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Feature Article

Readers' Forum

TLT Interviews

My Share

JALT Praxis

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In this month's issue . . .

Welcome to the March/April edition of *The Language Teacher*. Spring is my favorite time of the year in Japan and the cherry blossom viewing in the Kansai area is amazing! I hope all of you are enjoying the holidays before the inevitability of the new academic year commences.

As many people may already know, Caroline Handley has moved on from *TLT* to become the new JALT Publications Chair. For a number of years Caroline did an amazing job as assistant editor and it is now my task to try and fill those shoes.

We begin this edition of *TLT* with two thought-provoking articles that many will find valuable. First up is our Feature Article, *Which English Sounds are Difficult? Japanese EFL Learners' Intuitions Versus Their Performance* by **Charles M. Mueller**. The author explores whether student perceptions of difficult phonemic contrasts actually correspond to their ability to distinguish them on a listening task. That is followed by the Readers' Forum article, *Impacts of Introducing Four-Skill English Tests into University Entrance Examinations* by **Yukie Saito**. This article analyzes some of the recent policy changes to the university entrance exam system and describes the impact they are having on high school English classrooms.

Then TLT Interviews presents two noteworthy conversations, one with Rob Ellis and the other with Lindsay Clandfield. As always, My Share has several interesting classroom ideas so that we can all start our new classes on the right foot. Combined with the other columns and articles, I hope you enjoy this spring edition of *TLT*.

— TLT *Assistant Editor, Peter Ferguson*

*TLT*の3/4月号へようこそ。日本の春は私のお気に入りの季節で、関西地方のお花見は本当に素晴らしいものです。 皆様にとっては避けることのできない新学年がもう間もなく始まりますが、今はまだ、春休みを楽しんでいる頃ではないかと思います。

ご存じの方も多いと思いますが、Caroline Handleyが*TLT*からJALT Publications Chairの役職に移りました。長年にわたり、Carolineはassistant-editorとして素晴らしい仕事をしてきましたが、後任として私がその重責を担うことになりました。

Continued over

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今号は、示唆に富み、多くの読者に役立つ2つの記事から始まります。まずFeature Articleは、Charles M. Muellerの*Which English Sounds are Difficult? Japanese EFL Learners' Intuitions Versus Their Performance*です。リスニング課題において、難解な音素対立（phonemic contrasts）に対する学生の認識と、それらを聞き分ける学生の能力とが実際に一致するかについて、検証しています。次のReaders Forum記事は、Yukie Saitoの*Impacts of Introducing Four-Skill English Tests into University Entrance Examinations*です。この記事は、大学入試に関する最近の政策変更を分析し、高校の英語授業に及ぼす影響について説明しています。

そして*TLT* Interviewsでは、Rob EllisとLindsay Clandfieldへの注目すべきインタビュー記事を2つ掲載しています。いつものように、My Shareではいくつかの興味深い授業のアイデアを掲載し、新学期の授業に合わせて良いスタートになるようにしています。その他のコラムや記事も合わせて、*TLT*春号をお楽しみください。

— TLT *Assistant- Editor, Peter Ferguson*

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Which English Sounds are Difficult? Japanese EFL Learners' Intuitions Versus Their Performance

Charles M. Mueller
Fuji Women's University

Previous research has shown that Japanese learners experience difficulty in developing sensitivity to many English phonemic contrasts. An unexplored area in this research concerns learners' awareness of which contrasts pose the greatest difficulty. The current research seeks to fill this gap in our understanding by comparing EFL learners' (N = 63) ranking of nine problematic contrasts with the ranking determined by their actual performance on a minimal pairs test. Results showed that although the participants were aware of oft-discussed problematic contrasts such as /r/ versus /l/, they underestimated the difficulty of other contrasts such as those that occur between final nasals. Results of a posttest given one month following a brief practice session involving feedback resulted in significant improvement (p = .002). Participants' difficulty rankings were compared with perceptions of native and nonnative English language instructors. Possible explanations for the findings are discussed along with the pedagogical recommendations.

先行研究によると、日本人学習者にとって英語における音素対立の多くはその弁別が困難であるとされている。一方、音素対立に関する学習者の認識と実際の弁別の難易度との関連は明らかにされていない。本論では、EFL学