she perceived as meaningful at that particular point in the discourse. It was bound up with learning the culture of that speech community, learning the way the language is used and for what purpose, and learning how to become a full participating member of that speech community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). My presentation will conclude by pointing out that understanding the meaning making processes in which learners are engaged, the cultural tools that mediate these processes, and the appropriation of such tools by learners in the participative process will help us to appreciate the importance of classroom discourse as a semiotic resource for EFL learning.

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# Paragons or parasites—are we failing our language learners?

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**Sponsored by Macmillan LanguageHouse**

**Keywords:** disillusionment, perception, responsibility, change

**A**RE WE failing our language learners? It's an unpleasant question, but one that has to be asked. What happens to all the energy and interest so typically seen at the start of students' English education? How does this result in such disillusionment and underachievement for so many learners in East Asia? Over the past several years, I've been conducting interviews with a cross-section of students between 18 and 23 from Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. The aim has been to find out how their journey with English started, where it led, and how their language learning experience has affected them. What I have found is a surprisingly uniform picture.

## Learner experiences at secondary level

In Japan, 19-year-old Yui is perhaps a typical example. *English classes were like a lullaby for me*, he explained. His memory of junior high school is of listening to his teacher reading aloud, slowly and incomprehensibly, passage after passage from an old textbook. Another interviewee from Japan, Motomasa, complained that the teacher made the class repeat vocabulary items, endlessly. *Again and again, we had to say apple, orange, things like that, for about thirty minutes.*

Song-Ae, a 19-year-old student from South Korea, commented that while her primary English classes were fun, at middle school she simply had to memorise, and be tested on long, complex texts about things she couldn't relate to. From Taiwan,

Ling Chung was typical in saying that she never spoke a word of English at high school, partly because the teacher never asked anyone to speak, and partly because to do so meant raising her hand and standing up in front of a class of forty-five students.

Other comments from interviewees echo these experiences; *We only studied grammar and vocabulary at high school, I never spoke at all in my class. None of us did.* Towards the end of high school, it seems many students did nothing but exam practice. *We just studied English to pass the university exam.*

Small wonder that students become disillusioned. The system has failed them. *We study a long time but feel ashamed that we can't speak*, says Motomasa.

## Learner experiences at tertiary level

But, what of students' experience of English at college and university? In fact, many students said that their enjoyment of English improved at university. This was attributed to factors such as greater resources, improved teaching, and increased access to native English-speaking teachers. Pair and group work, and even roleplay—unheard of at high school—were fairly widespread and much appreciated. Content-based teaching at college and university, where practised, was also popular.

However, even in higher education, students complained of uninspiring, old-fashioned textbooks. *The textbook topics were sometimes really strange*, commented Tzu-Hsin, from Taiwan. In many cases, coverage was superficial and clichéd, along the lines of *Italians like to eat pasta*. Traditional teaching practices again left limited opportunity to speak in class. Weaker students often resigned themselves to low-level practice of the same language they had been repeating for years at high school. Again, the spectre of exam practice overshadowed students, with many restricted to studying for TOEFL or TOEIC.



## Do native teachers make a difference?

One interesting perception among interviewees was their view of native English-speaking teachers. Most students interviewed had been taught by native speakers at some stage. There is no doubt that students liked to be taught by native speakers because typically this would involve more speaking, and students liked to listen to native-speaker accents. However, there were many complaints of poorly trained and unqualified native teachers. *Sometimes we thought we were wasting our time* (Ling Chung, Taiwan). Many commented, *I used to do my homework in my English class.*

Students were quickly able to identify teachers who were adequately trained from those that were unqualified. They pointed out that native teachers who showed little knowledge of the language or had few teaching skills found it difficult to maintain students' motivation, or keep order in class.

The overriding view was that native English teachers were welcome as long as they were trained and able to teach. Even then, this did not guarantee success. One Japanese student commented his private high school had a high proportion of native English-speaking teachers with a military background. Their macho and rather intimidating behaviour actually made students *less forthcoming* than with their Japanese English teachers!

Many students valued the fact that non-native teachers were able to help with specific language difficulties. *They can explain the meaning of words easily* was a common observation. Students appreciate non-native teachers for their better understanding of the language problems they face. *If a Korean teacher can teach us well, with interesting books, then it would be better to have a Korean teacher not a native English teacher.* Non-native teachers were considered better-trained on the whole than native teachers. As one interviewee, Wen Chung, commented, *Taiwanese English teachers know how to teach.* The general consensus seemed to be that a mixture of native teachers and non-native teachers was best, and to have a non-native teacher was always preferable to a poorly-trained native teacher.

## What students say they want

Students were clear that class time is valuable to them. They were keen to use this time as fruitfully as possible. They complained that there was too much focus on vocabulary and grammar. *We can improve our vocabulary and grammar ourselves.*

*There are a lot of good textbooks for self-study. In class, students want authentic practice in speaking and listening, up-to-date materials, stimulating topics that reflect their lives, and more opportunity to talk about things that interest them. Interviewees stressed they wanted to learn. Even if it's a difficult text, we are happy to read using a dictionary and the Internet.*

## Students taking responsibility

Students from Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan are aware their mindset can sometimes hold them back. They often commented they were shy of speaking their minds in class, and were worried about making mistakes. *Japanese are shy and very slow thinking.* But many went on to add that young people today are changing, and becoming less shy. *If the teacher is friendly, students will respond.*

## Teachers taking responsibility

There are signs that teachers are changing, too. As younger, better-trained teachers emerge, using more modern methodology, interviewees speak of more interaction in class. Those with friends or family in high school and college confirm this. Educators who keep informed, engage in professional development, and attend conferences like JALT, are well-placed to continue pushing reform forward by encouraging more teachers to break out of their comfort zone. We need to see less emphasis on teaching for exams, more dynamic teaching practices, and more investment in resources, teacher-training, and curriculum development so we can meet students' needs.

## Conclusion

This study is the result of over 200 low-key, informal interviews over several years with Japanese, South Korean, and Taiwanese students studying at language school or college in the UK. I have simply tried to gather a snapshot of experiences, with students talking openly and honestly from the heart. I have not taken a scientific or quantitative approach here. However, I expect that much of what learners have said may resonate with you.

We know change is needed. We can all do something. The fact is, unless we accept this responsibility we are no better than parasites making careers out of a system that, despite modest improvements, is still failing our students.

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# Learning to read in a foreign language

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Sponsored by Oxford University Press

**Keywords:** foreign language reading

**T**HE PURPOSE of this article is to examine common approaches to teaching reading to second and foreign language (FL) learners. I begin with a brief discussion of the nature of reading and how we learn to read. I then provide an overview of four approaches to teaching reading to FL learners and discuss their strengths and weaknesses.

### The nature of reading

Models and definitions of reading are thick on the ground. From a cognitive point of view, my definition that works well for FL reading teaching is this:

Reading is a number of *interactive processes* involving the reader and the text. Readers use their knowledge of the world, the topic, the language, to interact with the text to *create, construct, or build* meaning.

I find this definition useful because it applies to both first language (L1) and FL contexts. It is important to note that this definition claims that readers *create* meaning. Of course there are texts that allow for only a single or literal meaning, such as: *Sachiko was born in 1975*.

Reading can also be looked at from an affective point of view. For example, I like to think of reading as *fun*. And reading is also *magic*. It can take us to the most incredible places. Without leaving our chairs, we can travel to different countries and experience different cultures.

Let's now look at how we learn to read. Like models and definitions, there are numerous accounts or explanations for the process of learning to read. One that I like is relatively simple but, at the same time, has major implications to the teaching of FL reading: *We learn to read by reading*. Further, the more reading our students do, the better readers they become.



### Approaches to teaching FL reading

The three most widely used approaches to teaching FL reading are *grammar translation*, *comprehension questions and language analysis*, and *skills and strategies*. These three are often categorized as *intensive reading*. Let's look briefly at each of these three intensive reading approaches.



## Grammar translation

Grammar translation needs little explanation for teachers and learners of English in Japan and many other Asian countries. In countries where English is taught as a foreign language (in contrast to countries where English is taught as a second language), the oral use of English (listening and speaking skills) may not be as important as a reading knowledge of English. In such cases, teaching English and teaching the reading of English is often the same thing. As a means of studying English, students may be taught to read texts written in English by translating them into the students' first language.

A grammar-translation approach to the teaching of FL reading often takes the following form in the classroom: The teacher reads aloud a short passage in English while the students follow along in their textbooks. The teacher then reads the passage sentence by sentence, and the students read each sentence aloud after the teacher. This is followed by an oral word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence translation by students. Meaning is taken at the sentence level, with less attention paid to the meaning of the text as a whole. Meaning is also constructed via the students' first language, not directly from English.

## Comprehension questions and language analysis

This approach centers on a textbook containing short passages that demonstrate the use of foreign-language words or points of grammar. These texts, short enough to encourage students to read them word-by-word, are followed by comprehension questions and exercises.

In class, the teacher introduces the text to be read, and usually pre-teaches any new vocabulary. The text is then assigned for reading as homework, together with the comprehension questions from the textbook. In the next class, students read the text out loud, with the teacher correcting pronunciation mistakes. This is followed by students being called on to answer the comprehension questions. Various grammar and vocabulary exercises from the textbook are worked through. The purpose of using language exercises and texts that exemplify points of language is, like grammar-translation, the teaching of the foreign language. The purpose of the comprehension questions, the heart of this approach, is, however, less clear. It could be to check the students' understanding of the text, to facilitate learning, or to make sure that the learners have read the assignment.

It is common for grammar translation and comprehension questions and language analysis to be combined in the teaching of FL reading.

## Skills and strategies

This approach focuses on the skills exhibited by fluent readers, and the strategies that readers use to comprehend a text. Generally, a skills and strategies reading lesson begins with the teacher preparing her students to read a one or two-page passage from a textbook by providing any knowledge that they might need to understand the reading passage. This often involves pre-teaching certain vocabulary items that appear in the reading passage. Students then read the passage silently at their own speed while keeping in mind two or three *while-reading* questions, the answers to which they will find in the passage. After reading, the students share their answers to these questions, perhaps in pairs or small groups. Students then complete various tasks or exercises that require them to demonstrate a global comprehension of the passage and their grasp of particular reading skills or strategies (e.g., finding the main idea, making inferences).

## Extensive reading

The fourth approach is extensive reading (ER). This is often seen as more than an approach to FL reading instruction but as *an approach to the teaching and learning of language* that involves students in reading large quantities of easy and interesting material in the FL. The goal is to improve students' overall FL proficiency and their attitudes toward FL and motivation for learning. ER can be blended into any FL course and program, regardless of the focus or methodology.

One of the major characteristics of ER is that students select their own reading material. Allowing learners to select what they want to read is the key to ER and is based on the view, mentioned previously, that we learn to read by reading. Students are more likely to read material in which they are interested.

Another feature of ER is that learners read easy books—books and other material that are well within their reading competence. Not everyone agrees with using easy materials. Many teachers believe that learners must read difficult texts; they also believe that learners need to be challenged when learning to read. Perhaps they think that reading difficult texts somehow gets them used to reading materials written for L1 reading.

This is a mistake. It confuses the means with the end. That is, our goal in teaching learners to read is to have them read literature that is written for native readers. But we should not start with that goal! We need to start with books and material especially written for beginning and intermediate levels of reading ability. Learners have to read texts they find easy and enjoyable to facilitate the learning process.

### A brief critique

Intensive reading approaches have major drawbacks. A grammar-translation approach does not allow students to *create* meaning in English. It requires the students to *translate* the text word-for-word. This is not reading; it is translating. The comprehension question-based approach confounds the teaching of the FL with the teaching of reading. In neither of these two approaches do learners do enough of the one thing they need to do to learn to read: reading.

A skills and strategy approach is really appropriate for students who can already read. Before we can teach FL students reading skills and strategies, we must help them become readers in the FL. Also, like the other two intensive approaches, it does not allow students to read, read, and read some more.

Extensive reading, in contrast, does provide opportunities for learners to engage in reading. It is the only approach that offers learners the potential for learning to read and enjoying FL reading. So if your goal is to have your students learn to read, then consider an ER approach.

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## My daily chicken soup for the ELT soul

**Steven Gershon**

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Sponsored by Macmillan LanguageHouse

**Keywords:** ice-breakers, planning, collocations, fluency, conversation

**G**OLFERS, FISHERMEN, and nurses have it easy. When the green is hidden by sand traps, when that 20 kilogram tuna swims away with the bait, when the clinic is full of coughs and sniffles... inspiration, affirmation, and insight

are only an Amazon click away—in the guise of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Now everyone, from pet lovers to prisoners, can savor the comforting broth of stories to open the heart and rekindle the spirit.

Well, almost everyone. What about the humble ELT professional, putting in countless classroom hours of PPP, searching endlessly for that perfect listening text, struggling stoically to get students into pairs? Where do we find inspiration when Keiko clams up, when Chiho chatters on her keitai, when Hiroshi's head hits the desk in silent slumber? We need our very own Chicken Soup to affirm, justify, to motivate the ELT soul. But we're busy people, planning lessons, making handouts,

judging speech contests. We want our Chicken Soup in bite-sized, daily doses, like those on the note-pad sized page-a-day calendars offering a daily thought, curious quote or useless fact.

So, let's imagine we could find our very own inspirational ELT Page-a-Day calendar. What would its daily offering be? A tricky grammar point clearly explained? A classroom management tip to tame that class of 50 1st-years? A provocative proverb that shines a new light on our well-worn ways?

Here's a week's worth of pages from my Chicken Soup for the ELT Soul calendar:

**Monday: *The turtle progresses only when sticking his neck out***

Most of us have taught classes in which the students were, for lots of reasons (unpleasant past experience, lack of confidence, enculturated classroom passivity), reticent to speak in class. It's that old, familiar, overdeveloped affective filter that Krashen (1981) warned us about.

The problem is that if students are unwilling to take risks, to *stick their necks out* and share experiences, express opinions, volunteer to answer questions, then the classroom ends up becoming a dull, low-energy place. I'm therefore determined to do whatever it takes to foster a comfortable, supportive, risk-taking atmosphere. This means lots of get-to-know-you activities early on, even if that involves waiting a week or two to open the textbook. To me it's time well spent, as the alternative can make for a very long semester. So I start off with an armful of fun, doable ice-breakers to get students feeling comfortable enough to stick their necks out. That helps them and it helps me.

**Tuesday: *Success waits at the crossroads of preparation and opportunity***

I expect students to be on-task for a major chunk of lesson time. But there are times in every lesson when other class business takes place, like at the beginning and end of the lesson dealing with latecomers and absences, or in the middle of the lesson transitioning between tasks or when students need to find a partner for an activity.

These are all opportunities to expand the use of English in class and thereby turn our classroom into a more natural *English Zone*. Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not hung-up about a little Japanese in class. But as long as we're in an English lesson, why not function as much as possible in

English. Experience tells me that's what the students want too. And to make sure that happens, I prepare the students with the language they need for all the stuff that normally goes on in a lesson—on and off-task. They feel empowered. And I feel I've given them the opportunity to work in a more productive English Zone.

**Wednesday: *A little planning goes a long way***

It's happened to me too often in class. We do a warm-up, I introduce the topic (*travel, shopping, work and jobs, whatever*), I write a few things on the board, I get the students into pairs, I tell them to *talk to your partner about...*, I say *OK, go!* and then I stand there for a few minutes listening to... the sounds of silence.

Teacher Training 101 taught us the basics of instructional planning: how to plan courses, plan units, and plan lessons. Fine, but here I'm talking about planning from the learners side of things—language planning. Yes, I know it may seem weird to suggest students should *plan* their conversation. After all, conversations in real life are not normally planned, they just happen, right?

Well, yes and no. First of all, if we thought about it, we'd realize how much internal rehearsal we all do in the throes of oral interaction. And we also need to recognize that the classroom is not real life. It's a bridge between the sociolinguistic demands of real life interaction, and the students' developing L2 competence. And as such, an element of imposed scaffolding, even for seemingly natural conversation, is a useful part of the learning process. There's also research (Foster, 1996) supporting the notion that a little structured planning time preceding oral tasks can go a long way to develop fluency, grammatical complexity, and range of vocabulary. That's what I like, a small investment with a big pay-off.

**Thursday: *A man is known by the company he keeps***

OK, maybe this isn't really true for people. But according to language corpus researchers, it is certainly true for words. Corpora (large collections of naturally occurring texts), aside from giving us useful data about the frequency of words used in daily life, also tell us a lot about common collocations, or word combinations.

Now, it turns out that English is full of collocations (*bright idea; heavy rain; make a point; take a breath*), which not only make speech more precise,



but also more natural and fluent. In fact, many vocabulary experts say that native speakers' collocational competence is what mainly distinguishes them from non-fluent language learners. The idea is that language basically consists of prefabricated chunks of lexis, with collocation being a key ingredient of these chunks (Hill, 1999). It follows that collocations (or lexical chunks) are the key to fluency. Actually, it makes sense. Native speakers have a large fund of ready-made, easily-accessible, chunks of language in their mental lexicon, so they can speak (and write) more fluently. I like that idea, and so, I try to come up with vocabulary activities that focus on the company words keep.

### Friday: *It takes two to tango*

Although the bodies hip-hopping in their own private acrobatic space in trendy clubs might persuade us otherwise, dance tends to be a social, interactive activity. Partners move in sync to a shared rhythm, respond gracefully to each other's leads, quickly repair any lapses in timing or direction, and (usually) manage to avoid stepping on each other's toes.

That's a bit like conversation, which also involves a lot of mutual to and fro. And in order for the interaction to proceed smoothly, the participants often employ strategies to manage the communicative flow, for example opening and closing conversations, introducing new topics, indicating understanding, seeking clarification, returning a question, or softening a reply. In short, participants use techniques to keep the conversation from getting stuck or breaking down.

We all do this conversation management dance without much thought in our own language, and so do our students. The tricky bit is doing it in a foreign language, when the steps are not always the same and the real-time linguistic demands can be daunting. I therefore introduce my students to simple strategies they can use in their conversation practice. To my mind, this empowers students with more awareness of the social and linguistic conventions of conversation. In turn, they can see their own communicative skills develop along with their increasing command of grammar and vocabulary. That means they begin to see themselves as effective, confident communicators in our *Eigo* tango.

So, that's this week's worth of Chicken Soup Page-a-Day sustenance. I readily admit they are mostly *after the fact* justifications for what I already do in the classroom. However, I figure it's

never a bad thing to find pithy proverbial support for one's pedagogic practice. Speaking of which, I need to start thinking about the daily menu for the rest of the semester. Any ideas?

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# Why don't my students enjoy working in pairs and groups?

**Leo Jones**

**Freelance writer**

Sponsored by Cambridge University Press

**Keywords:** fluency, speaking, advice, tips

## Why do we have to work in pairs and groups?

Do these students' remarks sound familiar?

*I feel scared and stressed when I have to speak English.*

*I feel stupid talking English. I make mistakes and don't know enough vocabulary.*

*I feel embarrassed speaking bad English.*

*I don't want to listen to other students talking bad English because I'll learn their mistakes.*

*My teachers speak wonderful English. I want to learn from them.*

*I can't talk English until when my English is much better.*

*Talking English is too difficult.*

*I can't think of anything interesting to say in a discussion.*

*There are too many students in the class for pair work. My teacher can't listen to all of us.*

If they do strike a chord, I'd like to share with you some thoughts and ideas on making the most of pair and group work.

controversial activities like listening and reading—or even grammar.

For speaking practice, we may favor whole-class discussions. But, even in a small class, during whole-class discussions:

- Only the brave, self-confident ones dare to speak.
- Shy students say nothing (which they may prefer).
- Students with no strong opinions, or interesting experiences to share, keep quiet.
- Some students are afraid the others will laugh at them if they make mistakes—and so say nothing.
- Most students are unwilling to expose themselves by saying anything personal in public—and so say nothing.

In a whole-class discussion, most students are silent *most* of the time—and have no chance to improve their conversation skills.

## You do know enough. You can talk in English!

The first step is to persuade students to talk in English during pair work when they're unsupervised. In a large class, we can't monitor everyone, so students on the other side of the room (or in the middle of a row) can talk Japanese if they want to, switching to English when we get closer. We may need to persuade students that speaking in English all the time in an English class is essential. But some students may not have the courage at first.

How can we encourage everyone to speak in English in pairs and groups? Here are some ideas:

- Some students may need a lot of guiding, coaxing, supporting, encouraging, and praising.
- Discuss with the class why pair and group work is necessary.
- Persuade everyone that mistakes don't matter for the moment. What's important is talking in English.
- *Try it in English, and I'll help you to improve.* Careful, sympathetic monitoring helps each

## CHALLENGING



## ASSUMPTIONS

To begin with, we can't assume that students will enjoy pair and group work, especially if they've had bad experiences in previous courses. Sometimes there can be so much resistance from students that we spend less and less time on pair and group work, preferring to focus on less con-



group feel that you're helping them. Positive feedback helps everyone feel they're making some progress—but they shouldn't expect to make giant strides in a few weeks!

- At first, we need to start with small steps, short tasks, and simple discussions. It's unreasonable to expect students to talk in English for too long at first. Even a whole minute of English conversation may be stressful for students who are unused to pair or group work.
- *Repeat after me.* Choral repetition may seem childish, but a few moments having students repeat useful expressions and conversational gambits in chorus can work wonders. Students need time to get their tongues round new expressions, and doing this in chorus is a non-stressful way of helping them. It also gives everyone a chance to practice the appropriate intonation and tone of voice.
- *Pairs of three* can help if students are tongue-tied or have little to say. Even if the book says *Pair work*, there may be fewer embarrassing silences in a group of three. Pairs of three are also more likely to talk in English than Japanese.
- Separate persistent Japanese speakers and put them with different partners. (This may involve separating best friends, but never mind.)
- Impose an *English only* rule. (Maybe you can fine students who talk in Japanese—and spend the proceeds on a class party at the end of the semester!)
- If all else fails, model dialogues can help. A short dialogue of about four turns can be learned, then practiced, and then acted out in pairs. And then the model dialogue can become the starting point or springboard for spontaneous conversation.

### Use your imagination! Take risks!

So, we've persuaded students to talk in English in pair and group work. The next step is encouraging students to experiment with English, and to become more confident. This may not be straightforward, however.

In this example, pairs of students are looking at some photos showing people doing scary things. The task is to talk about the pictures and decide how the people are feeling. How do we get students to progress from conversations like this:

A. *Photo number one. The woman, how she feel?*

B. *I don't know.*

A. *Maybe she fright?*

B. ?

A. *Maybe she fright doing this?*

B. *Yes, maybe.*

A. *Photo number two...*

and encourage them to attempt conversations more like this (though still with grammatical errors and more hesitation):

A. *Let's look at the first photo. How does the woman feel, do you think?*

B. *I'm not sure but I guess she's a bit scared. It looks like, you know, a scary situation.*

A. *But she's laughing. I think she's having a lot of fun.*

B. *Well, you could be right. But... er... but maybe she's just pretending not to be scared.*

A. *How do you mean?*

B. *I mean... er... she doesn't want the others to know she's scared.*

A. *Oh right! Yes, I see what you mean. How would you feel in that situation?*

B. *Me? Oh, I'd be quite excited. I've always wanted to try that. How about you?*

A. *Well, ...*

A tall order, for sure! But here are some ideas which may help:

- Brainstorming vocabulary beforehand and writing up useful phrases on the board can help students to feel ready for a discussion.
- Demonstrate or model a possible conversation while the class listens. Choose one of your more confident students to be your partner as you begin the conversation—but don't go too far in case you discourage students from using their own ideas as their conversations continue.
- Ask everyone to be quiet for a few moments before they start talking to each other, taking time to reflect and plan what to say before they speak—maybe making some brief notes to help them remember their ideas.
- After a discussion in pairs, form *pairs of pairs* and ask everyone to share what they discussed previously, and then continue the discussion in groups of four. (For this to work there needs to be an even number of pairs to start with.)
- If the pairs and groups are feeling isolated, continue the discussion as a whole class for a few minutes at the end, asking some volunteers to report on what they talked about.
- Encourage students to share personal experiences and ideas, using questions like: *Have you*

ever...? How would you feel? What did you do? What do you enjoy about...? Have you tried...? and so on. A puzzle that's worded like this: *A man wants to get across a river... How can he do this without...?* is much less effective than one worded like this: *You and your partner want to get across a river... How can you do this without...?*

- Encourage students to ask each other follow-up questions: *Why do you think so? How do you mean? Can you explain, please? Can you give me an example? What did you do? What did you say? How did you feel?* and so on.
- Make sure students have at their disposal the kinds of emotional expressions that help them to express their feelings in English. Expressions like *Wow! That's a great idea! Brilliant! Absolutely! Really? That's interesting!* and *Fantastic!* are essential if students are to feel fully involved in a discussion. (Choral repetition of these expressions is necessary for students to be able to invest them with the right tone of voice and for them to be able to say them automatically.)
- Rearranging the class regularly helps students not to get *stale* by always talking to the same people. Different ideas from new partners help to stimulate students—there's more to discover, more to ask, and more to say.

### Don't take it too seriously! Have fun!

We want our students to use English, not only in discussions, but also to share experiences, narrate stories, and even tell jokes. Using English to solve problems is a particularly rewarding experience, but not if the tasks are too serious or too difficult.

A professor told me recently that she wanted her students to give short presentations to the rest of the class. She gave them plenty of time to prepare this in pairs—but everyone did it in their own language, and then gave the presentation in English. I'm sure this was because the task seemed important and complex, and everyone wanted to do their best (and not risk losing face in public). It was easier and more efficient to prepare the presentation in their own language.

The key is to give students *achievable* tasks—tasks that they can, with a little effort, manage to complete. A light-hearted, not-too-serious approach works best. This puzzle-solving activity is a good example:

Work in pairs. What are the next two numbers or letters in each sequence?

31 28 31 30 \_ \_  
O T T F F S S \_ \_  
Y Y H L Y E Y \_ \_

When faced with these puzzles students may do one of four things:

1. Think about them alone, in silence, then share their answers with their partner.
2. Say nothing, feeling bewildered or frustrated, and wait to be told the correct answers.
3. Discuss them in Japanese.
4. Discuss and brainstorm ideas in English, maybe consulting another pair to compare ideas—the preferred approach, of course!

But how can we stop students doing numbers 1, 2 or 3? (Incidentally, I've often tried this activity with groups of teachers and some of them have done 1, 2 or 3—Why?) Here are some ideas:

- Reassure everyone that getting the answers right isn't as important as talking in English.
- Explain that the purpose of the activity is to give everyone a chance to use their English. They'll be using English to communicate with each other as they try to solve the problems together, and as they say numbers and letters aloud.
- Ask everyone to take their time—there are no prizes for the first to finish. Some people like to finish a task quickly and feel frustrated if time is up before they've finished. But it's actually better to be still talking when time is up than be sitting in silence waiting for slower groups to stop talking. Before an activity we may need to remind students: *Take your time with these questions. It's not a race—it's a chance to practice talking English together.*
- Tell the class how long they have for the task. When students know how long they have for a discussion they can deal with each question more thoroughly. If not, they'll probably try to finish quickly, and their discussion will be superficial, and unrewarding.

Exercises can be done in pairs too! Crossword puzzles, vocabulary exercises, and grammar exercises can be treated as problem-solving tasks. Working together on an exercise is an excellent way for students to use English together in a natural way. And don't forget the value of having students comparing and discussing answers in pairs (in English!) after a listening exercise or a reading exercise.

## You are making progress! I'll help you to improve!

Students are often unaware that their English is improving, particularly if the tasks they do are graded and get progressively harder.

We can help students to appreciate their progress in various ways:

- If we always spend some time after each activity, giving students feedback on their performance, we can help students to benefit from the monitoring we've done. Pointing out mistakes and recommending conversation techniques help them to move forward and to appreciate that pair and group work isn't just *fun* but a serious technique.
- Make notes for feedback in a notebook, not on scrap paper. This shows everyone that we take monitoring very seriously. It also leaves us with a permanent record of previous lessons.
- Encourage questions during the feedback session. Questions arising from what they've just done are a valuable way of helping students to acquire new knowledge, or overcome doubts and worries.
- In a large class, it's not feasible to monitor every pair in every lesson. If we've neglected students in one lesson, we need to make sure we monitor them in the next lesson, or the one after that. Students who were inaccessible in the middle of a row should move to more accessible places in the next lesson.
- Doing an activity again, after feedback, can sometimes help students to feel immediate progress. First time: not so good. Second time: better!

## You have four minutes for this!

Students must always know how long they have for every activity, be it discussion, problem solving or doing an exercise. (Not always four minutes, of course—different activities need less or more time.) Group work takes more time than pair work. And if we're giving students time to reflect before they begin talking, the time starts after that.

Successful, interesting discussions can only happen when students know they have plenty of time. Open-ended activities are particularly ineffective in a large class. Groups who finish quickly will get bored waiting for slower groups to finish. Slower groups (who are having a lively discussion) will resent being interrupted in mid-discus-

sion. Most students will opt for a short, quick discussion so as to finish all the steps.

But time-limited discussions work well because students can pace themselves, dealing with each question or section thoroughly. Having set a time limit, we need to keep track of the time with a timer—all cell phones have one, or use a stopwatch. And it's helpful to say: *Another half minute* to warn everyone that time is nearly up. We should of course be flexible! If the activity is going really well say: *Do you need a bit longer?* Yes? OK, *another minute then*. Or if it's not going well: *Do you need longer?* No? OK, *let's stop in half a minute from now*. A loud signal may be needed in a large class to make ourselves heard if everyone is engrossed in their discussion! A little bell maybe?



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# Rethinking activities to incorporate theories of learning

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Sponsored by Thomson Learning

**Keywords:** brain-compatible teaching, fundamentals of learning, brain studies, teaching practices, materials design

**W**HAT A surprise. This year's conference theme, *Challenging Assumptions* and the posted question, *At the core and micro level, how does learning occur?* fit right in with work we've been doing over the past several years: developing a new speaking series based on brain studies and recent theories of learning. We'd like to explain why.

## A window to the brain

Although language teaching has been informed by education, psychology, sociology, and communication, historically it has been dominated by linguistics. For hundreds of years, from parsing to corpus studies, we've focused on how language works. Only recently, has the focus shifted from language to how language learning occurs—and for a good reason. Whereas language has been easy to study, learning—since it happens inside the brain—hasn't. Now, all that is changing.

Recent technological advances have made it

possible for the first time to see inside the brain. We can now, for example, even observe neurons in the process of learning. Such discoveries on the micro level are being bolstered by findings on the macro level: theories that redefine intelligence as coming in multiple forms

(Gardner, 1983), memory as a part of emotional system (Goleman, 1995, p. 21), and communicative competence as a product of *mindfulness* (Gudykunst, 1995, p. 16).

Our understanding of learning is growing by leaps and bounds. Why then, is the way we teach so slow in following suit? As Knowles (1990) points out, our standard educational pedagogy has not changed much since the 11th century when it was developed to train monastic scribes. Teachers still deliver and students still memorize. However, in concordance with the burst of research on the brain, a growing movement called *brain-compatible teaching* (Jensen, 2000) offers insights on why such ineffective teaching must be overturned. Let's look at four such insights and consider their implications for language classrooms.

## The brain is not shaped like a grammar syllabus

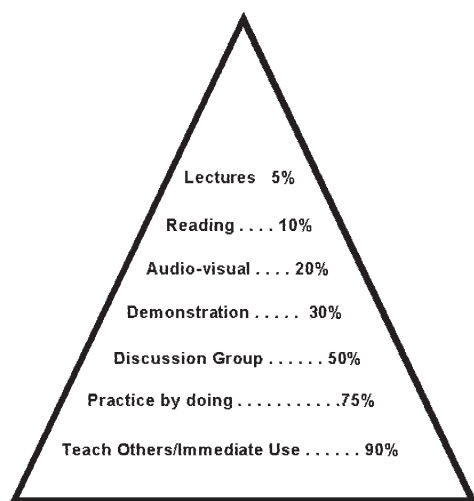
It is now apparent that the brain does not organize language the same way it has been traditionally organized in textbooks. Nor is the brain very good at learning things it has no real and immediate use for. We don't learn language and then wait for a chance to use it any more than we pick up a pen and wait for something to write. Such *educational banking* makes no sense. Unless the need for language is there first, its acquisition will be hard and shallow. Additionally, how language is presented has an enormous effect. There is evidence that the brain is better at processing music and stories than information presented in other formats (Jensen, 2000). This might be because music and stories activate several areas of the brain concurrently, making learning deeper and more active. All this suggests that language learning needs to be organized around needed language presented in ways that encourage deep processing.

## Active learners learn more

The human brain is a multiprocessor. Most times, various parts of the brain are doing different things, but when we get the parts working



together learning occurs at deeper levels. This suggests that language acquisition and retention are directly related to how much of the brain is used to process it. Deep processing leads to deep learning, causing thousands of new connections to form across the brain. These channels of connections occur when we experience multi-sensory input, when we have to figure out rather than be told things, and when we use what we learn. The widely used *learning pyramid* (Wood, 2004) suggests this very phenomenon.



**Figure 1. The learning pyramid**

In fact, recent research on neuroplasticity has shown that the shape of our brains changes all the time, mainly through focused cognitive actions. Another finding is that new neural growth does not happen from stimulation alone; it requires attentiveness as well (Begley, 2007). In other words, being passive deters learning while being active incites it. The aim of teaching, then, should be simple—to make learning as active as possible.

### **Language proficiency is only a small part of communicative competence**

For language learning, however, the pyramid is a bit off. Talking to someone is a hugely active endeavor. We readily acknowledge the thinking involved in other language skills, but underestimate how much thinking speaking actually requires. Even *mindless chatter* is highly cognitive. Verbal interaction requires total engagement. We watch, listen, gesture, and monitor our partner's eyes and facial expressions while monitoring our own, construe meaning, check belief, establish credibility, synthesize our next utterance, mirror,

time non-verbal signals, adjust register, calculate personal closeness, sift through related information in memory, and so on and so on.

Although native speakers share huge areas of verbal and non-verbal code, non-native speakers don't, and therefore must consciously think about every aspect of an interaction. Gudykunst (1995) calls this high level of cognitive activity *mindfulness* and claims it's more than just a crucial part of communicative competence: it's critical thought that expedites learning when consciously monitored. Critical thinking, once mistakenly limited to the domain of written language, is now understood to be of vast importance to spoken interaction as well. Therefore, it seems obvious that we must work to integrate critical thinking into speaking classes to help learners actively monitor their cognitive processes.

### **Language is an instinct—an instinct of survival**

Language, our amazing ability "to shape events in each other's brains with exquisite precision" (Pinker, 1994, p. 1) developed for the same reason our brains evolved—it gave us an evolutionary advantage. We're built to remember whatever helps us survive and forget the rest. A huge range of natural language interactions helps us adapt, grow, and so survive and thus are readily learned and internalized. The majority of textbook activities and dialogs, however, serve no such purpose and so are just as readily forgotten. Having students work through a dialogue about Jack at some distant post office is the hard way to garner retention. For language to be acquired and retained it must be more than just comprehensible. It must be meaningful, relevant, and needed. We even know why. Brain studies have shown that our emotional system not only regulates memory, but also that these two parts of the brain overlap. The amygdala, the brain's emotion center, measures how meaningful information is and tags whatever's relevant for retention. Jack and the post office will likely be tossed aside while language that's relevant, meaningful, and engaging on an emotional level will more likely be internalized and retained.

### **In conclusion**

These four concepts all point in the same direction—we need to develop brain compatible teaching practices and materials which focus less on language and more on how people learn languages. As we do, we'll see even more clearly

that language cannot be separated from meaningful interactions nor be effectively taught without learners' needs and cognitive processes centrally in mind. Otherwise, language is not language. It is just noise.

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# Critical approaches to language education: Focusing on race and culture

**Ryuko Kubota**

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**Keywords:** critical applied linguistics, race, racism, culture

**T**HE FIELD of second language teaching and learning has been creating multiple approaches and perspectives in research and practice. While the field has largely been influenced by the paradigm of cognitive science (Zuengler & Miller, 2006), it has recently taken a

critical turn (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). The term *critical*, however, has different interpretations. Perhaps the most common usage is seen in the term *critical thinking*. For instance, on a recently aired Japanese TV program for learning English, viewers were told that critical thinking was addressed in an ESL lesson, in which students discussed hypothetical situations (e.g., *What would you do if your roommate borrowed your clothes without asking?*). While the skills to hypothesize, synthesize, analyze, and evaluate indeed constitute so-called critical thinking, the critical turn mentioned above implies something quite different. In short, critical approaches to language education scrutinize taken-for-granted knowledge and practices related to teaching and learning and problematize underlying ideologies, discourses, and power relations. By questioning social, lin-



guistic, and institutional norms and advocating for multiplicity of meanings and identities, they aim to transform the status quo of power relations and create a more just society.

Critical approaches range from a focus on social contexts and categories including gender, race, and ethnicity (rather than an exclusive focus on cognitive aspects of learning) to explicit critiques of knowledge and power structures. These critiques can be done through critical discourse analysis, critical inquiry into language policy and planning including linguistics imperialism, and postfoundational approaches based on postmodern, poststructuralist, and postcolonial inquiries (see Pennycook, 2004). The postfoundational approaches to critical applied linguistics especially question the established knowledge constructed by positivism, enlightenment, and Eurocentrism which seek to discover universal truths through scientific investigation. Postfoundational approaches have revealed how our views on language and culture as well as racial, cultural, class, and gender difference are constructed by discourse and power (rather than existing a priori) and sought possibilities for transforming the taken-for-granted views of the world, social and linguistic practices, and power relations. As such, knowledge and practices that shape our everyday experiences are viewed inseparable from politics.

Within critical frameworks, social categories—such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual identities, culture, and language—constitute topics of inquiry into how power and politics influence the groups formed by these categories. While issues of gender, culture, and language have been discussed to a relatively great extent, issues of race have been under-explored. This tendency seems peculiar when contrasted with other related fields, such as education, composition studies, sociology, and anthropology. However, recent publications, such as Curtis and Romney (2006) and the 2006 *TESOL Quarterly* special topic issue, *Race and TESOL*, demonstrate an increased interest in issues of race in our field. As Kubota and Lin (2006) and others remind us, race is a socially and discursively constructed category rather than a biologically determined one. In other words, there is no biological evidence for racial differences; rather, racial groupings are produced by racialization or the process of constructing the idea of racial difference based on perceived phenotypes. Racism, however, does not necessarily result from racialization. Racism is the mechanism of including and excluding certain racialized groups with the consequence of domination and subordination. Racism mani-

fest itself not just as personal bigotries but also as an institutional and epistemological process of constructing and maintaining racial hierarchy and inequality in social structures and discourses. Racialization and racism are part of the legacy of colonialism and thus are closely related to second language teaching. This is evident when we think of the spread and imposition of English or Japanese under British or Japanese colonial rules. Colonialism that created racial hierarchies still remains as a discourse, forming people's perceptions and social practices as seen in the privileged position that White teachers have over teachers of color in teaching English.

There are many inquiry topics that can be explored on issues of race. Learner or teacher identities would be one. A language classroom is the place where teachers and learners often experience direct or indirect cross-racial encounters through various modes of communication. A question might be how one constructs one's own racialized identity or how it is constructed by others. Another question is how ideas of race are manifested or challenged in pedagogy, curriculum, materials, and technology. For instance, representation of a certain racialized group might predominate teaching materials, while teachers can challenge racist discourses through simulation exercises or antiracist projects (Hammond, 2006; Taylor, 2006). From a broader point of view, issues of race can be explored in relation to language policies and ideologies. Language restrictionism or English monolingualism imposed on Native Americans or Latino immigrants in the United States, for example, is not just a matter of language but also a manifestation of a racist culture. In investigating these topics, we need to keep in mind that in our contemporary discourse, racial difference has been replaced with cultural difference to a large extent. Cultural essentialism, or a static and monolithic understanding of a culture as a homogeneous entity, ends up privileging a particular racialized group while degrading others (see Kubota, 1999, 2001).

There are many ways to investigate these topics. The method could be quantitative (see Rubin, 1992 for how racial images of the speaker affect listeners' comprehension of the speech) or qualitative including interviews, ethnographic observations, and so on. Critical discourse analysis would also be a useful tool for revealing how racism is manifested in oral and written discourses. In terms of theoretical framework, critical race theory, which uses counter-storytelling to expose experiences of racially discriminated people, can provide insight into how racism gets perpetuated

in everyday experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Learning second languages exposes learners to diverse people with different racialized and culturalized backgrounds and identities. Investigating issues of race and culture in various aspects of everyday instructional contexts would provide teachers and learners with critical insight into society and humankind.

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# Balancing global issues and critical thinking in the classroom

**Charles LeBeau**

Language Solutions

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**Keywords:** Discussion, debate, global issues, critical thinking

*A language class is an ideal locus for offering information on topics of significance to students. The objectives of a curriculum are not limited to lin-*

*guistic factors alone, but also include developing the art of critical thinking.* (Brown, 2004, p. 24)

This quote highlights two fundamental classroom issues: *topics of significance* and *critical thinking*. The following article asks what exactly are topics of significance? How is significance defined? Who defines it? Further, this article addresses what is critical thinking? What would it look like in an EFL classroom? Is it culturally biased? Are there any adjustments we need to make for our classrooms?

## Topics of significance

A key question here is who determines significance, the teacher or the learners? Do we take a top-down approach with the teacher introducing particular areas of interest, or do we take a bottom-up approach with the learners bringing their topics of significance to class. This perhaps is a false dichotomy. A better approach might be: *start locally, and go globally*. Start locally with the learners' interests.

## Start locally

While writing *Discussion Process and Principles* (LeBeau & Harrington, 2006), we queried 1st-year students in five universities to find out their main interests and what they wanted to talk about. Here is a partial list of their responses: food, cosmetics, friends, movies, idols (celebrities), manga (comics), and music. Not exactly topics of significance, but a learner-centered class starts locally with the students. The challenge for the teacher is how to go globally with these topics.

## Go globally

In the end, we found that the key to creating topics of significance lies not in the topic but the task. Rather than introducing topics of significance to the class, the instructor's challenge is providing level-appropriate tasks that give the students' topics a global or universal significance. Let us take the first topic on the student list, *food*. Turn on the TV here in Japan at any hour of the day or night and you are almost sure to see a program about either eating food or preparing food. Food is next to an obsession here. My students love to talk about their likes and dislikes regarding food. Moreover, they love to ask me about my culinary preferences. Now, how can we build on this? How can we take this beyond the small universe of this particular class' likes and dislikes to another level of significance? Suppose the students were the planning committee for an International Student Welcoming Party (LeBeau & Harrington, 2006, p. 93). Suppose they had to design a single menu for students from five continents. What criteria and considerations might there be? Religion? Dietary restrictions of vegans? What Japanese dishes can students find that meet these criteria? Can they explain the final menu well enough in English to satisfy questions from vegans, Hindus, Muslims, and Orthodox Jews?

## Critical thinking

My favorite definition of critical thinking is: "...to consider that issue from various perspectives, to

look at and challenge any possible assumptions that may underlie the issue and to explore possible alternatives" (Halvorsen, 2005, p. 1).

In summary, critical thinking includes: Considering perspectives, challenging assumptions, and exploring alternatives. Are these things that we do naturally? Are they human nature, or are they learned? Is it natural for us to put aside our perspective to consider another perspective, especially when our wants, needs, and interests are threatened? The value of critical thinking is that, with practice, it grants us a second nature, a moment of grace, that lets us consider another party's perspective before we entrench ourselves into our own.

However, second nature is learned through practice. At first, riding a bicycle is awkward and feels unnatural. (It is unnatural. We evolved as bipeds, not as bicycle peddlers!) But the gift of our species is that something—like looking at another perspective—that is not our first nature can become our second nature. We can develop. We can improve. What was once awkward is now second nature. This, I believe, is the function of a university education. Ideally, a university classroom is where looking at various perspectives, challenging assumptions, and exploring alternatives are practiced until they become second nature.

Let us move now to what this might actually look like in the context of an EFL class. What activities best encourage the attitudes of critical thinking?

## Debate

The best way to learn someone else's perspective is to argue it. The best way to learn the weaknesses of your own position is to defend it. However, to make debate feasible in the EFL classroom, there are at least two challenges to overcome. First, debate is an extremely sophisticated language activity, even for native speakers. Second, debate is outside the cultural experience of many EFL students. Many Asians come from a different rhetorical tradition. Most of my students have never seen a real debate, let alone participated in one. Clearly, we need a different approach to debate for non-native speakers than for native speakers.

In exploring new approaches, I stumbled on a metaphor embedded in the English language. Consider for a moment what words we use when we talk of argumentation and debate. We speak of *constructing* and *building* an argument. Lawyers, of course, talk about *building a case*.



Moreover, we insist that an argument must have a *concrete foundation* of evidence. Upon examination, the language we use is the very language we use for building a structure such as a house. We metaphorically build an argument. The opinion or resolution is the *roof*. The job of the speaker (or writer) is to build a structure strong enough to uphold this roof. The pillars upholding the roof are the reasons; the concrete foundation of the house is the evidence for the argument (Lubetsky, LeBeau, & Harrington, 2000).

In classroom debate activities, students can draw their *house* on poster paper or a white board and use it as a visual aid as they present. The use of this metaphor turns debate, a very abstract activity, into something concrete, something visible, something we can point to. The house becomes both a graphic organizer and a presentation aid.

### Challenging assumptions

Carl Sagan, the renowned educator and astronomer, in his final years taught a popular course in critical thinking. He assembled an amusing Baloney Detection Kit listing 20 fallacies (1995, pp. 201-218). His Cornell university students may have been able to digest all 20 of these, but for most EFL students, it may be biting off a bit more than they can chew. They need a simpler set of tools. Critical thinking in the EFL classroom is of a different order. We need more scaffolding.

### The quality control check-list

Instead of Sagan's Baloney Detection Kit, here is a simpler approach, a Quality Control Check-list. Returning again to the house metaphor, students can examine arguments as if they were building inspectors checking the house for construction flaws, that is, weak pillars and cracks in the concrete foundation. What *cracks* and *flaws* are they looking for? A beginner's check-list might consist of only two items: *Is the reason or evidence true?* and *Is it important?*

As students become more experienced inspectors, they can develop evaluation of truth to include: not factually true, not always true, and not necessarily true. Similarly, importance can be divided into not relevant to the case, not significant enough to be meaningful, and not important because it is easy to solve. The inspectors can actually write these words on the house posters to make the process more concrete (Lubetsky, LeBeau, & Harrington, 2000, pp. 64-65).

### Conclusion

The discussion of global issues and other topics of significance in the classroom should originate locally in the learner's interests and experience. The onus is on the teacher to broaden classroom horizons by designing interesting, level-appropriate discussion and debate tasks. Similarly, critical thinking about these topics should begin locally by considering the learner's language level and cultural background.

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# Helping Japanese language learners to use figurative language

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Sponsored by David English House

**Keywords:** language learning, metaphor, figurative language

IT HAS recently been proposed that playing with the creative potential of a target language can be a good way of learning that language (Cook, 2004, pp. 197-205). One of the most common ways of being creative in a language is to try and employ its words figuratively. In English, figurative extensions of word meaning are extremely common. For example, we talk figuratively about *key* issues, the *foot* of the page, the first *leg* of a journey, *breaking* a promise, and *running through* an exercise. The ability to understand and produce figurative extensions such as these is likely to widen the range of topics that a language learner can talk about, thus improving their level of communicative language ability. Although for most native speakers, usages such as those mentioned above are relatively conventional, for language learners coming across them for the first time, they are much more likely to appear highly creative, and indeed to be processed as creative language (Littlemore & Low, 2006a). Figurative language *production* is also likely to involve a significant degree of creative thinking in the first instance.

When faced with a situation where they need to understand or produce figurative expressions, learners have recourse to several strategies.

They can employ mental imagery; transfer expressions from their L1 (see Kellerman, 1987), or work with figurative extensions of their existing vocabulary. This last skill is of particular interest, as the ability to figuratively extend word meaning and to *try things out* in the L2 is likely to have a strong

impact on learning, especially if a learner can obtain feedback on his or her figurative utterances and interpretations (see Swain, 2005).

However, it is unlikely that the ability to identify and produce figurative extensions of their existing vocabulary will come naturally to all learners (see Littlemore, 2001). One group of learners who may find it particularly difficult to engage in these types of figurative extension activities are Japanese learners of English, who are not generally encouraged to *play* with the language or to be experimental in their language classes. It would be beneficial if we could help Japanese learners to engage in figurative thinking as they would then be able to discuss a wider variety of topics using the vocabulary that they possess, which would be highly motivating. A range of techniques have been suggested that might promote figurative thinking in language classrooms (Littlemore & Low, 2006a, pp. 89-193; Azuma, 2005, pp. 304-308) but to date the relative strengths of these techniques have not been tested extensively.

## An exploratory study at a Japanese university

In order to investigate ways in which figurative thinking might be promoted in Japanese learners of English, I recently conducted a study, with Masumi Azuma from Kobe Design University, Japan, into the relative effectiveness of two techniques designed to promote figurative thinking amongst Japanese university students. The study was conducted as part of a research project funded by the DAIWA Anglo-Japanese Foundation, and is described in full in Littlemore and Azuma (forthcoming). We took two groups of 1st-year EFL students, 20 in total, at Kobe Design University, and gave each group a set of pre-tests designed to measure their ability to understand and produce figurative language in English. Each group was then given a different type of training designed to promote their figurative thinking ability.

The first group was given *attribute matching* training. This involves encouraging learners to explicitly identify the characteristics of a particular



word in order to assess how that word might be used figuratively. For example, the learner might be asked to think about the characteristics of a human eye (the fact that it is round, it is used for seeing, it sits in a hole in the head, and so on) and to consider how these characteristics might be invoked in figurative uses of the word *eye* (eyeing a piece of cake; get the eyes out of the potatoes; the eye of a storm; the eye of a needle, etc.). This is an analytical, objective process that breaks figurative thinking down into its constituent parts.

The second group was given *gestalt* training. This involves asking learners to create analogies but not to attempt to explain those analogies in any way whatsoever. For example, the student might be asked questions such as *If George Bush were a colour, what colour would he be? What shape would he be? and What type of music would he be?* At the end of the study, the groups were re-tested on their ability to understand and produce figurative language. Statistical tests were conducted to assess whether either of the groups had shown any significant improvement as a result of the training.

The study was inspired by an earlier study by Pitts, Smith, and Pollio (1982), which looked at the effects of these different training techniques on the ability of native speakers to produce or interpret novel metaphors. Pitts et al. (1982) found that native speakers benefited most from the *gestalt* training. Interestingly, in our study, we found the opposite to be true; those learners who had received the attribute matching training improved significantly both in their ability to produce ( $p < 0.05$ ) and interpret ( $p < 0.05$ ) figurative language, whereas those who had received the *gestalt* training made no significant improvement. This led us to conclude that the attribute matching training had been more beneficial to these learners than the *gestalt* training.

## Conclusion

These findings indicate that, in order to help Japanese language learners understand and produce figurative language in English, it may be beneficial to train them explicitly in the technique of attribute matching. If we can promote figurative thinking amongst Japanese students of English via the use of attribute matching training, this may lead to a rise in their levels of communicative language ability (Littlemore & Low, 2006b). This is particularly relevant given the Japanese Ministry of Education's recent announcement of its aim to promote communicative competence in language classrooms throughout Japan. Developing the ability to use English creatively, flexibly,

and figuratively is likely to make a significant contribution to this goal.

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She is particularly interested in the acquisition of figurative language by non-native speakers of English, and has recently published a book on the subject with Graham Low, entitled *Figurative Thinking and Foreign Language Learning* (published by Palgrave MacMillan). She is currently treasurer of the international Association Researching and Applying Metaphor (RAAM). She has a lively research group of post-graduate students, many of whom are based in Japan and Korea.



# Bringing extensive reading into oral communication classes

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**Sponsored by Thomson Learning**

**Keywords:** oral communication, extensive reading, curriculum, discussion, reading circles

**R**EADING IS sometimes taught in a special reading class, and at other times, it is taught as part of what is done in a general English class (i.e., from the textbook). In recent times, many teachers have added an Extensive Reading (ER) component to their classes to broaden and widen the language experience and language exposure learners are presented with as well as to give vital opportunities for language consolidation. However, the problem many teachers face is knowing where to put ER into their curriculum. This paper suggests that the Oral Communication class is a valid vehicle for this—or indeed, any class that has communication as its focus.

I often hear that students are reluctant to speak in class, especially if the topic is not structured (i.e., free conversation), or one they may have little to talk about (e.g., what they did last night), or have asked and answered to death (*What are your hobbies?*). The mayhem of unstructured speech can be threatening to beginner learners and especially to those lacking confidence in English. In my experience, the main reasons that students do not or cannot speak are either: the task they are asked to do is too difficult or too complex (e.g.,

being asked to debate when they have not been taught how to debate), or they are not adequately prepared for the task either linguistically or in terms of content (e.g., being asked to talk about something about which they have insufficient background knowledge, or do not care about, and

without the language tools to do so). Extensive Reading can provide this structure.

Stories are a part of our human nature. We tell stories all day—about what happened at work, what we saw on TV last night, jokes, the gossip about a neighbor, what is on the news, and so on. Asking students to retell stories is a natural thing to do in a language classroom. Retelling stories can be very supportive for less confident and low-ability learners because they have a predictable framework within which to produce language. If learners are asked to talk about something they have read and understood (the definition of reading extensively assures us that what they have understood what they read), they have sufficient content from which they can exchange information. Story discussions also provide a framework for speech because the learners have something to talk about, as well as learning which books are best to read as a genuine reason to interact or exchange ideas and stories.

Stories always have a structure (an opening, rising drama, climax, and resolution) which helps the learners to organize and structure their thoughts. Story structure can help the learners to form their ideas into a logical flow and direction when relating the story, or answering questions about it. Retelling stories that have been read extensively, not only provides content support but also provides a rich framework for practicing linguistic structures. When retelling or reporting stories in speech or in writing, certain language structures will always be needed, such as connectives, time sequencers, past tenses, descriptive adjectives, and so on. Thus retelling stories provides extremely useful practice in the basic components of speech. If the learners are asked to read a book and report on it on a regular basis, these language patterns will become second nature and a solid foundation of language development.

Initially though, some learners may have to write their story summary out and be allowed to read it aloud. Once they have done this a few times, they should be encouraged to try to memorize parts of their summary and retell it from memory. If they forget, they could look at the paper again but should keep it hidden as they speak. In this way, the learners will add a few





extra sentences and ideas spontaneously and help them on the road to freer speech. Towards the end of the course, the learners should be encouraged not to write summaries from which to read or recite, but be asked to prepare an oral summary without having written it first.

It is always wise to give the listener something to do, rather than just listen passively. If the listener is required to ask two or three questions after hearing the summary or opinion of the story, it makes the listening active and interactive.

Less able learners may need considerable language support to allow them to frame their questions. Support can be given by either giving a list of prompt questions, such as:

*What kind of story is it?*  
*Did you enjoy it?*  
*Who was your favorite character?*  
*And then what happened?*

Or, if the learners are able to construct their own sentences, gap-fill prompts could be used, such as:

*Who...?*  
*What happened when...?*  
*Why did...?*

The above works best if each learner has her own book to report on. But if teachers do not have the luxury of enough books to allow for self-selected reading, the above is also possible by structuring the tasks differently. Teachers can ask different students to read different parts of the same book and report it to the others in a kind of jigsaw activity. This can however, be quite taxing for lower-ability learners so teachers should be careful not to demand too much or it will lead to silence. Teachers who use a class reader (all learners have the same book) can also lead discussion about themes in books such as discussions on honesty, bravery, loyalty, or whatever theme the story they read together has been about. In this way the reading can be extended to the learners' own lives.

Recently many teachers have been using Reading Circles in their classes. Furr showed us in the May 2007 Special Issue on Extensive Reading of *The Language Teacher* that Reading Circles can lead to useful and well-structured conversations. Basically, in Reading Circles, learners work in

groups of five or six, each with different tasks such as *Discussion Leader*, *Organizer*, *Connector*, and *Culture Collector* (Furr, 2007). As each learner has specific tasks, the discussions are focused and have to be well prepared which make for smoother, more enjoyable and rewarding discussions.

Of course, story discussions are not the only thing that learners need to talk about, but I hope this article has shown that adding an Extensive Reading component to an Oral Communication class can not only help learners to find something to genuinely talk about, but provide many opportunities for language practice and enhance their overall oral communicability.

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CHALLENGING



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# Turning passive students into active learners

**Ken Wilson**

Sponsored by Oxford University Press

**Keywords:** Passive, active, learner, exercise material, dialogues

**M**Y MAIN argument in this article is that students learn more when they are actively involved in the learning process. I want to suggest some ways in which students provide more *core information* and *ideas* during the lesson. Teachers need to give their students more chances to say what they know and to use their imagination. And they can do this all through the class, not just in the designated *freer* activities.

First of all, let's examine what a typical passive lesson consists of. The following seems to be the norm for many teachers.

- 1 Students listen while the teacher explains a new structure item.
- 2 Students listen to a tape of a conversation illustrating the new structure.
- 3 Students practice the conversation in pairs.
- 4 Students read a text and answer comprehension questions.
- 5 Students do an exercise from the workbook.
- 6 Teacher gives students some written homework.

The students aren't very active in this lesson plan! Let's look at some of the aspects of this passive lesson plan and see if we can find ways to get the students more involved.

## CHALLENGING



## ASSUMPTIONS

### Explaining new structure items

There are many ways to present new language—through a story which leads to a marker sen-

tence (a sentence which contains an example of the new structure), through mime, by explaining, and so forth. Some teachers like to explain a new grammar item in the students' own language, others prefer to do it in English.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with any of these ways but I have noticed that most teachers give *all* the information in the build-up to a new item, when in fact, they could easily ask the students themselves for details to add to the story. Let me explain what I mean by giving an example.

I once saw the following story-presentation of the present perfect tense, introducing the use with *since* and *for*. The sentence that the teacher was aiming to teach was: *She's been in New York since 2000*.

The teacher had a series of flashcards, a picture of a woman, a picture of a man, a picture of London, another one of New York, and even a picture of the CBS TV studio in New York.

This was the exchange between the teacher and the students, who answered in chorus:

Teacher: *This is Jane—what's her name?*

Students: *Jane!*

Teacher: *She comes from London. Where does she come from?*

Students: *London!*

Teacher: *Now she lives in New York. Where does she live?*

Students: *New York!*

This behaviourist teaching method may seem quite old-fashioned to you, but it is still common. The classroom is very noisy, the students speak every 20 seconds or so, but they are *not involved*.

So, how can we change this and make the students more active and actively involved? First of all, why not let them give the details of the story presentation where it is possible for them to do so? For example, the students can choose not only the names of the characters, but also where they come from and where they live now. In fact, the teacher can elicit information to complete details all the way through the presentation. The only thing that the teacher really needs to give is the

first example of the new language: *She's been in X since X*. The rest can be supplied by the students.

## Using dialogues

The first dialogues appeared in English teaching materials more than 300 years ago (in a book which was written to help French dressers—French people who came to England to help aristocrats who didn't know how to put on their own clothes!). Dialogues or other examples of spoken English then disappeared from course material until the middle of the 20th century. My French and German course books in the 1960s, for example, had no dialogues.

However, in about 1950, the Berlitz School published a book that contained a series of dialogues which presented new language. The dialogues were between two people called John and Mary Brown. We presume that they were man and wife, but you couldn't tell, as they started most conversations by introducing themselves to each other! Thereafter, some of the exchanges were frankly surreal. Here's an example:

John Brown: *Hello, I'm John Brown.*

Mary Brown: *Hello, I'm Mary Brown.*

John Brown: *Have we a house?*

Mary Brown: *Yes, we have a house.*

I wonder who they thought they were writing for—amnesiacs?

Dialogues are much more realistic nowadays, but they are also predictable and often quite dull. The worst ones are the ones that try to be amusing. But the real problem is not the dialogues, but the teachers who slavishly accept them as the one possible way of expressing a certain idea. We sometimes forget that they are not set in stone. In other words, they are just one example of how people speak to each other. Teachers should offer students the chance to adapt, change, re-write—even the conversations between the central characters in a book.

## Reading texts

Using a reading text in class can be a very passive activity, but there are ways that you can enliven the lesson by allowing students to contribute extra details and information. Take this rather ordinary reading text, for example:

*At the hospital near where I live, all the doctors are women and all the nurses are men. When new patients arrive at the hospital, they always call the*

*doctors nurses, which makes the doctors feel quite annoyed. And they also call the nurses doctors, which makes the nurses feel quite pleased.*

*One day at the hospital, a patient, a man, approached a doctor. 'Excuse me, nurse,' said the patient. 'When can I see the doctor?'*

*'Listen,' said the doctor. 'I'm a doctor, and the man over there that you think is a doctor is actually a student nurse.'*

*'Oh, sorry,' said the patient. 'The last time I came to this hospital, that doctor, sorry— that nurse—that nurse said that you were a nurse.'*

*'Well, I'm not,' said the doctor. 'I'm a doctor, not a nurse.'*

*'Well, once again, sorry about that,' said the patient. 'By the way, what's your name?'*

*'Nurse,' said the doctor. 'Doctor Nurse.'*

When I use a reading text like this, I always ask students questions which they cannot answer just by reading the text itself. For example, I ask *Where's the hospital?* The students' answer *Near where I live* or *Near where you live*.

I reply that it's actually near where the writer lives. Where's that?

At first, students are confused about this. I say, none of us know, so let's invent. By the end of the sentence, we know that the hospital is in Chicago, it has seven floors, two hundred beds, 60 doctors and 150 nurses. All this information has come from the students. It is now their story. They are actively involved.

When you do this the first time, the students are confused and a little suspicious. Once they realise that you are not looking for *one* correct answer, and they can offer any ideas they want, they enjoy the chance to contribute. They can write the enhanced version of the story for homework. The only problem is that they may want to do it with *every* reading text.

## Exercises

Exercises make students feel either bored or stressed. This is the result of the conspiracy between publishers and teachers. Publishers know that teachers like exercises because they can take a mental break for a few minutes. The problem is that the students take a mental break, too!

The problem is in the perception of exercise material as some kind of simple mathematical equation, when in fact, good exercise material provides you with conversation starters. My feeling is that you should always put students in pairs and ask them to turn the examples into mini-dialogues. As with reading texts, sometimes the students are a little uncertain how this works, but as soon as they get the idea, they enjoy it. More importantly, the exercise material starts to feel like real English, not just de-contextualised sentences.

Here's an example. Imagine that you are doing this exercise with your class.

### **Choose an appropriate future tense**

- 1 *We...(visit) my grandparents this weekend and I'm really looking forward to it.*
- 2 *I'm tired — I think I...(go) to bed.*
- 3 *What time... the next train... (leave) for Boston?*
- 4 *I...(let) you know as soon as Adam arrives.*

Put the students in pairs and tell them to think of sentence 1 as the first line of a conversation. At this point, don't worry about the *right* answer. Just help the students think of it as a real piece of discourse.

Take the example in number 1. Give the right answer (we're going to visit, or we're visiting) and then ask students to think of possible responses to this stimulus. Examples here are: *Why? Where do they live? How old are they?* and so forth. It is really important to make the students realise that there isn't just one right answer.

Again, when you first do this, the students will be a little surprised, but you will be amazed how quickly they get the idea.

### **Conclusion**

A lot of learning is passive. Students have to spend a lot of time listening to the teacher or reading a text. Exercise material is particularly passive—stimulus sentences are usually written so that reasonably aware students can do them in their sleep. A lot of students enjoy passive learning. They are the ones who smile when you start talking, or look really pleased when you tell them to open the book and read something.

But the reality is that these students represent at most 25 per cent of the class. The other 75 per cent do not benefit from a diet of mainly passive learning. Also, when the balance of the lesson swings too far to the passive, the ability of students to actually benefit from the lesson diminishes rapidly.

Learners retain more of what they are taught when they are actively involved in the learning process and statistics suggest that, if students learn passively, an incredible amount of classroom information is forgotten within a very short space of time. You can of course revise and recycle, but information gained from active involvement usually sticks, making revision and recycling a more rewarding process.

Active learning can be enjoyable and fun. There is a definite relationship between laughter and learning. Some people involved in education argue that students who are having fun are not getting full value from the lesson. I think that this attitude is not just wrong, it's unhelpful.

An astonishing number of teachers think that knowledge is power and that this means they are more powerful and more valuable if they have *all* the knowledge. This is a dangerous attitude!

Allowing students to be more involved in their own learning may mean that teachers have to give up some of the power and authority that they have in the classroom. And, they have to rely less on the coursebook.

Finally, remember—in a class of 30 students, there are 32 potential sources of information: you, the book, and the students themselves.



**Ken Wilson** trains teachers all over the world and is a prolific author of ELT materials with more than twenty titles to his name. His latest course material is *Smart Choice*, published by Oxford University Press. Ken's first ELT publication was a collection of songs called *Mister Monday*, which was released

when he was 23, making him at the time the youngest-ever published ELT author. Since then, he has written and recorded more than 150 ELT songs, published as albums or as integral parts of course material.

He has also written more than a hundred ELT radio and television programs, including 50 radio scripts for the *Follow Me* series, 30 *Look Ahead* TV scripts and a series of plays called *Drama First*.

Ken was one of the authors of the *New Standard English* course for China, of which more than a hundred million copies are being used.

# Shadowing plus: Stepping stones to fluency

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**Sponsored by Pearson Longman**

**Keywords:** Shadowing, fluency, speaking, classroom practice

**F**LUENCY is a faraway place for most language learners. Often setting out with unrealistic expectations, the leap across the brink to a fluency level, whereby the individual becomes a user of the language, is often too big a leap to make. Stepping stones break down the huge leap into small steps or jumps. Such is the case with shadowing in our classes.

This paper sets out to explain the merits of classroom peer-shadowing activities as one way to help students improve their fluency, and also to explain the differences between shadowing and audio-lingual listen and repeat.

## What is shadowing?

When I use the term shadowing I am referring to the name of a technique; a language practice technique. The technique of shadowing involves active bottom-up listening whereby the shadower borrows someone else's language in order to practice oral production.

Peer-shadowing as a classroom activity is usually done in pairs; one person is a speaker and the other is a shadower. The speaker speaks and by so doing provides the target language input for the shadower. The shadower processes the language input in order to immediately repeat it. The shadower is under pressure to actively process the input. This peer-pressure to pay attention and process the input is

important. Without this pressure it is quite conceivable for many students the input would simply go in one ear and out the other without ever being attended to and processed.



I owe a huge debt to Tim Murphey for first introducing me to shadowing. Tim has been actively using shadowing in his classes for many years and how I use shadowing in my classroom was heavily influenced by his work (see Murphey, 1998, 2000). There is not just one type of shadowing rather there are many, many varieties. Murphey (2000) describes three continuums that can vary when using shadowing:

1. silent <-----> out loud
2. complete <-----> selective
3. non-interactive <-----> interactive

Using these three continuums different shadowing activities can be designed. I use the following 5 practical classroom shadowing techniques:

1. Full shadowing–continuous, flowing no pauses.
2. Slash shadowing–speaker cuts their speech into small *chunks* with pauses between –shadower has more time to shadow.
3. Silent shadowing–sub-vocalization, not actually saying the words out loud.
4. Part shadowing + comment: pick up key-word and add a comment.
5. About you shadowing–full shadow but change I --> you, my --> your, etc. (see Helgesen, Brown, & Wiltshier, 2007, p. SS1; Wiltshier, in press)

Kadota and Tamai (2004) use shadowing techniques they call *mumbling*, *contents shadowing* and *prosody shadowing*. Each has a different purpose or focus with *mumbling* focusing on the sounds that can be heard while mumbling the words. Prosody shadowing focuses on the rhythm, stress, intonation, speed, and pause of the language. Content shadowing focuses on trying to understand the meaning of the language. All three are varieties of shadowing.

## Is not shadowing just listen and repeat–audio lingual revisited?

Shadowing is different from the audio-lingual listen and repeat in many ways. In a shadowing classroom activity the language is initially generated by the students themselves and as such the activity becomes student centered. This is very



different from textbook provided pattern practice which is unconnected to the students' world.

The second major difference is the fact students speak to other students rather than into a tape recorder or computer. My own memories of language laboratory work in French are not positive. Speaking into a tape recorder is not interesting. Computers are not good at smiling. In contrast a classmate's positive reaction and smile is encouraging and motivating.

Shadowing as I use it in my classroom is communicative because a transfer of information, thoughts, or ideas is taking place. Original speaker generated language is invariably interesting for the listener. This statement is easy to verify by observing the amount of chatting in Japanese that usually follows shadowing activities: chatting on the same topic, trying to find out more, or checking what was just said in English.

The challenge to students is to understand and repeat what their partner is saying not to focus on whether it is grammatically correct or not. Avoiding focus on form, I believe, reduces student inhibition enabling students to more freely have a go at speaking English (lowering affective filters).

The classroom dynamic plays an important role in the success of any classroom activity. Shadowing is no exception. Speaking in pairs with close friends is not always conducive to optimal performance. However, asking students to find a partner can be time-consuming and somewhat uncomfortable especially for the less popular members of a class. Structured, random partner selection is a key component of my shadowing activities. Students are organized in concentric circles or parallel lines. Using such classroom organization the teacher can easily provide students with new speaking or shadowing partners. The roles of speaker and shadower are alternated—this dynamic maintains energy levels as the type of active contribution from each student is frequently changing. Shadowing is a cooperative learning experience. Classmates are very good at accommodating their partners and the language level naturally adjusts to ensure successful completion of the task.

Part of a classroom shadowing activity is *think-time*. Simply, students are given time to consider what they are going to say. This makes successful completion of the task easier and leads to an increase in language complexity. The shadower does not need to worry about creating their own language as they simply borrow the language their partner uses. This reduces the mental load and provides a stepping stone to improving their own oral fluency.

The teacher's role is to set up and run the activity and provide selective language input in order to allow the students to say what they want to say. During the activity the teacher may be listening, but is careful not to interrupt.

Error correction, if done at all, happens after the shadowing activity has finished or while changing partners. The teacher can provide correct models of the language students are attempting to use by writing them on the board or saying them aloud to the whole class. In this way the teacher does not interrupt the students when they are speaking and does not single individual students out in front of classmates. Feedback about their partner's understanding is provided to the speaker by the amount and ease of repetition and the facial reactions of their partner.

### In conclusion

The title of my featured speaker workshop is *Shadowing Plus: Stepping stones to fluency*. As I wrote in the introduction, fluency is a faraway place for most language learners—a place that many language learners will never, in fact, reach. Just as stepping stones are necessary for people to cross from one side of a river to the other, classroom shadowing activities provide practice which is necessary to allow students to improve their fluency and progress from passive language learners to active language users.

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- Wiltshier, J. M. (in press). Fluency through shadowing—what, why, and how? *JALT2006 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: The Japan Association for Language Teaching.

**John Wiltshier** has been a teacher for 17 years, 11 of which have been in Japan. John has presented in Europe and the US. He has been a guest presenter at Columbia University Tokyo, invited speaker on the ETJ Teacher Training Tour across Japan and plenary speaker at PANSIG 2007. He is co-author of the new edition of *English Firsthand Access and Success* and currently works at Miyagi University.

## ...with Jerry Talandis

&lt;my-share@jalt-publications.org&gt;



We welcome submissions for the My Share column. Submissions should be up to 1000 words describing a successful technique or lesson plan you have used which can be replicated by readers, and should conform to the My Share format (see any edition of *The Language Teacher*). Please send submissions to <my-share@jalt-publications.org>.

## MY SHARE ONLINE

A linked index of My Share articles can be found at:  
<jalt-publications.org/ltt/myshare/>

**I**N OUR first activity this month, Patrick Miller introduces a speaking activity designed to help get a class off to a good start. Following that, Ben Fenton-Smith provides a listening / speaking activity that will help prepare students for the first part of the TOEIC test.

## Making first impressions count

**Patrick Miller**

**Chubu University**

<patrick@lc.chubu.ac.jp>

### Quick guide

**Key Words:** First day of class, first-day activity, first impressions, syllabus, expectations

**Learner English level:** Any

**Learner maturity level:** High school and above

**Preparation time:** 60 minutes

**Activity time:** 60 to 90 minutes

**Materials:** Course syllabus, question strips, question sheets

Making a good impression on the first day of class is important. The need to set a favorable tone can be critical to the learning / teaching process for the remainder of the term. Fink (1999) identified nine important goals that could be ac-

complished during the first day or first week of class:

- Involve students quickly
- Identify the importance of the subject
- Set expectations
- Establish rapport
- Reveal something about yourself
- Establish your own credibility
- Establish the “climate” for the class
- Provide administrative information
- Introduce the subject matter

This lesson is designed to address these goals in one first-day activity. In this activity, you can impart vital administrative information while establishing a non-threatening environment in which your students become confidently engaged in a variety of classroom arrangements. Course expectations and rules, as well as classroom etiquette and important vocabulary, can be introduced and practiced. Course goals and objectives can be previewed. You and your students can exchange personal or professional information to the extent you wish, establishing rapport and credibility. In short, this lesson can help you make a memorable impression and start the course off right.

### Preparation

**Step 1:** Prepare your course syllabus.

**Step 2:** Create a numerically ordered series of questions (*First Day Questions*) based on information you wish to highlight from your course syllabus. Include questions about your personal information you would like students to know about. Prepare at least one question per student (see Appendix A).

**Step 3:** Prepare individual *question strips* based on the First Day Questions sheet by copying the form and cutting it into strips.

**Step 4:** For each student, prepare a separate personal interview sheet for pair interview and introductions (see Appendix B).

### Procedure

**Step 1:** Distribute the numbered question strips, making sure each student receives at least one. Allow about 3 minutes for students to check new vocabulary and understand the questions.

**Step 2:** Pass out the First Day Questions sheet.

**Step 3:** For about 25 to 30 minutes, have each student ask you a question from their strip while the entire class writes the answers they hear on the numbered question sheet. Classroom language can be introduced at this point: *How do you spell that? Could you please repeat that? Did you say, 13 or 30?*

**Step 4:** When all the questions have been asked, give students about 15 minutes to check their answers by comparing results with a partner. Put them back-to-back for this listening/speaking activity.

**Step 5:** Give each student pair your syllabus and have them read it carefully and double check their answers for 15 to 20 minutes.

### Expansion

- Students interview a classmate using questions like those on the *Get to Know Your Classmates* sheet. Later, partners introduce each other to the whole class, a small group, or another classmate.
- Assign a journal entry or other short writing assignment based on the partner interview (in class or homework).
- Students free-write about their expectations regarding the course (in class or homework).

### Conclusion

In this first-day activity, you can convey information, set the class tone, establish rapport and rules, and preview student and teacher in- and out-of-class expectations. All of this is accomplished with students actively using language skills and functions in a variety of class configurations. In forming first-day impressions, it is imperative that instructors do whatever it is they want the class to do for the rest of the semester. The first day is your opportunity to express your enthusiasm and stimulate the students' interest and motivation for the course. Above all, it is everyone's chance to make a first impression that counts.

### Reference

Fink, P. (1999). The First Day of Class. *Teaching Tips Inbox* Retrieved April 28, 2006, from <honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/firstday.htm>

### Appendices

The appendices can be viewed at <[jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/resources/0707a.pdf](http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/resources/0707a.pdf)>

# A communicative introduction to part one of the TOEIC test

**Ben Fenton-Smith**

**Kanda University of International Studies**

<[benfento@kanda.kuis.ac.jp](mailto:benfento@kanda.kuis.ac.jp)>

### Quick Guide

**Key words:** TOEIC, pictures, listening, present progressive, there is/are

**Learner English level:** Beginner to intermediate

**Learner maturity level:** Junior high school and above

**Preparation time:** 35 minutes

**Class time:** 25 minutes

**Materials:** Pictures, handouts, sticky tape

TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) courses are ubiquitous in Japanese universities, as well as in other English language institutions. A challenge for instructors is raising classes above the level of robotic, test-taking workshops to something more interesting, engaging, and communicative. This activity serves several purposes at once. Firstly, it alerts students to the target structures contained in the first (listening) section of the TOEIC. Secondly, it gets them out of their seats, moving around, and talking in English. Finally, it is a handy activity to use in the very first class of a TOEIC course because it deals with the first section of the test, is a good ice-breaker, and does not require a book or listening equipment.

### Preparation

**Step 1:** Obtain 10 pictures that are typical of part

one of the TOEIC (you can cut them out from magazines or an old textbook). Clearly mark each one with a number between 1 and 10.

**Step 2:** Prepare a worksheet (see Appendix). Note there are verbs in parentheses in the table—these describe actions in the pictures, so change them accordingly.

**Step 3:** Make enough copies for half the class (one per pair).

**Step 4:** Before the lesson, stick the pictures up around the walls of the classroom.

## Procedure

**Step 1:** Put the students in pairs and have them decide who is partner A and B.

**Step 2:** Give one copy of the handout to each pair. Tell the students that the numbers 1 to 10 on the worksheet refer to the numbers 1 to 10 on the pictures around the walls.

**Step 3:** Explain the roles: Partner A stays at his or her desk as the *writer*, while partner B goes around the room gathering information. B's job is to study a picture carefully, then return to A and explain (in English!) what he or she saw. Then A and B have to agree on a single sentence to describe the picture, and write that sentence in the appropriate space on the worksheet. After they have done this for pictures 1 to 5, they should change roles and complete pictures 6 to 10.

**Step 4:** Explain the rules:

1. Sentences must be constructed around either of two verb forms since these are the major patterns found in this part of the test:
  - a. verb + ing
  - b. there is/are
2. Every sentence must contain at least two nouns. This forces students to produce suitably elaborate sentences. At this point, refer to the two example sentences on the handout.
3. The student observing the pictures cannot take any pens, pencils, or paper with him or her. This requires students to communicate more naturally.

**Step 5:** Point out that the worksheet makes clear which verb construction is appropriate for each picture. For type (a), there is a verb in parentheses following the picture number. For type (b), the words *There is/are* are written after the picture number.

**Step 6:** Tell the Bs to get ready to move. Point out that it does not matter which order they go to the pictures.

**Step 7:** Start the activity and let it run until a few pairs have completed the entire worksheet.

**Step 8:** Check the answers, allowing for the fact that multiple responses are possible. However, refer to the grammatical guidelines laid down at the start of the activity—sentences that do not conform to the pattern should be corrected.

## Comments

To make the activity more exciting, a competitive element can be introduced, such as awarding points for the fastest pairs, and more points for the most grammatically accurate pairs. If you are feeling generous, offer a small prize to the champion pair.

## Conclusion

Once the activity is completed, review the target sentence patterns. Tell the students that the present progressive is typically used to describe temporary states, which is why it is suited to descriptions of snapshots of actions. Similarly, tell them that *there is/are* is commonly used to say that something exists, which again is why it is suited to descriptions of pictures. Point out that these two simple patterns account for the majority of the listening items in this section of the test. Such an explanation serves as a good prelude to listening practice for part one of the test.

## Appendices

The appendices can be viewed at <[jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/resources/0707b.pdf](http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/resources/0707b.pdf)>

### Is your membership due for renewal?

Check the label on the envelope this TLT came in for your renewal date, then go to <[jalt.org/main/membership](http://jalt.org/main/membership)> and follow the easy instructions to register. Help us to help you! Renew early!



## ...with Robert Taferner

&lt;reviews@jalt-publications.org&gt;



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.

## BOOK REVIEWS ONLINE

A linked index of Book Reviews can be found at:

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

**T**HIS MONTH'S column features 『小学校英語教育の進め方—「ことばの教育」として—』 *English Education in Elementary Schools for Communication*, an elementary school teacher's resource book evaluated by Toshiyuki Takagaki, and *Japanese Sentence Patterns for Effective Communication*, a Japanese learner's resource book reviewed by Paul Crane.

## 『小学校英語教育の進め方—「ことばの教育」として—』 English Education in Elementary Schools for Communication

[Hideo Oka and Tsuyoshi Kanamori, (Eds.). Tokyo: Seibido, 2007. (Incl. CD). pp. 278. ¥2,625. ISBN: 978-4791971411.]

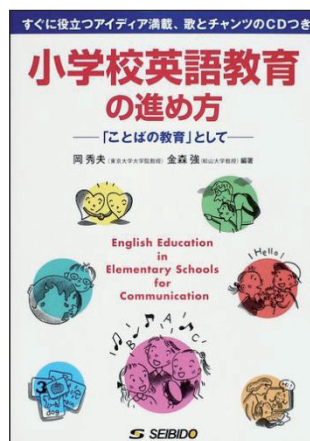
**Reviewed by Toshiyuki Takagaki, Onomichi University**

*English Education in Elementary Schools for Communication* targets both in-service and pre-service teachers who need to familiarize themselves with both theory and practice regarding English teaching at elementary schools. This reference book is written in plain Japanese by 12 scholars and edited by Hideo Oka and Tsuyoshi Kanamori; both editors served on the Division of Foreign Language of the Central Council for Education. As

seen in the subtitle, the major theme of this book is centered around the importance of *kotoba no kyōiku*, or language education, which should help students facilitate a sound attitude toward, and value of, communication over language skills.

In 2006, the Division of Foreign Language of the Central Council for Education suggested, among other things, that offering English as a subject at elementary schools merits further examination. Whether the Division's suggestions are fully adopted or not, they may have an effect on the

final decision of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT). Since 2002, English has been taught as part of education for international understanding, and approximately 90 percent of all public elementary schools across the nation provide English conversation activities, although the hours of instruction vary from



school to school (MEXT, 2006). Should English be introduced as a subject at elementary schools in the future, teaching hours of English would probably increase and teachers would be expected to teach more methodically. Given the background, it is wise for elementary school teachers and would-be-teachers to be better prepared for teaching English.

This book comprises three parts in which chapters are organized in a concise and readable manner. The first part consists of 10 chapters dealing with theories and backgrounds of early foreign language education. More specifically, these chapters focus on such topics as the significance of foreign language education, first and second language acquisition theories, and language mechanism and communicative competence. The second part is made up of another 10 chapters covering practical issues at the macro level. For instance, the first three chapters are concerned with (a) how to set goals in English education at elementary school, (b) how to create a foreign language teaching environment with common understanding among colleagues and (or as well as) how to provide in-house teacher education, and (c) the key points of making a curriculum and a 1-year teaching plan. The last part consists

of seven chapters and includes a variety of practical issues at the micro level, ranging from basic points in teaching elementary school students to lesson plan samples. Moreover, this edited book is accompanied by a wealth of useful annotations, sample teaching materials, and a CD, making it extremely user friendly and attractive.

Needless to say, few books can completely satisfy all readers and this book is not an exception. In my opinion, this book would have been more comprehensive had the opposing or skeptical views regarding teaching English at elementary schools been treated in more detail. For example, I questioned the effectiveness of elementary school English in Japan based on my analysis of the core French program in Canada (Takagaki, 2003). As a matter of fact, many of these views see the concept *kotoba no kyōiku* from different perspectives. I believe those who teach English at the elementary school level should give serious thought to such questions as (a) What is the rationale of conducting language education only through English activities (alongside of Japanese) when the practical skills of English as an *international language* are less emphasized?, (b) Could any language, including artificial and sign languages, serve the purpose of the language education?, and (c) Is there any possibility that teaching only English may help students form distorted ideas about communication such as: all foreigners speak English, or English is superior to other languages?

I should also acknowledge that this book is not intended to be research-oriented but is aimed to be practical in spirit, and it successfully serves the purpose as an introductory resource. I would, therefore, recommend this reference text for both in-service and pre-service teachers at elementary schools, as well as anyone interested in early English education in Japan.

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- Takagaki, T. (2003). A critical look at elementary school English in Japan from the perspective of the core French program in Ontario, Canada. *The Language Teacher*, 27(6), pp. 17-19.

# Japanese Sentence Patterns for Effective Communication

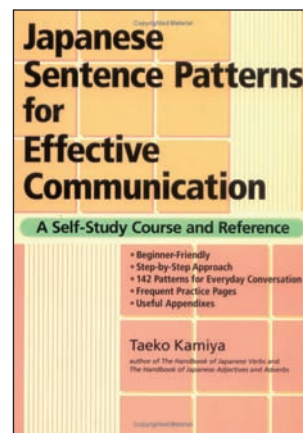
[Taeko Kamiya. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2005. pp. vi-311. ¥2,625. ISBN: 4-7700-2983-7.]

**Reviewed by Paul A. Crane,  
Nagoya University of Foreign  
Studies**

*Japanese Sentence Patterns for Effective Communication* is an accessible book for learners of Japanese targeted at advanced beginners of Japanese as well as intermediate to advanced learners needing to review Japanese syntax through the study of 142 basic sentence patterns. The 12 chapters are organized according to general functions, for example Chapter 3 *Making Comparisons*, Chapter 10 *Expressing Conjecture and Hearsay, and Quoting People*, and Chapter 11 *Using Conditional, Passive, Causative, and Causative-Passive Forms*. Each

chapter is divided into smaller, manageable areas of study introduced by one of the 142 sample sentence patterns, first in English with the Japanese translation below it, followed by an explanation of the grammar and linguistic function of the sentence. Following the explanation are three to four more sample sentence patterns to further

illustrate variances in the pattern. Next, there is a short lexical list for use in the brief practice section that includes three to four sentences in English which the learner is to translate into Japanese in order to test their knowledge of the sentence patterns. The answers are provided immediately below the practice section. The Japanese translations are all appropriately in *kanji*, *hiragana*, and *katakana* with the roman letter version also included for beginning learners who do not yet



have a grasp of the Japanese writing system.

My first impression of the book was that it was rather easy for an upper-intermediate learner like myself. However, by the time I reached Chapter 4 *Describing Actions in the Present, Future, and Past*, I stumbled on pattern 48B to practice the proper usage of the seemingly innocuous *e* (へ) used to indicate direction of an action when I should have used *made* (まで) to indicate an ending point for an action. Later, I stumbled again in Chapter 6 *Stating Purpose, Cause, and Reason* with practice patterns for *kara* (から) and *node* (ので). *Kara* is to be used for subjective reasons which might include a belief, command, or invitation whereas *node* is to be used primarily for objective excuses or reasons. Progressing through the book, there were several other areas that indicated I was definitely benefiting from the practice of these sentence patterns.

One of the limitations in attempting to produce a concise book of this nature is that for the sake of simplicity and brevity, similar patterns and grammar functions that can be used to express ideas must be omitted. For beginning learners of Japanese, this is probably acceptable to avoid confusion but for more advanced learners, it might cause the learner to look elsewhere for further grammar explanation as I did on the several occasions when I stumbled on a practice pattern.

With such issues of conciseness and brevity aside, I was particularly impressed with the layout of the book, which makes it easy to use. The chapter titles are printed at the bottom of each page, making it easy for the user to find their place although the chapter numbers are not included which may have been an oversight. The appendices at the end of the book are especially convenient. Appendix 1 covers *Numerals* of all sorts, while Appendix 2 covers 25 of those punctilious counters that differ depending on the noun. Appendix 3 deals with adjective inflection for 49 of the *i* adjectives and 40 of the *na* adjectives. Appendix 4 ambitiously tackles verb conjugation for 108 *Regular I* verbs, 44 *Regular II* verbs, as well as the 2 irregular verbs, albeit only 11 of the possible 32 conjugation patterns, apparently to keep the book both simple and concise.

Overall, *Japanese Sentence Patterns for Effective Communication* lives up to its intention to be a useful self-study and reference guide for Japanese learners, regardless of ability. I recommend this book as an enjoyable way to memorize basic patterns or as a reference book for review.

## Resources • Recently Received

...with Scott Gardner

<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

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

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

### Books for Students (reviewed in *TLT*)

Contact: Scott Gardner

<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

日本人が知らない英語の必須フレーズ150 [*150 Essential English Idiomatic Expressions (That Japanese Don't Know)*]. Bintliff, J., & Morita, H. Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 2007.

*The Active Learner: Communication Strategies for the Real World, Book 1*. Maybin, D. W., & Maher, J. J. Tokyo: Macmillan LanguageHouse, 2007. [Incl. class CD, teacher's manual].

*Adventures Abroad: English for Successful Travel*. Fuller, D., & Cleary, K. Tokyo: Macmillan LanguageHouse, 2007. [Incl. class CD, teacher's manual].

\* *Bookworms Club Gold, Silver, & Bronze: Stories for Reading Circles*. Furr, M. (Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. [Incl. three story collections, teacher's handbook, English/Japanese guides to Oxford graded reading programs].

*Encounters Abroad*. Critchley, M. P. Tokyo: Nan'un-do, 2007. [Incl. two editions, with or without Japanese rubrics and support; student CDs; mini-workbooks; teacher's edition; online support].

\* *Executive Writing, American Style: A Business Writing Manual for Foreign-born Professionals*. Diamond, L. E., Fahey, M., & Diamond, H. Berkeley, CA: Apocryphile, 2007.

! *Language and Our World*. Clankie, S., & Kobayashi, T. Tokyo: Sanshusha, 2007. [Incl. CD, teacher's manual].

*Making Friends 1: Social English for Adult Learners*. Williamson, D., & Williamson, M. Tokyo: Macmillan Languagehouse, 2006. [Incl. class CD, teacher's manual].

*Tactics for TOEIC Speaking and Writing Tests*. Trew, G. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. [Incl. CDs, answer key, tapescript].

### Books for Teachers

(reviewed in *JALT Journal*)

Contact: Yuriko Kite <jj-reviews@jalt-publications.org>

*The Art of Teaching Spanish: Second Language Acquisition from Research to Praxis*. Salaberry, R., & Lafford, B. A. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2006.

! *A Friendly Approach to English for Academic Purposes*. Strain, S. S. Tokyo: Shohakusha, 2006.



## ...with Joseph Sheehan

&lt;jalt-focus@jalt-publications.org&gt;



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

**JALT FOCUS ONLINE**

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

**JALT Calendar**

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

- ▶ 22-25 Nov 2007: JALT2007 "Challenging Assumptions: Looking In, Looking Out" at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center, Tokyo.

**JALT Watch**

JALT National news and announcements in brief.

- ▶ If you need to contact JALT Central Office, note that the email address is now <jco@jalt.org>.

**JALT Notices****JALT2007 Pre-Conference Workshop Call for Presenters**

For JALT2007, we will be running concurrent pre-conference workshops aimed at helping teachers develop their professional skills. The workshops will be held on the afternoon of Thursday, 22 Nov 2007.

JALT is currently accepting proposals for these pre-conference workshops. These workshops will be highly practical, with detailed hand-outs so that participants can replicate the main techniques after the conference. Each speaker's session will last 1 hour plus 15 minutes for Q&A. Participants will be limited to 30. Internet access will be available and necessary AV equipment will be provided. Each presenter will be given a conference waiver to JALT2007.

We welcome submissions in the following areas:

- Workflow tools: Introductory level tutorials on software that teachers can use to make their lives easier (e.g., Word, Excel, etc.)
- Teaching tools: Introductions to software or solutions for the classroom, language lab, or computer lab.
- Research tools: Introductions to tools for teacher-researchers (text analysis, statistics, etc.)
- Other: Do you have an idea that doesn't seem to fit above? Let us know.

Please submit the following by 15 Sep 2007 to Mark Shrosbree <markshros@gmail.com>.

- Name
- Contact details (email, phone)
- Workshop title
- Workshop description (150 words)
- Workshop threshold target participant. Choose either: 1) Novice computer skills or 2) Some computer skills
- Self-bio: Please briefly outline your experience in the area you're proposing.

Multiple submissions will be accepted. Upon acceptance, a more detailed workshop overview will be asked for.



## New JALT Associate Members

JALT is pleased to welcome the addition of a couple of new Associate Members to our organization. **Young English System** <[www.youngenglishsystem.com](http://www.youngenglishsystem.com)> is a company that has developed a unique approach and offers a range of teaching materials for children. **RMIT English Worldwide** <[www.rmitenglishworldwide.com](http://www.rmitenglishworldwide.com)> is an Australian company offering English language training and testing.

## Publications positions available

### *The Language Teacher* and *JALT Journal*

...are looking for people to fill the positions of

English language proofreaders and Japanese language proofreaders.

### *JALT2007 Conference Proceedings*

...is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Co-Editor for the 2007 volume.

### *Publications website editor*

The JALT Publications Board invites applications for the position of Web Editor for the JALT Publications website.

### *More information*

Job descriptions and details on applying for these positions are posted on our website <[www.jalt-publications.org/positions/](http://www.jalt-publications.org/positions/)>.

## ...with Theron Muller

<[memprofile@jalt-publications.org](mailto:memprofile@jalt-publications.org)>



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

**T**HIS MONTH in Showcase Gregory Hadley, author of *Field of Spears* (Paulownia Press, 2007), shares his experience of writing a historical account of the loss of an American B-29 over Niigata near the end of the Second World War. Have your own story to share? I look forward to hearing from you.

## SHOWCASE

## Gregory Hadley

On a number of occasions, I had heard war stories from people in Niigata about "The B-29"—of it burning brightly in the night sky, and of parachutes. My curiosity was sparked by the accounts. With the incident 60 years in the past, and given the taboo in Japan of talking about those dark days, would it be possible for me, a foreigner, to learn anything?

My search set me on a 3-year quest that led through small Japanese farming villages, dusty archives, and rural American towns. I interviewed scholars, survivors from the crew, eyewitnesses, former prisoners of war, and old soldiers. In telling their stories, each had something valuable to share—and something dreadful to hide.

I decided the best way to approach this book was as a narrative. I attempted to relate the viewpoints of the crewmen and the villagers who captured them. To show war's effects on ordinary people I decided to tell as much of the story as I was able to discover. At the same time I feel this story must be told with compassion. It will be up to readers to decide whether I have succeeded.

Decide for yourself at <[paulowniapress.co.uk/books/Field\\_of\\_Spears.html](http://paulowniapress.co.uk/books/Field_of_Spears.html)>.

### FIELD OF SPEARS

THE LAST MISSION OF THE JORDAN CREW

GREGORY HADLEY

WITH A FOREWORD BY PHILIP SEATON



PAULOWNIA PRESS

## ...with Joyce Cunningham & Mariko Miyao

<grassroots@jalt-publications.org>



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



**E**VER FELT like Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz* and wondered who is running JALT? Well, read our first report and see what one volunteer has to say about becoming involved in various aspects of the organization. In the second report, Cullen & Smiley take a fresh look at the theoretical and

practical sides of using music in EFL in Japan.

## Where's the "U" in JALT?

Hi, my name is Eric Skier, and over the past 5 years I have gone from being an ordinary member of JALT to being associated with the organization in numerous roles: co-liaison for featured speakers (FS); reader for conference proceedings, *TLT*, and conference proposals; member-at-large for the LD SIG; co-editing an LD SIG publication on autonomy in Japan; coordinator of the TOL SIG; and most recently publicity chair for JALT2007 (to be held in Tokyo from 22-25 Nov). Whew! Talk about getting around! But, I would be lying to you if I said I didn't enjoy almost every aspect of being associated with the hardworking (and oftentimes unappreciated?) professionals that make up JALT. As an ordinary member, there was so much I took for granted, and I wonder if there are many reading this that might feel the same? In short, what have "U" done for JALT lately?

I know this may come off as a sales pitch, but I sincerely believe that for every bit of energy I have put into JALT, I have received just as much energy (usually positive, too!) back. It has been

rewarding and highly educational as well. As co-liaison for FS, I was able to meet world-famous teacher-researchers from around the globe, and I am happy to say that each and every one of them was quick to show sincere appreciation for the help (advice, language and technical support, and so on) offered them. The same went for the various publishing house representatives and sponsors I helped. All were great people!

As for the more *academic* roles, they have been challenging, but neither JALT nor the LD SIG has ever left me hanging. There has always been someone to "watch my back," if you will. The encouraging structure has been non-judgmental, respectful, often supportive of my professional autonomy, and even humorous at times. As such, it has been a pleasure to participate in shaping the contents of *TLT*, conference proceedings, an anthology on autonomy in Japan, and the annual conference itself.

So what may happen if you do your work on time and in a professional and seemingly effortless manner in such positions (although the truth may be far different!)? You will likely be asked to take on more responsibility. As the editorial staff of the *TLT* always does when looking for new people for their team, they like to promote from within—and I can certainly see their point. And that, I guess, is how I got to be the coordinator of a SIG and the publicity chair for JALT2007. Now I have some *power*, but with power comes responsibility, and I am always aware of the role I play in the bigger picture (i.e., JALT). Now I have to be aware of audits, attend executive board meetings, and generally come to grips with what it takes to run a non-profit organization for language teaching in Japan. Again, a lot of hard work, but rewarding, too.

On the lighter side, I am glad to be able to say I have learned what it takes to put together a book, a conference flyer, and most recently a conference T-shirt and sweatshirt—and the *simple* T-shirt isn't as easy as you might think! I have also learned about a number of media outlets for publicizing JALT events. In all of the *fun* listed above, I have yet to be straight out criticized. I have been questioned, and that is normal, but never just told I have been doing something wrong. Again, I really believe there is an honest attempt at supporting people.

In short, it is an awesome effort that a few people put in, and I know there are more members out there just like us. We aren't special, but we have decided to try to make a change and a difference, and I, for one, think we are having an

effect. If you are interested in sharing your abilities and talents with the JALT team, feel free to let someone know. What you have to contribute won't go unnoticed in a group like this!

Eric Skier

Tokyo University of Pharmacy and Life Sciences

<skier@ps.toyaku.ac.jp>

- Conference and T-shirt URL: <conferences.jalt.org/2007>
- MAYA URL: <coyote.miyazaki-mu.ac.jp/learnerdev/maya/index.html>
- Interested in volunteer work at this year's conference? Contact Phil McCasland at <programs@jalt.com>
- Interested in a position with the editorial team of *TLT*? Contact <www.jalt-publications.org/positions>

## Using music in EFL in Japan

According to our online survey administered in 2007, 93% of English teachers in Japan are doing it. They're doing it in children's classes, at high school, at university, and even with pensioners. Music is a popular ingredient in the classroom. In this article, we discuss the why and how of music in EFL in Japan.

Music's effect on the brain is significant. The Society for Neuroscience reports that adult musicians have larger primary motor cortexes and cerebellums than non-musicians. Childhood musical training results in more neural stimulation, more synapse connections formed, better academic achievement, and a better-developed individual. Even for non-musicians, classical music affects mood (the *Mozart Effect*), and baroque music is a core method in Suggestopedia. A new theory called *conceptual integration* provides an explanation: new knowledge is not learnt as is, but rather incorporated into our existing framework of experiences and knowledge. Music acts as a powerful trigger of this framework, and new experiences are assimilated more deeply.

All this is just a complicated way of saying, "Music helps us learn." Tables 1 and 2 show that teachers in the survey know it. 74% of teachers believe that students learn language easily from songs; 67% think that music creates a good learning atmosphere. Teachers in Japan who have

never even heard of conceptual integration or Suggestopedia know the same things from their teaching experience.

### Why not?

Of course there are reasons that people report for not using music. First, teachers don't feel that music is relevant, for example, "My classes are based on practical business situations, and music rarely appears in such situations." Second, teachers don't feel comfortable using music, for example, "I don't have a lot of musical energy myself." The following quotation included both of these reasons: "Music is so intensely personal. Sharing my reactions to music with my students feels so tenuously connected to ELT that I don't." We don't necessarily agree with these sentiments but can see how they are formed.

### How do you use music?

Music can be used in many ways. A lesson plan can be based on the cultural, linguistic, or technical aspects of songs. The scientific, sociological, or geographic features can become the basis for linguistic activity. Lyrics may be conceptualised as texts, social discourse, discussion themes, or vocabulary and grammar examples. As with any text, the words may be used for cloze, listening, grammar, or vocabulary activities; creative writing; and so forth. Techniques such as rhyme and rhythm may be taught. Tables 3 and 4 bring you ideas from your colleagues in Japan.

### What music/songs do you use?

The EFL jukebox plays an eclectic mix including The Carpenters, Potato Pals, and Elvis. University teachers liked songs with a story. Kids' teachers liked songs with lots of repetition. Everyone loves a good melody and rhythm.

### Other comments

Here are some of the many funny and thought-provoking comments that we received:

- Students remember the music and lyrics long after they forget the rest of the course!
- Music can be very motivating for students but it can also be very distracting. It should serve a purpose in the lesson.
- Songs are essential. Any teacher who doesn't use them should be drummed out of the profession at once. Finis.

- A class without music is like sashimi with no soy sauce—pretty near tasteless!

If you're not using music in your lessons, we hope that the ideas in this article will encourage you to bring soy sauce to your sashimi and songs to your students.

Brian Cullen  
Nagoya Institute of Technology  
Jim Smiley  
Tohoku Bunka Gakuen University






**Table 1. Why do you use music?**

It's fun.		28	65%
It creates a good learning atmosphere.		29	67%
Students learn language easily from songs.		32	74%

**Table 2. Other responses**

It's a good break for students in long classes.	It can make a hidden grammar practice.
It can signal the start of an activity or break states.	Music provides a good "memory hook."
[My students] want to learn two Destiny's Child songs.	It helps them to understand English rhythm.
It is fun listening for low level learners.	It helps pronunciation. It's motivating.

**Table 3. How do you use music?**

We sing songs together.		29	67%
We use movements with music/songs.		24	56%
I put music/songs on in the background.		17	40%
Cloze listening exercise.		16	37%
Starting point for discussion.		9	21%

**Table 4. Other responses**

Listening comprehension using visual aids.	BGM, other listening activities (ordering etc).
We read the words and color pictures on the pages.	Songs are used to reinforce a grammar point.
[Our students will] sing two songs at the Festival!	As cues for the beginning or end of set activities.
To model the language targets.	I play the keyboard.
I use it to target key vocabulary and for singing.	Matching rhyming words.
As a starting point for writing.	Identify genres as part of music likes/dislikes.



## ...with James Hobbs

<sig-news@jalt-publications.org>



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

## JALT 2008 Pan-SIG Conference: Call for Participation

The 7th Annual Pan-SIG Conference will be held on 10-11 May 2008 at a location in or near Kyoto City. If your SIG is interested in participating in this conference, please contact Eric Skier <skier@ps.toyaku.ac.jp> no later than 15 Jul.

### SIGs at a glance

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

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

## Bilingualism

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

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

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

## Computer Assisted Language Learning

[🔍] technology, computer-assisted, wireless, online learning, self-access [📖] *JALT CALL Journal Newsletter*—3x year [👤] Annual SIG conference, national conference, regional workshops, publications [✉] [💬]

Thanks to all presenters and attendees for helping make the 2007 JALTCALL Conference a great success! Over 130 presentations were given on the various aspects of classroom integration of CALL technologies and methodologies: Web 2.0

software, podcasting, and even the pedagogical applications of digital video clips. We thank the faculty, staff, and students of Waseda University for their support and for a wonderful experience. We look forward to seeing you in 2008! More at <jaltcall.org>.

## College and University Educators

[🔍] tertiary education, interdisciplinary collaboration, professional development, classroom research, innovative teaching [📖] *On CUE*—3x year [👤] Annual SIG conference, national conference, regional workshops, publications [✉] [💬]

Information about what is going on in CUE can be found at <allagash.miyazaki-mu.ac.jp/CUE/>. Check for regular updates on the 15th of each month.

## Gender Awareness in Language Education

The GALE SIG, in collaboration with other JALT SIGs and the Osaka Chapter, will hold a 2-day conference 6-7 Oct. The plenary lecture is *Gender and Leadership: Some Socio-Pragmatic Considerations*, by **Janet Holmes**, Victoria University of Wellington, followed by a discussion on 6 Oct 18:00-20:00 at TUJ-Osaka campus. On 7 Oct there are paper presentations 10:00-17:00 at Kansai University and a panel presentation with Janet Holmes as the discussant. More information at <gale-sig.org/events.htm>.

## Global Issues in Language Education

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

Are you interested in promoting global awareness and international understanding through your teaching? Then join the Global Issues in Language Education SIG. We produce an exciting quarterly newsletter packed with news, articles, and book reviews; organize presentations for local, national, and international conferences; and network with groups such as UNESCO, Amnesty International, and Educators for Social Responsibility. Join us in teaching for a better world!

Our website is <www.jalt.org/global/sig/>. For further information, contact Kip Cates <kcates@fed.tottori-u.ac.jp>.

## Junior and Senior High School

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

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

## Learner Development

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

The LD SIG is becoming more active at grass-roots level! We have been meeting to discuss LD-related issues and socialising in small groups in Tokyo, Kobe, and Kyoto, and have started an e-discussion group to plan events and discuss themes of interest. Information about how to join is on the community page on our website <ld-sig.org/community/>. For other queries, contact the SIG coordinator Hugh Nicoll <hnicoll@gmail.com>, or the program chair Ellen Head <ellenkobe@yahoo.com>.

## Materials Writers

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

The MW SIG shares information on ways to create better language learning materials, covering a wide range of issues from practical advice on style to copyright law and publishing practices, including self-publication. On certain conditions we also provide free ISBNs. Our newsletter *Between the Keys* is published three to four times a year and we have a discussion forum and mailing list at <groups.yahoo.com/group/jaltmwsig/>. Our website is <uk.geocities.com/materialwriter-sig/>. To contact us, email <mw@jalt.org>.

## Other Language Educators

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

OLE participated in PanSIG 2007 in Sendai this year for the first time with a plenary speaker, **Martine Gunske von Koelln** of Fukushima University and six other presentations on various aspects of Spanish, French, German, and further foreign language learning in general (info available from <reinelt@iec.hime-u.ac.jp>). Due to this success, OLE will also participate in PanSIG 2008 in Kyoto and information will be made available by the coordinator as soon as it comes out.

## Pragmatics

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

The Pragmatics SIG is one of the sponsors of the GALE SIG Conference on Gender and Beyond. The conference will be held on 6 Oct at Temple University, Japan, Osaka, and on 7 Oct at Kansai University. There will be a special lecture by **Janet Holmes**, Linguistics Chair of Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, entitled *Gender and Leadership: Some Socio-Pragmatic Considerations*. For more details, see <www.gale-sig.org>.

## Professionalism, Administration, and Leadership in Education






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

## Teacher Education

[🔗 action research, peer support, reflection and teacher development] [📖 *Explorations in Teacher Education*—4x year] [🗣️ library, annual retreat or mini-conference, Pan-SIG sponsorship, sponsorship of speaker at the JALT national conference] [✉️] [🗣️]

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



## Teaching Children

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

The Teaching Children SIG is for all teachers of children. We publish a bilingual newsletter 4 times a year, with columns by leading teachers in our field. There is a mailing list for teachers of children who want to share teaching ideas or questions at <groups.yahoo.com/group/tcsig/>. We are always looking for new people to keep the SIG dynamic. With our bilingual newsletter, we particularly hope to appeal to Japanese teachers. We hope you can join us for one of our upcoming events. For more information, visit <www.tcsig.jalt.org>.

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

## Teaching Older Learners






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

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

成人英語教育研究部会は来る高齢化社会に向けて高齢者を含む成人の英語教育をより充実することを目指し、昨年結成した新しい分科会です。現在、日本では退職や子育て後もこれまでの経験や趣味を生かし積極的に社会に参加したいと望んでいる方が大幅に増えております。中でも外国語学習を始めたい、または継続

を考えている多くの学習者に対してわれわれ語学教師が貢献出来る課題は多く、これからの研究や活動が期待されています。TOLでは日本全国の教師が情報交換、勉強会、研究成果の出版を行い共にこの新しい分野を開拓していこうと日々熱心に活動中です。現在オンライン<www.eigosenmon.com/tolsig/>上でもフォーラムやメールリスト、ニュースレター配信を活発に行っております。高齢者の語学教育に携わっていらっしゃる方はもちろん、将来の英語教育動向に関心のある方まで、興味のある方はどなたでも大歓迎です。日本人教師も数多く参加していますのでどうぞお気軽にご入会ください。お問い合わせは Amanda Harlow <amand@aqua.livedoor.com>。または Eric Skier <skier@ps.toyaku.ac.jp>までご連絡ください。

## Testing & Evaluation

[  research, information, database on testing ] [  Shiken—3x year ] [  Pan-SIG, JALT National ] [  ] [  ]

Nine assessment-related workshops were held during the 12-13 May Pan-SIG Conference in Sendai. Detailed information about some of those workshops should be in the Pan-SIG Proceedings at <www.jalt.org/pansig/2007/> in around December. During the upcoming JALT National Conference in Tokyo, our SIG will be sponsoring a panel discussion on assessment literacy. Details will be on our website.

jalt journal  
全国語学教育学会

## JALT Journal

is a refereed research journal of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (全国語学教育学会).

It invites practical and theoretical articles and research reports on second/foreign language teaching and learning in Japanese and Asian contexts.

For more information and submission guidelines see <www.jalt-publications.org/jj/>



## ...with Aleda Krause

<chap-events@jalt-publications.org>



Each of JALT's chapters sponsors regular events. JALT members may attend events at any chapter. Chapters, don't forget to add your event to the JALT calendar or send the details to the editor. Please include a 60-word description of the event.



### CHAPTER EVENTS ONLINE

You can access all of JALT's events online at:  
<[www.jalt.org/calendar](http://www.jalt.org/calendar)>.

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

**Chiba—Problems and Issues in Primary English Education in Japan** by **Irina Babanova**. In Japan, the teaching of English in elementary schools was implemented in 2002. Babanova will talk about the main problems in early foreign language education here. Participants will be encouraged to discuss such issues as: who should teach, primary-secondary continuation, staging of skills and the relationship between oral/aural and written aspects of the language, motivation, and the number of languages children could learn. *Sun 29 July 14:00-16:30; SATY Bunka Hall, 4F, Room 1 (1 min. walk from Inage Station east exit, JR Sobu Line); one-day members ¥500.*

**Fukuoka—Second Annual Temple University/Fukuoka JALT Applied Linguistics Colloquium.** More information to be announced. *Sun 15 Jul; Fukuoka Jo Gakuin Tenjin Satellite Campus, 9F, Tenjin 2-8-38, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka-shi (see map <[www.fukujo.ac.jp/tenjin/access.html](http://www.fukujo.ac.jp/tenjin/access.html)>); free for all.*

**Gunma—Multimedia Showcase in the Age of Web 2.0** by **Hideto Harashima**. This presentation introduces a variety of multimedia tools/services that realize the concept of Web 2.0. After briefly introducing Web 2.0, the presenter will show how we can enhance language teaching/learning by using cutting edge technologies such as Text-to-Speech conversion, Podcasting, Blog, Internet Radio, Skypecast, YackPack, YouTube, Google, and more. *Sun 22 Jul 14:00-16:30; MIT: Maebashi Insti-*

*tute of Technology (Maebashi Koka Daigaku), 460-1 Kamisadori, Maebashi; one-day members ¥1000.*

**Gunma—(in August) 19th JALT Gunma Summer Workshop at Kusatsu: Writing in English as an L2** with **Alister Cumming**, OISE/University of Toronto, and **Razika Sanaoui**, University of Toronto. Cumming will give two lectures: *Conceptualization of EFL/ESL Writing Curricula*, and *Writing Pedagogy, Curricula, and Assessment in First and Second Languages*. Sanaoui will talk about *Writing, Reading, and Technology*. There will also be four presentations by participants. To register, contact **Morijiro Shibayama** <[mshibaya@jcom.home.ne.jp](mailto:mshibaya@jcom.home.ne.jp)>, t/f: 027-263-8522. Applications will be accepted on first-come, first-served basis. *Sat 25-Sun 26 Aug; Kusatsu Seminar House, Kusatsu, Gunma; ¥9000 (¥3000 for the program, ¥6000 for room and board).*

**Hokkaido—Learning Pragmatics in Foreign Language Classrooms** by **Gabriele Kasper**. Kasper will first outline the main approaches to teaching pragmatics in foreign language settings. Then she will give examples of how students' pragmatic competence—specifically, their ability to make requests—can be advanced through face-to-face interaction and computer-mediated communication. *Sun 15 Jul 13:30-16:00; Hokkai Gakuen University, Library Building International Room 6F; one-day members ¥500.*

**Iwate—Teaching Pre-Teens: Problems and Possibilities.** by **Aleda Krause**. How do you feel about teaching pre-teens? Even the most confident teachers can be challenged by 10- to 12-year olds. They are no longer small children and not yet young adults, but seem to swing back and forth between the two. Do you experience difficulties generating energy, managing classes with mixed levels, or bringing out shy students? Aleda will share some secrets for success with upper elementary students in this activity-based presentation. *Sun 15 Jul 13:30-16:30; Aomori Akenohoshi Tanki Daigaku; one-day members TBA.*

**Kitakyushu—The New TOEIC Tests: Understanding the Challenges, Preparing for Success** by **Grant Trew**. The recent changes to the TOEIC have significant implications for both students and educators running test preparation courses. Grant will clarify the main changes of the new TOEIC: Listening and Reading Test and present some approaches to overcoming the problems

Japanese learners are likely to face. He will also give an overview of tasks included on the new TOEIC: Speaking and Writing Tests. *Sat 14 Jul 19:00-21:00; Kitakyushu International Conference Center, Room 31 (a 5-minute walk from the Kokura train station); one-day members ¥1000.*

**Matsuyama—Motivation From Natural Resources: Genuine Communication Through Surveys** by **Erin Peter Kourelis**, American Language School, Matsuyama. How do you get your students motivated? The speaker will discuss the use of surveys to get real questions—from the minds of Japanese students—answered by native English speakers. He will show how this can be applied to all ages and levels. There will be opportunity for attendees to discuss their own ways of motivating students. *Sun 8 Jul 14:15-16:20; Shinonome High School Kinenkan 4F; one-day members ¥1000.*

**Miyazaki—Promoting a Holistic Approach to Speaking in the Classroom** by **Simon Capper**, The Japanese Red Cross Hiroshima College of Nursing. Many language learners (and teachers) have a tendency to focus excessively on linguistic features at the expense of paralinguistic and nonverbal aspects of communication. Similarly, language teaching materials often fail to acknowledge the importance of these crucial channels. This workshop will demonstrate materials and activities that raise awareness of these important features. Participants will be invited to share their own teaching and learning experiences, activities, and ideas. *Sat 14 Jul 16:00-18:00; Miyazaki Municipal University Room 310; free for all.*

**Nagasaki—Gender in Language and Giving Peace Studies a Chance** with Clem Hiemstra, Nagasaki, and Tim Allan, Kwassui Women's College. This meeting will be about global issues and content-based instruction from two perspectives. Hiemstra will guide us through a session on the topic of gender and language. We will list some obvious examples where we can see gender at work in language, comparing Japanese examples with English ones. Allan will introduce some activities, rationales, and materials for local peace studies classes. More information at <[www.kyushuelt.com/jalt/nagasaki.html](http://www.kyushuelt.com/jalt/nagasaki.html)>. *Sat 28 July 14:00-16:00; Dejima Koryu Kaikan, 4F; one-day members ¥1000.*

**Nagoya—Curriculum Innovation: Coordinating and Managing Change** by **Douglas Jarrell**,

**James Venema**, and **Kathi Emori**, Nagoya Women's University. The speakers will discuss three aspects of curriculum innovation. Doug will talk about the politics of change and the necessary conditions for implementing curriculum renewal. James will offer some suggestions for curriculum and teacher coordination based on lessons learned over the last few years. Kathi will talk about assessing courses and implementing curriculum innovations. *Sun 18 July 13:30-16:00; Nagoya International Center, 3F, Lecture Room 2; one-day members ¥1000.*

**Okayama—Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC)** by **David Mcloughlin**, Nagoya University of Commerce and Business, and **Jo Mynard**, Koryo International College. The presenters will show examples of CMC and how it can be used in a language classroom to promote both language acquisition and higher-order thinking. **Using a Student Newspaper to Promote Communication** by **Jason Williams** and **Chris Creighton**, Notre Dame Seishin University. The presenters will demonstrate how to set up an English-language newspaper for students in order to increase inter- and intra-class English communication. *Sun 22 July 15:00-16:50; Sankaku A Bldg. 2F, near Omotecho in Okayama City; one-day members ¥500.*

**Omiya—1) Picture Books, Storytelling, and Imaginative Learning** by **Patricia Daly Oe**. Author Oe will discuss the value of using picture books and storytelling when teaching children, and show examples of techniques for small and large classes and a range of levels. **2) Native English Teachers: Ideas for Self-Introductions at Elementary School** by **Irina Babanova**. A first step in reducing the strangeness of a language for young children is a self-introduction, letting them know about us, their teachers. Babanova will demonstrate a self-introduction lesson. *Sun 8 July 14:00-17:00; Sakuragi Kominkan 5F (near Omiya Station, west exit); one-day members ¥1000.*

**Sendai—Reading Children's Picture Books** by **David Gilbey**. We know how to read text in English-speaking cultures: it's left to right and top to bottom. But how do we "read" pictures? What is it that we respond to? How is our attention directed or constructed? Is there a grammar for reading pictures? Children's books open up a myriad of possible connections between image and text. Gilbey will address key areas such as colour, line, position, style, and perspective in examining sample illustrations from contemporary

children's picture books. *Sun 29 July 14:00-17:00; Sendai Mediatheque; one-day members ¥1000.*

**Tokyo—Expressing Causation in English and Japanese** by **Chikako Shigemori Bucar**, University of Ljubljana. The Japanese causative affix *-(s)ase-* is usually taught in the beginning level. English speaking learners are not eager to produce the causative in Japanese, perhaps because there is no comparable morpheme in English. Added to this, *-(s)ase-* has various functions besides causation. Based on contrastive research and corpus studies, the presenter will explore when the causative should really be taught. Space is limited for this seminar. If you are interested, contact Megumi Kawate-Mierzejewska <seminar-2006jaltokyo@gmail.com>. *Fri 20 Jul 19:00-20:30; Temple University Japan, Minamiazabu campus; one-day members ¥1000.*

**Toyohashi—What is Oral Interpretation? What Can It Do?** by **Makoto Omi**. Oral Interpretation, originally “the art of communicating to an audience a piece of written work in its intellectual, emotional, and esthetic entirety” (Charlotte Lee), is actually a powerful means of language input. It enhances learners’ sensitivity toward a text through analysis not only of its meaning but more importantly of its voice and intentions. As the essential rhetoric of language is absorbed, it will be-

come evident in spontaneous spoken and written utterances. *Sun 8 Jul 13:30-16:00; Aichi University, Bldg. 5, Room 543; one-day members ¥1000.*

**Yamagata—North Dakota in Terms of its History, Culture, Education, and Language** by **Rachel Henkelmann**, Yamagata City ALT. The topic will be presented in terms of English as a means of global communication in the 21st century. *Sat 7 Jul 13:30-15:30; Yamagata Kajo Kominkan Sogo Gakushu Center, Shironishi-machi 2-chome, 2-15 (t: 023-645-6163); one-day members ¥800.*

**Yokohama—Teaching Yoga to Children Through English** by **Elizabeth Knight**. After a 75-minute yoga class, there will be a discussion on using yoga as a supplement to lessons. Knight will introduce games students can do without knowing they are doing yoga. Yoga has become popular for adults looking for a healthier life. Children also need a healthier environment to grow up in. Why not start? Please bring a long bath towel, comfortable loose fitting clothing, water, and a positive mind. *Sun 8 Jul 14:00-16:30; Ginou Bunka Kaikan (Skills & Culture Center) near JR Kannai & Yokohama Subway Isezakichojamachi; one-day members ¥1000.*

## ...with Heather Sparrow

<chap-reports@jalt-publications.org>



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

**Akita: April—The Power of Stories to Teach and Motivate** by **Jarrett Dave Ragan Jr.** Story telling has been the preferred method of teaching since ancient times. It is still used in many societies as a way to help people understand the world. From the stories we hear and tell we learn right and

wrong and what is deemed useful and wasteful. In socio-cultural terms we construct our identity, along with others in our society, through the stories we tell. In neuroscience terms, stories help us make patterns of neurons in our brains that are used to shape and control our behaviors, thoughts, and beliefs about what is possible and impossible for ourselves and for our society.

Ragan discussed the effectiveness of motivational stories in the language classroom as both a tool for language learning and for enhancing learning strategies, thus improving the learners’ motivation for language acquisition. He shared two of his favorite motivational stories that he uses to help himself and his students construct a more useful way of looking at and hopefully tackling the world of learning English specifically and life in general.

*Reported by Stephen Shucart*



**East Shikoku: April—*Why Extensive Reading is Necessary in all Language Programs* by Rob Waring.** Waring explained the various components needed for successful language learning, beginning the presentation by highlighting the differences between *intensive* and *extensive* reading and demonstrating why there needs to be much more attention given to extensive reading. By introducing recent vocabulary learning research findings and noting the daunting task an L2 learner faces in the area of vocabulary acquisition, Waring made a strong case for extensive reading through graded readers as the only way for students to get massive language exposure at a level suitable for individual learners. Among the many advantages graded readers offer, Waring focused on how they allow learners to work at their own pace and at their own level, and how they provide opportunities for learners to get a feel for how words collocate and the grammatical relationships between words. Waring concluded by offering a statistical analysis of the number of English words a learner has to meet in order to learn a particular word.

*Reported by Darren Lingley*

**Gifu: April—*Meaning-Focused Learning Through Drama* by Kathi Emori.** Emori spoke about the challenges and the benefits of using drama in the language classroom. She presented a five-step approach to drama instruction—an approach which begins with the instructor leading basic voice and movement exercises and builds towards the students independently planning, writing, and performing their own skits. Emori led participants through a number of practical activities to be used at each step. She asked participants to perform short skits and apply many of the techniques and ideas presented at the meeting, then introduced a number of texts, one-act plays, and other materials that instructors may find valuable for their own classes. She concluded by discussing the practicalities of introducing drama activities beyond the university setting to students of various ages and abilities.

*Reported by Jon Rozhon*

**Gunma: April—*Stories to Heal the World* by Charles Kowalski.** Kowalski began his workshop with a heart-rending Cambodian story of abuse, compassion, and transformation, sharing *kamishibai*-like pictures made from the original picture book. His emotional narrative drew the participants into the world of storytelling. His way of speaking proved that it is not only pictures and words of a story that convey its message.

The factors that truly give life to the story are the storyteller's voice tone and body language. After his demonstration, he introduced three group activities to help the participants make their stories come alive.

Throughout the workshop, he explained how introducing learners to stories from unfamiliar cultures can foster world peace. As the peace activist Gene Knudsen Hoffman explains, "an enemy is one whose story we have not heard." From this viewpoint, peacemakers are not only the great heroes of history such as Gandhi or Mother Teresa, but we, language teachers, can be peacemakers. The workshop ended successfully with all the participants becoming storytellers and telling each other stories of peace from other cultures.

*Reported by Natsue Nakayama*

**Hokkaido: April—*Tips on Giving Effective Presentations* by C. A. Edington, Wilma Luth, and Chris Perry.** Edington and Luth elicited points that made presentations effective. These were categorized into the areas of delivery, logistics, and preparation. In addition, Edington showed a slideshow that demonstrated effective and ineffective uses of media such as *PowerPoint* or *Keynote*. Perry gave a brief heads up on what, from his experience as a vetter for national JALT conferences, is important in writing an abstract that will be accepted. Participants talked about what they were excited about in their own teaching and started to plan how they might turn that into a presentation. This presentation produced a valuable lexicon of ideas and suggestions for developing and presenting our research or activities in a presentation format.

*Reported by B. Bricklin Zeff*

**Ibaraki: April—*Getting Your Foot in the Publishing Door* by Satoko Shimoyama.** Shimoyama advised how to enter the realm of publishing and answered questions concerning academic publishing. She addressed the question, *How do publishers decide what to publish?* explaining that publishing plans are influenced by competitors' titles, long-term market trends, pedagogical considerations, and the publisher's budget and resources.

Shimoyama explained the publishing process beginning with the *idea/concept stage* in which proposals are reviewed internally and examined in light of market research. If the decision is made to continue, the process enters the *approval*



*stage*: a publisher-author agreement is signed, and staff arrangements and schedules are drawn up. The *productive stage* finds the author writing and rewriting the manuscript within a cycle of editing and classroom piloting. The *finalizing* (not *final*) *stage* involves design, layout, and proofing. The *manufacturing stage* completes the process with printing, binding, and delivery. Shimoyama warned authors to be prepared to find substantial differences between their initial conception and the final product.

Besides submitting one's own proposal, another first step is to offer to review or pilot others' materials. Likewise, contributing small portions to workbooks or teachers' resource books may get your foot in the EFL publishing door.

*Reported by John Racine*

**Kitakyushu: April—Writing Class: A Fun Part of Senior High School** by **Takashi Inomori**. Inomori outlined the brief history of teaching creative English writing in Japan, which was first little more than translating from Japanese to English and has not developed much further due to teachers' lack of experience with it themselves. He demonstrated how he makes his classes fun while guiding the development of writing and learning techniques, first with a "chain letter" activity, where paragraphs are passed from writer to writer, each adding a sentence supporting the theme or disputing it. The end result is an amusing icebreaker to begin a term with. Classes include timed writing exercises and discussion of common errors, always allowing enough time for brainstorming and pre- and post-writing activities, as well as peer feedback and correction (Japanese permitted). Perfect accuracy is stressed less than writing fluency so that up to 13 essays can be completed per term, the best of which are posted on his school's website. He usually does the assignment first, as an example, and always gets the students started writing before the lesson ends. Inomori's expertise and enthusiasm has resulted in some quality student writing.

*Reported by Dave Pite*

**Miyazaki: April—Sing Your Life: Effectively Using Pop Lyrics in EFL** by **Paul Hullah**. Hullah emphasized several points that he felt would make the use of pop lyrics more effective for university-aged EFL learners. Among these were: 1) the lyrics chosen should have some relevance to students' lives; 2) the vocabulary level should be appropriate; 3) pronunciation practice and

closes are not suitable for use with pop lyrics because of the unnatural meters forced upon them by the music; 4) a focus should be put upon the personalization of the meaning because Japanese explanations of meaning are not always helpful; and 5) songs that have a narrative structure with provocative imagery are often the most effective. Using samples of lyrics he found effective vs. those that he felt were less effective, Hullah emphasized that the ultimate goal of such a course or lesson should be to liberate the English that students have already internalized, and cautioned against "dumbing down" content by using childish or vapid lyrics. Hullah also outlined how he typically used a single lyric as a full lesson in his own classroom.

*Reported by Mike Guest*

**Nagasaki: April—1) The Place of Placement Tests** by **Melodie Cook**. Cook highlighted the purposes, processes, and outcomes of a placement system for 1st-year university students. 2) **Ideas for New Classes**. Participants shared ideas for first classes.

*Reported by Melodie Cook*

**Nagoya: April—Japanese in the EFL Class? The Why and the Way** by **Mark Rebuck**. Rebuck gave a questionnaire to his students regarding his teaching method using Japanese in the classroom—the students' L1. More than 78% viewed a native English speaking teacher's (NEST) use of L1 positively with a qualification. However, his students at the British Council, whose average score of TOEIC is 800, didn't appreciate his teaching style. His university students, in the 1st year of the medicine or pharmacy faculty, were positive. The purposes of the NEST's use of L1 in class are to explain vocabulary, grammar, English text, and cultural background, etc. Positive responses to the questionnaire were: 1) Japanese is essential in teaching about subtle differences in nuance; 2) it reduces the chance of falling behind; and 3) it is good for the atmosphere of the class because the teacher's imperfect mastery of L1 promotes students' empathy. Negative views were: 1) opportunity is wasted; and 2) it is detrimental to the atmosphere for learning a foreign language. In his self-monitoring video lessons, Rebuck explains difficult English vocabulary and grammar in Japanese to speed up comprehension and promote student participation. It helps as a break, adding variety, and encourages autonomous learning.

*Reported by Kayoko Kato*

**Sendai: February—Off to the Onsen** by Paul Nation. JALT Sendai's annual 2-day retreat featured vocabulary expert Paul Nation in the restful environment of Akiu Onsen. Two workshops, three sumptuous meals, and a number of visits to the onsen baths made for an interesting, informative, and relaxing break.

Nation presented his *four strands* approach to language learning, a robust framework that includes meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development in approximately equal proportions. This approach provides a practical tool for teachers planning curricula or lessons.

His second session explored the deliberate learning and teaching of vocabulary, including study techniques such as using word cards for drilling, as well as teaching approaches such as adapting tasks and activities in order to maximize students' vocabulary learning potential.

*Reported by Ben Shearon*

**Shinshu: April—Raising English Ability Through Making Speeches** by Dennis Woolbright. Woolbright provided valuable insights in the major steps involved in teaching Japanese university students how to prepare for and give a speech: non-threatening beginnings; getting ideas; speech construction; drafts, drafts, and more drafts; making a tape of the speech by a native speaker; a tape by the student; memorization using the tape, not just the manuscript alone; body gestures; and finally, the presentation itself.

He offered several unique methodologies and valuable advice. For example, he suggests that students write out 21 ideas for speech titles—good, bad, and crazy ideas. Any idea can make a perfect speech topic choice. If a student can't think of an idea, then they should write a speech on why they cannot think of an idea! Also, never start with a question—it has been overdone and has lost any impact it may have once had. However, the first 5 seconds are very important so make them count to capture the audience.

*Reported by David Ockert*

## COLUMN • JOB INFORMATION CENTER

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### ...with Derek DiMatteo

<job-info@jalt-publications.org>



To list a position in *The Language Teacher*, please submit online at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs/> or email Derek DiMatteo, Job Information Center Editor, <job-info@jalt-publications.org>.

Online submission is preferred. Please place your ad in the body of the email. The notice should be received before the 15th of the month, 2 months before publication, and should contain the

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

#### Job Information Center Online

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

## In-service teacher development

by Derek Di Matteo

In your job hunt, showing a commitment to professional development is crucial. Organizations such as JALT are one important avenue for this, and JALT's conferences, publications, chapter meetings, and SIGs provide excellent opportunities to stay current in the field. However, by necessity these focus on issues within the ESL/EFL discipline that are more general than what's happening at your own school. Thus, it is incumbent upon teachers to meet with colleagues from their own school for professional development in order to relate theory and pedagogy to local practice. In Japan, such in-service teacher development opportunities are scarce (a Japanese high school teacher might attend in-service training just twice a year), and usually are not extended to native English-speaking teachers. Here's a brief description of one in-service teacher development experience I had in the US, and some guidelines for setting up your own.

The first in-service seminar in which I participated in the States was held bi-weekly on Wednesdays, and was limited to 10 teachers from various departments. It was led by a pair of experienced faculty who had planned a syllabus and devised activities in advance. Readings came from a variety of sources, including newspaper articles, journal articles, and selections from textbooks. We read, wrote journal responses, and discussed the readings with each other. Even when the reading focused on something very specific (e.g., peer leadership among high school students or a selection of differentiated-instruction case studies), the conversations we had were focused on how the issues raised in the article related to the contexts of our students, the community, our teaching, and to own experiences as learners.

Based on that experience and my work in Japan, I suggest the following guidelines for conducting a professional development seminar within your school, *gaku*en, or district:

- Meet regularly (e.g., twice a month).
- Choose group leader(s) to coordinate things, such as meeting rooms and times, discussion topics, specific readings, record keeping, and participants' schedules.
- Create a focus, goal, or purpose for the group (e.g., the title of the seminar I describe above was "The world we create here at Wayland High," which helped to keep our reading responses and conversations grounded in our reality).
- Create a syllabus (perhaps centered on a theme, a set of issues, or a set of essential questions).
- Provide photocopies of the readings.
- Keep response journals (i.e., in which to reflect on the readings and respond to that week's theme or question).
- Ask participants to come to the meetings prepared (e.g., having done the readings and written in their journals) and ready to share with each other.
- Invite a cross-disciplinary group—including Japanese teachers, if possible. This could help bridge the gaps between NESTs and nonnative English teachers within your department and school.

While the group could be organized around a syllabus of readings that will lend themselves to discussion and reflection, the group might also wish to engage in additional activities, such as

portfolio development (*TLT* 31.2, 42-43). Other examples of professional development activities include action research, reflective teaching, mentor-mentee partnerships, peer observations, and lesson study.

Finally, a note about Professional Development Points (PDPs) for teachers planning to return to their home country to teach. Official record keeping and documentation of professional development activities are necessary for teachers who need to work towards recertification of teaching licenses issued in their home country. Credit for overseas professional development activities may require extra documentation, so check with the appropriate officials at your Department of Education, e.g., <[www.doe.mass.edu/recert/2000guidelines/sect2.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/recert/2000guidelines/sect2.html)>.

Summer is upon us, so this is a perfect time to plan a professional development seminar to start in the Fall.

## Job Openings

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

**Location:** Ehime-ken, Matsuyama-shi

**School:** Matsuyama University

**Position:** Lecturer (full-time English instructor)

**Start Date:** Apr 2008

**Deadline:** 28 Sep 2007

**Location:** Fukuoka-ken, Kurume-shi

**School:** Kurume University

**Position:** Part-time instructor of English

**Start Date:** Apr 2008

**Deadline:** 28 Sep 2007

**Location:** Hawaii, USA

**School:** University of Hawaii-Manoa

**Position:** Assistant/ Associate Professors (2, tenure-track)

**Start Date:** 1 Aug 2008

**Deadline:** 15 Sep 2007

**Location:** Hokkaido, Asahikawa  
**School:** Hokkaido University of Education  
**Position:** Foreign instructor (full-time)  
**Start Date:** 1 Oct 2007  
**Deadline:** 13 Jul 2007

**Location:** Kanagawa-ken, Fujisawa-shi  
**School:** Keio Shonan-Fujisawa Junior & Senior High School  
**Position:** English teacher (full-time)  
**Start Date:** 1 Apr 2008  
**Deadline:** 12 Jul 2007

**Location:** Osaka-fu, Higashi-Osaka  
**School:** Kinki University, Faculty of Law  
**Position:** Instructor of English (tenure track)  
**Start Date:** 1 Apr 2008  
**Deadline:** 17 Jul 2007

**Location:** Saitama-ken  
**Company:** Shumei Gakuen  
**Position:** Teacher of English (full-time)  
**Start Date:** 1 Sep 2007  
**Deadline:** Ongoing, until filled

## COLUMN • CONFERENCE CALENDAR

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### ...with Alan Stoke

<conferences@jalt-publications.org>

New listings are welcome. Please email information to the column editor by the 15th of the month, at least 3 months before a conference in Japan, or 4 months before an overseas conference. Thus, 15 Jul is the deadline for an Oct conference in Japan or a Nov conference overseas. Feedback or suggestions on the usefulness of this column are also most welcome.



### Upcoming Conferences

**7-8 Jul 2007—Japanese Society for Language Sciences Ninth Annual International Conference**, in Sendai. **Contact:** <aimee.gsid.nagoya-u.ac.jp/jsls2007/wiki.cgi?page=English>

**27 Jul 2007—TESOL Action-Research Mini-Conference: Astonishing Research: Opportunities, Discovery and Results**, at the British Council, Tokyo, 17:45-21:00. Presentations by Urszula Clark, Andy Boon, and Simon Stevens. **Contact:** <www.geocities.com/jaltwesttokyo/> <bromleycross@hotmail.com>

**27-30 Jul 2007—Third Corpus Linguistics Conference**, at the U. of Birmingham, UK. **Contact:** <www.corpus.bham.ac.uk/conference2007/index.htm>

**1-3 Aug 2007—ICTATLL Workshop 2007: Information and Communications Technology in Analysis, Teaching and Learning of Languages**, at International Education Center, Hiroshima International U. **Contact:** <www.ictatll.org/>

**3-5 Sep 2007—Fifth International Conference on Third Language Acquisition and Multilingualism**, at U. of Stirling, Scotland. **Contact:** <www.ioe.stir.ac.uk/L3conference/>

**6-8 Sep 2007—40th British Association for Applied Linguistics Annual Conference: Technology, Ideology and Practice in Applied Linguistics**, at U. of Edinburgh. **Contact:** <www.baal.org.uk/>

**11-14 Sep 2007—17th Annual Conference of the European Second Language Association: Interfaces in Second Language Acquisition Research**, at Newcastle U., UK. **Contact:** <www.ncl.ac.uk/niassh/eurosla17>

**15-17 Sep 2007—Sixth Symposium on Second Language Writing: Second Language Writing in the Pacific Rim**, at Nagoya Gakuin U. To provide an international forum for the discussion of various issues of interest to L2 writing teachers and researchers. **Contact:** <logos.unh.edu/sslw/2007/>

**20-22 Sep 2007—Second International Conference on Task-Based Language Teaching: TBLT: Putting Principles to Work**, at U. of Hawai'i. **Contact:** <www.tblt2007.org>



**5-8 Oct 2007—Third International Conference of the Independent Learning Association: *Exploring Theory, Enhancing Practice: Autonomy Across the Disciplines***, at Kanda U. of International Studies, Chiba. **Aims:** to expand the theoretical base of learner autonomy in language learning; to review past achievements and set future directions; to promote pedagogical innovation in classrooms that foster learner autonomy and in self-access centres; to support and consolidate the growing interest in self-access learning and learner autonomy in Japan; to expand understanding of the relationship between CALL and learner autonomy; to explore the role of teacher education programmes in fostering learner autonomy and independent learning. **Keynote Speakers:** Henri Holec (U. of Nancy II) *Autonomy in Language Learning: Past, Present & Future*; James Lantolf (Pennsylvania State U.) *Autonomy and Sociocultural Theory*; Yoshiyuki Nakata (Hyogo U. of Teacher Education) *Autonomy and Motivation*; Kathleen Graves (School for International Training) *Autonomy and Teacher Education*; Klaus Schwienhorst (U. of Hannover, Germany) *Autonomy and CALL*. **Contact:** <www.independentlearning.org>

**6-7 Oct 2007—JALT GALE SIG Mini-Conference: *Gender and Beyond***, at Temple U., Osaka (6 Oct) and at Kansai U. (7 Oct). Janet Holmes (Linguistics Chair, Victoria U. of Wellington, NZ) will give the opening lecture, *Gender and Leadership: Some Socio-Pragmatic Considerations*, and take part in a panel discussion. **Contact:** <www.gale-sig.org>

**11-14 Oct 2007—30th Annual Second Language Research Forum: *Second Language Acquisition and Research: Focus on Form and Function***, at U. of Illinois. **Contact:** <slrf-2007@uiuc.edu>

**13-14 Oct 2007—First Annual Japan Writers Conference**, at Ochanomizu U., Tokyo. **Contact:** <www.viversimples.ezhoster.com/writerconference.html>

**27-28 Oct 2007—Sixth Annual Conference on Peace as a Global Language: *Cultivating Leadership***, at Kyoto U. of Foreign Studies. **Contact:** <www.kufs.ac.jp/MUN/>, <www.pgjlapan.org>

**27-28 Oct 2007—15th Korea TESOL International Conference: *Energizing ELT: Challenging Ourselves, Motivating Our Students***, at Sookmyung Women's U., Seoul. **Contact:** <www.kotesol.org/?q=2007intcon>

**2-7 Nov 2007—GLoCALL 2007: *Globalization and Localization in CALL***, at Hanoi U. (2-4 Nov) and Ho Chi Minh City (5-7 Nov). **Contact:** <glo-call.org>

**21-24 Nov 2007—Second International Conference on Language, Education and Diversity**, at U. of Waikato, NZ. Keynote speakers from Canada, Israel, South Africa and USA. **Contact:** <www.led.ac.nz>

## CHALLENGING



## ASSUMPTIONS

# JALT2007

22-25 Nov 2007

National Olympics  
Memorial Youth  
Center, Tokyo

<conferences.jalt.org/2007>

**22-25 Nov 2007—JALT2007 International Conference: *Challenging Assumptions: Looking In, Looking Out***, at National Olympics Memorial Youth Center, Tokyo. **Contact:** <conferences.jalt.org/2007>

**7-11 Jan 2008—Responding to Change: Flexibility in the Delivery of Language Programmes**, in Hong Kong and Chiang Mai, Thailand. An international conference sponsored by Hong Kong U. of Science and Technology, and Payap U., Chiang Mai. **Contact:** <lc.ust.hk/~centre/conf2008/>

**21-26 Jul 2008—18th International Congress of Linguists**, at Korea U., Seoul. **Contact:** <cil18.org>, <bspolsky@gmail.com>

**24-29 Aug 2008—15th World Congress of Applied Linguistics: *Multilingualism: Challenges and Opportunities***, in Essen, Germany. **Contact:** <www.aila2008.org>

## Calls for Papers or Posters

**Deadline: 13 Jul 2007 (for 23 Sep 2007)—Fourth JALT Hokkaido Language Conference**, at Hokkai Gakuen University, Sapporo. Presentations, in English or Japanese, are invited on any aspect of teaching. Time slots are 45 minutes; however, where justified, presenters may request a double (90-minute) session. All submissions of abstracts will be vetted; notifications of acceptance will be sent out in the first week of August. To facilitate planning, please submit your abstract, in English or Japanese, as early as possible. **Contact:** for online submission: <[www.jalthokkaido.net](http://www.jalthokkaido.net)>; Conference Program Chair, Michael Mielke: <[conference@jalthokkaido.net](mailto:conference@jalthokkaido.net)>

**Deadline: 31 Jul 2007 (for 12-14 Dec 2007)—12th English in South-East Asia Conference: *Trends and Directions***, at King Mongkut's U. of Technology, Bangkok. **Contact:** <[arts.kmutt.ac.th/sola/esea](mailto:arts.kmutt.ac.th/sola/esea)>

**Deadline: 1 Aug 2007 (for 24 Sep 2007)—Annual Association of Canadian Teachers in Japan Mini-Conference: *Changes in Content: Our Evolving Mosaic***, at the Canadian Embassy, Tokyo. Proposals are invited for a total of 12 presentations in four sessions. Presenters need not be members or Canadian. Presentations may take the form of demonstrations or mini-workshops, and may be on any aspect of L2 teaching or acquisition, but proposals that have some connection to Canada will be especially welcome. Presentations are eligible to be published in the ACTJ quarterly journal, *Canadian Content*. The conference will be

followed by a social event. **Contact:** <[www.actj.org](http://www.actj.org)><[robmc@tokoha-u.ac.jp](mailto:robmc@tokoha-u.ac.jp)>

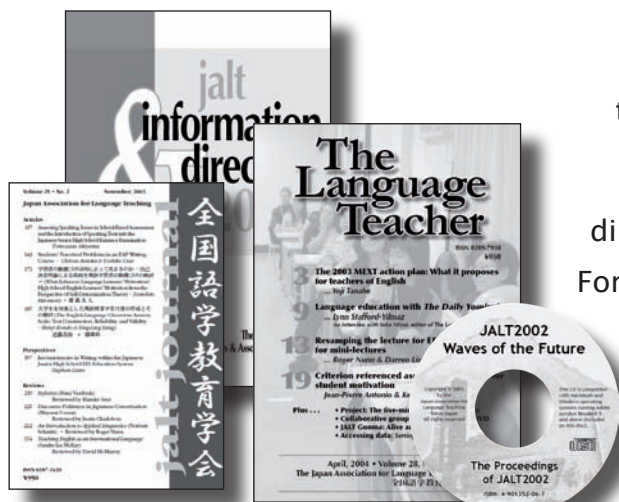
**Deadline: 20 Aug 2007 (for 1-3 Nov 2007)—Language Planning: The Need or the Desire to Standardize?** at Agder U. College, Kristiansand, Norway. **Contact:** <[www.hia.no/hum/nordisk/norm/engelsk-ind.htm](http://www.hia.no/hum/nordisk/norm/engelsk-ind.htm)>

**Deadline: 30 Nov 2007 (for 26-29 Jun 2008)—Ninth International Conference of the Association for Language Awareness: *Engaging with Language***, at U. of Hong Kong. To address language awareness in the learning and teaching of languages and, more generally, in literature and education. **Contact:** <[www.hku.hk/clear/ala](http://www.hku.hk/clear/ala)>

**Deadline: 30 Nov 2007 (for 3-5 Jul 2008)—Fifth Biennial Conference of the International Gender & Language Association**, at Victoria U. of Wellington, NZ. Proposals are invited on any topic related to language, gender, and sexuality. **Contact:** <[www.vuw.ac.nz/igala5/](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/igala5/)>

## Is your membership due for renewal?

Check the label on the envelope this TLT came in for your renewal date, then go to <[jalt.org/main/membership](http://jalt.org/main/membership)> and follow the easy instructions to register. Help us to help you! Renew early!



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

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

## Feature Articles

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

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

Send as an email attachment to the co-editors.

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

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

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

Send as an email attachment to the co-editors.

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

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

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

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

**学会報告:** 語学教師に関心のあるトピックの大会に出席された場合は、400語程度に要約して、報告書を書いてください。共同編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

## Departments

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

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

Send as an email attachment to the My Share editor.

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

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

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

Send as an email attachment to the Book Reviews editor.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Send as an email attachment to the Chapter Reports editor.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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## The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

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

### Annual international conference 年次国際大会

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

### JALT publications include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Membership Categories 会員と会費

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

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

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

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# Old Grammarians...

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

## Do not pass go

I WAS WAITING in my car at a railroad crossing the other day, speculating about the availability of a nice little studio apartment alongside the tracks just opposite (I later discovered it was an abandoned freight container), when all of a sudden the scales fell from my eyes and the Truth was revealed to me like a pickled plum in the center of a bowl of rice: *Communication is like Twister.*

Yes, that scandalous party game for contortionists that has entertained generations of suburbanites who can't think of more evolved ways to socialize at neighborhood gatherings. (For those of you unfamiliar with Twister, here's a quick summary of the rules: Players take turns spinning the dial for a color and appendage—hand or foot—then placing the designated appendage on one of the designated colored spaces on the floor. They spin again and place another appendage on another color, *without* removing the first one. Imagine trying to prevent half a dozen golf balls from rolling off the deck of a ferry in choppy seas. Then think of three other people trying to do the same thing, in the same place, at the same time, and you might have a good image of what Twister demands of its participants.)

Communication—as I was saying before I rolled off deck—can be likened to Twister. In any given conversation I put forth a proposition (e.g., left foot red) and my interlocutor responds with a completely irrelevant rejoinder (right hand blue), which may or may not cause me some degree of discomfort (“Watch where you’re putting your left knee, pal!”). In an effort to understand what my companion is getting at, I try to *bend over backwards* and establish some common ground (right hand green), whereupon my partner rewards my trouble with an even more egregious irrelevance (left foot yellow) which ultimately leaves one of us either sitting on the other’s head or else sprawled out on the carpet nearby nursing a strained calf muscle. The conversation ends there.

Of course the gamelike aspects of communication are not a new area of study. Sociolinguists discuss the concept of *gambits*, which are little communicative bets that people place in hopes of having a winning hand by the end of

the discussion. For example, in a conversation with my wife, I may present a gambit in telling her that traffic was terrible and there was no way I could possibly have made it to the supermarket to buy milk before closing time, while in the back of my mind I’m thinking, “Let’s see if she believes *this* one.”

Linguists also like to use the term *tickets* to describe utterances that indicate a speaker’s desire for a new or longer turn. They’re like Life cards, which you pull out and employ as needed to preserve your status in the game/exchange. Some examples of tickets include “Have you heard the one about the three penguins on an ice floe?”; “It’s just like my cousin Abner always told me”; and “I hear they’ve got special prescription ointments for that now.” However, once you’ve been given a turn you must be careful to be timely and considerate. Go on talking for too long and you’re liable to get your ticket punched.

The gaming formula of communication has been ingrained in us to the extent that gaming terms make regular appearances in our everyday conversation. Who hasn’t at some point felt the urge to add their *two cents* to a conversation, as if engaged in penny-ante gambling? Or when pressed to reveal private information, to tell their interrogator to *go fish*? I knew an English teacher who, whenever a few of us met up at the café to mull over plans for the coming semester, would often interject with “I’d like to trade my notional syllabus for what’s behind Door Number 2!” None of us knew what he meant by that.

So there you have it. Communication in many respects resembles a game. Recognition of this fact may help lighten the mood of your next conversation, no matter what the topic: “Boss, the Board of Health called. Five of your customers from lunch last Thursday are being treated for food poisoning.” “I’ll see your five and raise you two stomach pumps!” Unfortunately I’m not very good at games, and when I lose I usually sulk in my chair for several minutes and start eating the playing cards, so I much prefer written communication—such as this column—wherein I can make all of my moves at once before anyone else even gets a chance to roll the dice. Checkmate—your turn!

## — JALT Domestic Forum 2007 —

### English language education at secondary schools in Japan: Today and into the future

An Action Plan to Cultivate “Japanese with English Abilities” was implemented by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) in 2003. The SELHi (Super English Language High School) project was one of the objectives of the plan from which various activities and trials have already started. In this forum, we would like to review the results of the project, and suggest future steps. The invited panelists include a specialist from the International Education Division, Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau of MEXT, a JACET representative, members of the MEXT Planning and Evaluation Committee of SELHi, and a representative from JALT's Junior and Senior High School SIG. Also, a SELHi teacher from Hiroshima will demonstrate with video the types of classroom activities he is implementing. After each panelist speaks, questions and comments will be taken from the audience. Anyone who is interested in English language education at secondary schools in Japan is most welcome to attend.

#### Panel Chair:

- **Kensaku Yoshida** –Sophia University, MEXT SELHi Committee member

#### Panelists:

- **Satoshi Tsuzuki** –Senior Specialist, MEXT International Education Division, Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau
- **Hideko Midorikawa** –Showa Women's University, JACET representative: MEXT SELHi Committee member
- **Itsuhiro Nishi** –Hiroshima City, Irifune SELHi High School teacher
- **Roger Pattimore** –JALT Junior-Senior High [JSHS] SIG representative

#### Details:

- **Time & Day:** 13:15-16:00, Friday, November 23, 2007
- **Place:** National Olympics Memorial Youth Center, Tokyo, Japan
- **Admission fee:** Free

\* Special Note: Simultaneous translation (English to Japanese/Japanese to English) is available.



For more information

<[conferences.jalt.org/2007](http://conferences.jalt.org/2007)>

# A vocabulary size test

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## Appendix

### First 1000

1.	see: They <b>saw</b> it.
a.	cut
b.	waited for
c.	looked at
d.	started

2.	time: They have a lot of <b>time</b> .
a.	money
b.	food
c.	hours
d.	friends

3.	period: It was a difficult <b>period</b> .
a.	question
b.	time
c.	thing to do
d.	book

4.	figure: Is this the right <b>figure</b> ?
a.	answer
b.	place
c.	time
d.	number

5.	poor: We are <b>poor</b> .
a.	have no money
b.	feel happy
c.	are very interested
d.	do not like to work hard

6.	drive: He <b>drives</b> fast.
a.	swims
b.	learns
c.	throws balls
d.	uses a car

7.	jump: She tried to <b>jump</b> .
a.	lie on top of the water
b.	get off the ground suddenly
c.	stop the car at the edge of the road
d.	move very fast

8.	shoe: Where is your <b>shoe</b> ?
a.	the person who looks after you
b.	the thing you keep your money in
c.	the thing you use for writing
d.	the thing you wear on your foot

9.	standard: Her <b>standards</b> are very high.
a.	the bits at the back under her shoes
b.	the marks she gets in school
c.	the money she asks for
d.	the levels she reaches in everything

10.	basis: I don't understand the <b>basis</b> .
a.	reason
b.	words
c.	road signs
d.	main part

### Second 1000

1.	maintain: Can they <b>maintain</b> it?
a.	keep it as it is
b.	make it larger
c.	get a better one than it
d.	get it

2.	stone: He sat on a <b>stone</b> .
a.	hard thing
b.	kind of chair
c.	soft thing on the floor



	d.	part of a tree
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3.	upset: I am <b>upset</b> .	
	a.	tired
	b.	famous
	c.	rich
	d.	unhappy

4.	drawer: The <b>drawer</b> was empty.	
	a.	sliding box
	b.	place where cars are kept
	c.	cupboard to keep things cold
	d.	animal house

5.	patience: He has no <b>patience</b> .	
	a.	will not wait happily
	b.	has no free time
	c.	has no faith
	d.	does not know what is fair

6.	nil: His mark for that question was <b>nil</b> .	
	a.	very bad
	b.	nothing
	c.	very good
	d.	in the middle

7.	pub: They went to the <b>pub</b> .	
	a.	place where people drink and talk
	b.	place that looks after money
	c.	large building with many shops
	d.	building for swimming

8.	circle: Make a <b>circle</b> .	
	a.	rough picture
	b.	space with nothing in it
	c.	round shape
	d.	large hole

9.	microphone: Please use the <b>microphone</b> .	
	a.	machine for making food hot
	b.	machine that makes sounds louder
	c.	machine that makes things look bigger
	d.	small telephone that can be carried around

10.	pro: He's a <b>pro</b> .	
	a.	someone who is employed to find out important secrets
	b.	a stupid person
	c.	someone who writes for a newspaper
	d.	someone who is paid for playing sport etc

### Third 1000

1.	soldier: He is a <b>soldier</b> .	
	a.	person in a business
	b.	student
	c.	person who uses metal
	d.	person in the army

2.	restore: It has been <b>restored</b> .	
	a.	said again
	b.	given to a different person
	c.	given a lower price
	d.	made like new again

3.	jug: He was holding a <b>jug</b> .	
	a.	a container for pouring liquids
	b.	an informal discussion
	c.	a soft cap
	d.	a weapon that explodes

4.	scrub: He is <b>scrubbing</b> it.	
	a.	cutting shallow lines into it
	b.	repairing it
	c.	rubbing it hard to clean it
	d.	drawing simple pictures of it

5.	dinosaur: The children were pretending to be <b>dinosaurs</b> .	
	a.	robbers who work at sea
	b.	very small creatures with human form but with wings
	c.	large creatures with wings that breathe fire
	d.	animals that lived an extremely long time ago

6.	strap: He broke the <b>strap</b> .	
	a.	promise

	b.	top cover
	c.	shallow dish for food
	d.	strip of material for holding things together

7.	pave: It was <b>paved</b> .
	a. prevented from going through
	b. divided
	c. given gold edges
	d. covered with a hard surface

8.	dash: They <b>dashed</b> over it.
	a. moved quickly
	b. moved slowly
	c. fought
	d. looked quickly

9.	rove: He couldn't stop <b>roving</b> .
	a. getting drunk
	b. traveling around
	c. making a musical sound through closed lips
	d. working hard

10.	lonesome: He felt <b>lonesome</b> .
	a. ungrateful
	b. very tired
	c. lonely
	d. full of energy

#### Fourth 1000

1.	compound: They made a new <b>compound</b> .
	a. agreement
	b. thing made of two or more parts
	c. group of people forming a business
	d. guess based on past experience

2.	latter: I agree with the <b>latter</b> .
	a. man from the church
	b. reason given
	c. last one
	d. answer

3.	candid: Please be <b>candid</b> .
	a. be careful
	b. show sympathy

	c.	show fairness to both sides
	d.	say what you really think

4.	tummy: Look at my <b>tummy</b> .
	a. cloth to cover the head
	b. stomach
	c. small furry animal
	d. thumb

5.	quiz: We made a <b>quiz</b> .
	a. thing to hold arrows
	b. serious mistake
	c. set of questions
	d. box for birds to make nests in

6.	input: We need more <b>input</b> .
	a. information, power, etc. put into something
	b. workers
	c. artificial filling for a hole in wood
	d. money

7.	crab: Do you like <b>crabs</b> ?
	a. sea creatures that walk sideways
	b. very thin small cakes
	c. tight, hard collars
	d. large black insects that sing at night

8.	vocabulary: You will need more <b>vocabulary</b> .
	a. words
	b. skill
	c. money
	d. guns

9.	remedy: We found a good <b>remedy</b> .
	a. way to fix a problem
	b. place to eat in public
	c. way to prepare food
	d. rule about numbers

10.	allege: They <b>alleged</b> it.
	a. claimed it without proof
	b. stole the ideas for it from someone else
	c. provided facts to prove it

	d.	argued against the facts that supported it
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### Fifth 1000

1.	deficit: The company had a large <b>deficit</b> .	
	a.	spent a lot more money than it earned
	b.	went down a lot in value
	c.	had a plan for its spending that used a lot of money
	d.	had a lot of money stored in the bank

2.	weep: He <b>wept</b> .	
	a.	finished his course
	b.	cried
	c.	died
	d.	worried

3.	nun: We saw a <b>nun</b> .	
	a.	long thin creature that lives in the earth
	b.	terrible accident
	c.	woman following a strict religious life
	d.	unexplained bright light in the sky

4.	haunt: The house is <b>haunted</b> .	
	a.	full of ornaments
	b.	rented
	c.	empty
	d.	full of ghosts

5.	compost: We need some <b>compost</b> .	
	a.	strong support
	b.	help to feel better
	c.	hard stuff made of stones and sand stuck together
	d.	rotted plant material

6.	cube: I need one more <b>cube</b> .	
	a.	sharp thing used for joining things
	b.	solid square block
	c.	tall cup with no saucer
	d.	piece of stiff paper folded in half

7.	miniature: It is a <b>miniature</b> .	
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	a.	a very small thing of its kind
	b.	an instrument for looking at very small objects
	c.	a very small living creature
	d.	a small line to join letters in handwriting

8.	peel: Shall I <b>peel</b> it?	
	a.	let it sit in water for a long time
	b.	take the skin off it
	c.	make it white
	d.	cut it into thin pieces

9.	fracture: They found a <b>fracture</b> .	
	a.	break
	b.	small piece
	c.	short coat
	d.	rare jewel

10.	bacterium: They didn't find a single <b>bacterium</b> .	
	a.	small living thing causing disease
	b.	plant with red or orange flowers
	c.	animal that carries water in lumps on its back
	d.	thing that has been stolen and sold to a shop

### Sixth 1000

1.	devious: Your plans are <b>devious</b> .	
	a.	tricky
	b.	well-developed
	c.	not well thought out
	d.	more expensive than necessary

2.	premier: The <b>premier</b> spoke for an hour.	
	a.	person who works in a law court
	b.	university teacher
	c.	adventurer
	d.	head of the government

3.	butler: They have a <b>butler</b> .	
	a.	man servant
	b.	machine for cutting up trees
	c.	private teacher
	d.	cool dark room under the house

4.	accessory: They gave us some <b>accessories</b> .	
	a.	papers giving us the right to enter a country
	b.	official orders
	c.	ideas to choose between
	d.	extra pieces

5.	threshold: They raised the <b>threshold</b> .	
	a.	flag
	b.	point or line where something changes
	c.	roof inside a building
	d.	cost of borrowing money

6.	thesis: She has completed her <b>thesis</b> .	
	a.	long written report of study carried out for a university degree
	b.	talk given by a judge at the end of a trial
	c.	first year of employment after becoming a teacher
	d.	extended course of hospital treatment

7.	strangle: He <b>strangled</b> her.	
	a.	killed her by pressing her throat
	b.	gave her all the things she wanted
	c.	took her away by force
	d.	admired her greatly

8.	cavalier: He treated her in a <b>cavalier</b> manner.	
	a.	without care
	b.	politely
	c.	awkwardly
	d.	as a brother would

9.	malign: His <b>malign</b> influence is still felt.	
	a.	evil
	b.	good
	c.	very important
	d.	secret

10.	veer: The car <b>veered</b> .	
	a.	went suddenly in another direction
	b.	moved shakily
	c.	made a very loud noise

	d.	slid sideways without the wheels turning
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### Seventh 1000

1.	olive: We bought <b>olives</b> .	
	a.	oily fruit
	b.	scented pink or red flowers
	c.	men's clothes for swimming
	d.	tools for digging up weeds

2.	quilt: They made a <b>quilt</b> .	
	a.	statement about who should get their property when they die
	b.	firm agreement
	c.	thick warm cover for a bed
	d.	feather pen

3.	stealth: They did it by <b>stealth</b> .	
	a.	spending a large amount of money
	b.	hurting someone so much that they agreed to their demands
	c.	moving secretly with extreme care and quietness
	d.	taking no notice of problems they met

4.	shudder: The boy <b>shuddered</b> .	
	a.	spoke with a low voice
	b.	almost fell
	c.	shook
	d.	called out loudly

5.	bristle: The <b>bristles</b> are too hard.	
	a.	questions
	b.	short stiff hairs
	c.	folding beds
	d.	bottoms of the shoes

6.	bloc: They have joined this <b>bloc</b> .	
	a.	musical group
	b.	band of thieves
	c.	small group of soldiers who are sent ahead of others
	d.	group of countries with a common purpose



7.	demography: This book is about <b>demography</b> .
a.	the study of patterns of land use
b.	the study of the use of pictures to show facts about numbers
c.	the study of the movement of water
d.	the study of population

8.	gimmick: That's a good <b>gimmick</b> .
a.	thing for standing on to work high above the ground
b.	small thing with pockets for holding money
c.	attention-getting action or thing
d.	clever plan or trick

9.	azalea: This <b>azalea</b> is very pretty.
a.	small tree with many flowers growing in groups
b.	light material made from natural threads
c.	long piece of material worn by women in India
d.	sea shell shaped like a fan

10.	yoghurt: This <b>yoghurt</b> is disgusting.
a.	dark grey mud found at the bottom of rivers
b.	unhealthy, open sore
c.	thick, soured milk, often with sugar and flavouring
d.	large purple fruit with soft flesh

### *Eighth 1000*

1.	erratic: He was <b>erratic</b> .
a.	without fault
b.	very bad
c.	very polite
d.	unsteady

2.	palette: He lost his <b>palette</b> .
a.	basket for carrying fish
b.	wish to eat food
c.	young female companion
d.	artist's board for mixing paints

3.	null: His influence was <b>null</b> .
a.	had good results
b.	was unhelpful
c.	had no effect
d.	was long-lasting

4.	kindergarten: This is a good <b>kindergarten</b> .
a.	activity that allows you to forget your worries
b.	place of learning for children too young for school
c.	strong, deep bag carried on the back
d.	place where you may borrow books

5.	eclipse: There was an <b>eclipse</b> .
a.	a strong wind
b.	a loud noise of something hitting the water
c.	the killing of a large number of people
d.	the sun hidden by a planet

6.	marrow: This is the <b>marrow</b> .
a.	symbol that brings good luck to a team
b.	soft centre of a bone
c.	control for guiding a plane
d.	increase in salary

7.	locust: There were hundreds of <b>locusts</b> .
a.	insects with wings
b.	unpaid helpers
c.	people who do not eat meat
d.	brightly coloured wild flowers

8.	authentic: It is <b>authentic</b> .
a.	real
b.	very noisy
c.	old
d.	like a desert

9.	cabaret: We saw the <b>cabaret</b> .	
	a.	painting covering a whole wall
	b.	song and dance performance
	c.	small crawling insect
	d.	person who is half fish, half woman

10.	mumble: He started to <b>mumble</b> .	
	a.	think deeply
	b.	shake uncontrollably
	c.	stay further behind the others
	d.	speak in an unclear way

5.	whim: He had lots of <b>whims</b> .	
	a.	old gold coins
	b.	female horses
	c.	strange ideas with no motive
	d.	sore red lumps

6.	perturb: I was <b>perturbed</b> .	
	a.	made to agree
	b.	worried
	c.	very puzzled
	d.	very wet

### Ninth 1000

1.	hallmark: Does it have a <b>hallmark</b> ?	
	a.	stamp to show when it should be used by
	b.	stamp to show the quality
	c.	mark to show it is approved by the royal family
	d.	mark or stain to prevent copying

2.	puritan: He is a <b>puritan</b> .	
	a.	person who likes attention
	b.	person with strict morals
	c.	person with a moving home
	d.	person who keeps money and hates spending it

3.	monologue: Now he has a <b>monologue</b> .	
	a.	single piece of glass to hold over his eye to help him to see better
	b.	long turn at talking without being interrupted
	c.	position with all the power
	d.	picture made by joining letters together in interesting ways

4.	weir: We looked at the <b>weir</b> .	
	a.	person who behaves strangely
	b.	wet and muddy place with water plants
	c.	old metal musical instrument played by blowing
	d.	thing built across a river to control the water

7.	regent: They chose a <b>regent</b> .	
	a.	an irresponsible person
	b.	a person to run a meeting for a short time
	c.	a ruler acting in place of the king or queen
	d.	a person to represent them

8.	octopus: They saw an <b>octopus</b> .	
	a.	a large bird that hunts at night
	b.	a ship that can go under water
	c.	a machine that flies by means of turning blades
	d.	a sea creature with eight legs

9.	fen: The story is set in the <b>fens</b> .	
	a.	a piece of low flat land partly covered by water
	b.	a piece of high, hilly land with few trees
	c.	a block of poor-quality houses in a city
	d.	a time long ago

10.	lintel: He painted the <b>lintel</b> .	
	a.	beam across the top of a door or window
	b.	small boat used for getting to land from a big boat
	c.	beautiful tree with spreading branches and green fruit
	d.	board which shows the scene in a theatre

**Tenth 1000**

1.	awe: They looked at the mountain with <b>awe</b> .	
	a.	worry
	b.	interest
	c.	wonder
	d.	respect

2.	peasantry: He did a lot for the <b>peasantry</b> .	
	a.	local people
	b.	place of worship
	c.	businessmen's club
	d.	poor farmers

3.	egalitarian: This organization is very <b>egalitarian</b> .	
	a.	does not provide much information about itself to the public
	b.	dislikes change
	c.	frequently asks a court of law for a judgement
	d.	treats everyone who works for it as if they are equal

4.	mystique: He has lost his <b>mystique</b> .	
	a.	his healthy body
	b.	the secret way he makes other people think he has special power or skill
	c.	the woman who has been his lover while he is married to someone else
	d.	the hair on his top lip

5.	upbeat: I'm feeling really <b>upbeat</b> about it.	
	a.	upset
	b.	good
	c.	hurt
	d.	confused

6.	cranny: We found it in the <b>cranny</b> !	
	a.	sale of unwanted objects
	b.	narrow opening
	c.	space for storing things under the roof of a house
	d.	large wooden box

7.	pigtail: Does she have a <b>pigtail</b> ?	
	a.	a long rope of hair made by twisting bits together
	b.	a lot of cloth hanging behind a dress
	c.	a plant with pale pink flowers that hang down in short bunches
	d.	a lover

8.	crowbar: He used a <b>crowbar</b> .	
	a.	heavy iron pole with a curved end
	b.	false name
	c.	sharp tool for making holes in leather
	d.	light metal walking stick

9.	ruck: He got hurt in the <b>ruck</b> .	
	a.	hollow between the stomach and the top of the leg
	b.	noisy street fight
	c.	group of players gathered round the ball in some ball games
	d.	race across a field of snow

10.	lectern: He stood at the <b>lectern</b> .	
	a.	desk made to hold a book at a good height for reading
	b.	table or block used for church sacrifices
	c.	place where you buy drinks
	d.	very edge

**Eleventh 1000**

1.	excrete: This was <b>excreted</b> recently.	
	a.	pushed or sent out
	b.	made clear
	c.	discovered by a science experiment
	d.	put on a list of illegal things

2.	mussel: They bought <b>mussels</b> .	
	a.	small glass balls for playing a game
	b.	shellfish
	c.	large purple fruits
	d.	pieces of soft paper to keep the clothes clean when eating

3.	yoga: She has started <b>yoga</b> .
a.	handwork done by knotting thread
b.	a form of exercise for the body and mind
c.	a game where a cork stuck with feathers is hit between two players
d.	a type of dance from eastern countries

4.	counterclaim: They made a <b>counterclaim</b> .
a.	a demand made by one side in a law case to match the other side's demand
b.	a request for a shop to take back things with faults
c.	an agreement between two companies to exchange work
d.	a top cover for a bed

5.	puma: They saw a <b>puma</b> .
a.	small house made of mud bricks
b.	tree from hot, dry countries
c.	very strong wind that sucks up anything in its path
d.	large wild cat

6.	pallor: His <b>pallor</b> caused them concern.
a.	his unusually high temperature
b.	his lack of interest in anything
c.	his group of friends
d.	the paleness of his skin

7.	aperitif: She had an <b>aperitif</b> .
a.	a long chair for lying on with just one place to rest an arm
b.	a private singing teacher
c.	a large hat with tall feathers
d.	a drink taken before a meal

8.	hutch: Please clean the <b>hutch</b> .
a.	thing with metal bars to keep dirt out of water pipes
b.	space in the back of a car used for bags etc
c.	round metal thing in the middle of a bicycle wheel
d.	cage for small animals

9.	emir: We saw the <b>emir</b> .
a.	bird with two long curved tail feathers
b.	woman who cares for other people's children in Eastern countries
c.	Middle Eastern chief with power in his own land
d.	house made from blocks of ice

10.	hessian: She bought some <b>hessian</b> .
a.	oily pinkish fish
b.	stuff that produces a happy state of mind
c.	coarse cloth
d.	strong-tasting root for flavouring food

### Twelfth 1000

1.	haze: We looked through the <b>haze</b> .
a.	small round window in a ship
b.	unclear air
c.	cover for a window made of strips of wood or plastic
d.	list of names

2.	spleen: His <b>spleen</b> was damaged.
a.	knee bone
b.	organ found near the stomach
c.	pipe taking waste water from a house
d.	respect for himself

3.	soliloquy: That was an excellent <b>soliloquy</b> !
a.	song for six people
b.	short clever saying with a deep meaning
c.	entertainment using lights and music
d.	speech in the theatre by a character who is alone

4.	reptile: She looked at the <b>reptile</b> .
a.	old hand-written book
b.	animal with cold blood and a hard outside
c.	person who sells things by knocking on doors



	d.	picture made by sticking many small pieces of different colours together
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5.	alum: This contains <b>alum</b> .	
	a.	a poisonous substance from a common plant
	b.	a soft material made of artificial threads
	c.	a tobacco powder once put in the nose
	d.	a chemical compound usually involving aluminium

6.	refectory: We met in the <b>refectory</b> .	
	a.	room for eating
	b.	office where legal papers can be signed
	c.	room for several people to sleep in
	d.	room with glass walls for growing plants

7.	caffeine: This contains a lot of <b>caffeine</b> .	
	a.	a substance that makes you sleepy
	b.	threads from very tough leaves
	c.	ideas that are not correct
	d.	a substance that makes you excited

8.	impale: He nearly got <b>impaled</b> .	
	a.	charged with a serious offence
	b.	put in prison
	c.	stuck through with a sharp instrument
	d.	involved in a dispute

9.	coven: She is the leader of a <b>coven</b> .	
	a.	a small singing group
	b.	a business that is owned by the workers
	c.	a secret society
	d.	a group of church women who follow a strict religious life

10.	trill: He practised the <b>trill</b> .	
	a.	ornament in a piece of music
	b.	type of stringed instrument
	c.	way of throwing a ball

	d.	dance step of turning round very fast on the toes
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### Thirteenth 1000

1.	ubiquitous: Many weeds are <b>ubiquitous</b> .	
	a.	are difficult to get rid of
	b.	have long, strong roots
	c.	are found in most countries
	d.	die away in the winter

2.	talon: Just look at those <b>talons</b> !	
	a.	high points of mountains
	b.	sharp hooks on the feet of a hunting bird
	c.	heavy metal coats to protect against weapons
	d.	people who make fools of themselves without realizing it

3.	rouble: He had a lot of <b>roubles</b> .	
	a.	very precious red stones
	b.	distant members of his family
	c.	Russian money
	d.	moral or other difficulties in the mind

4.	jovial: He was very <b>jovial</b> .	
	a.	low on the social scale
	b.	likely to criticize others
	c.	full of fun
	d.	friendly

5.	communiqué: I saw their <b>communiqué</b> .	
	a.	critical report about an organization
	b.	garden owned by many members of a community
	c.	printed material used for advertising
	d.	official announcement

6.	plankton: We saw a lot of <b>plankton</b> .	
	a.	poisonous weeds that spread very quickly
	b.	very small plants or animals found in water
	c.	trees producing hard wood

d.	grey clay that often causes land to slip
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7.	skylark: We watched a <b>skylark</b> .
a.	show with aeroplanes flying in patterns
b.	man-made object going round the earth
c.	person who does funny tricks
d.	small bird that flies high as it sings

8.	beagle: He owns two <b>beagles</b> .
a.	fast cars with roofs that fold down
b.	large guns that can shoot many people quickly
c.	small dogs with long ears
d.	houses built at holiday places

9.	atoll: The <b>atoll</b> was beautiful.
a.	low island made of coral round a sea-water lake
b.	work of art created by weaving pictures from fine thread
c.	small crown with many precious jewels worn in the evening by women
d.	place where a river flows through a narrow place full of large rocks

10.	didactic: The story is very <b>didactic</b> .
a.	tries hard to teach something
b.	is very difficult to believe
c.	deals with exciting actions
d.	is written in a way which makes the reader unsure of the meaning

### Fourteenth 1000

1.	canonical: These are <b>canonical</b> examples.
a.	examples which break the usual rules
b.	examples taken from a religious book
c.	regular and widely accepted examples
d.	examples discovered very recently

2.	atop: He was <b>atop</b> the hill.
a.	at the bottom of

b.	at the top of
c.	on this side of
d.	on the far side of

3.	marsupial: It is a <b>marsupial</b> .
a.	an animal with hard feet
b.	a plant that grows for several years
c.	a plant with flowers that turn to face the sun
d.	an animal with a pocket for babies

4.	augur: It <b>augured</b> well.
a.	promised good things for the future
b.	agreed well with what was expected
c.	had a colour that looked good with something else
d.	rang with a clear, beautiful sound

5.	bawdy: It was very <b>bawdy</b> .
a.	unpredictable
b.	enjoyable
c.	rushed
d.	rude

6.	gauche: He was <b>gauche</b> .
a.	talkative
b.	flexible
c.	awkward
d.	determined

7.	thesaurus: She used a <b>thesaurus</b> .
a.	a kind of dictionary
b.	a chemical compound
c.	a special way of speaking
d.	an injection just under the skin

8.	erythrocyte: It is an <b>erythrocyte</b> .
a.	a medicine to reduce pain
b.	a red part of the blood
c.	a reddish white metal
d.	a member of the whale family

9.	cordillera: They were stopped by the <b>cordillera</b> .
a.	a special law

	b.	an armed ship
	c.	a line of mountains
	d.	the eldest son of the king

10.	limpid: He looked into her <b>limpid</b> eyes.	
	a.	clear
	b.	tearful
	c.	deep brown
	d.	beautiful

# Making first impressions count

Patrick Miller

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## Appendix A. Sample questions about course and instructor

### *First Day Questions*

*You will receive some questions on a small slip of paper. Be ready to ask your questions. Also, listen carefully and write the answers you hear.*

#### *Expectations / Attendance, Performance Policy*

- What should we do if we miss a class?
- What should we bring to every class?
- Will we have homework?
- What happens if we forget to do the homework?
- Should we speak only English?
- Will we have any tests?
- Can I use my cell phone in this class?

#### *General Questions about the course description*

- What will we learn in this class?
- What kind of activities will we do?

#### *Schedule Questions*

- What is the homework for Week 1?
- How many graded readers reports are there?

#### *Evaluation*

- What is the grading system?
- What percent of our grade is for homework?

#### *Teacher/Course information / Personal Information*

- What is your name?
- What should we call you?
- Where are you from?
- Where is your office?
- What is your email address?
- Can we call you or email you if we have a problem?

- When are your office hours?
- How long have you been in Japan?
- Where did you teach before coming to Japan?
- Why did you come to Japan?
- Where do you live?
- What do you think of Chubu University?
- What do you do in your free time?

## Appendix B. Sample questions used to interview and present a classmate

### *Get to Know Your Classmates*

*Interview a classmate. Be ready to tell us about him or her.*

1. What's your name?
2. Where are you from?
3. Where do you live?
4. What's your major?
5. What do you do in your free time?
6. What do you think of Chubu University?
7. Why are you taking this class?



# A communicative introduction to part one of the TOEIC

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## Appendix: Sample worksheet

You must use the *-ing* form of the verb in parentheses ( ),

OR *There + is/are...*

Every sentence must contain at least two nouns.

- Examples:
- |               |            |              |
|---------------|------------|--------------|
| 1. The boy    | is playing | tennis.      |
| (noun)        | (V – ing)  | (noun)       |
| 2. There are  | three men  | in the shop. |
| (There + are) | (noun)     | (noun)       |

Change roles after you have completed the first five sentences.

1.	(hold)	
2.	(wait)	
3.	(paint)	
4.	There is / are	
5.	(shake)	
6.	(play)	
7.	There is / are	
8.	(look)	
9.	(clean)	
10.	There is / are	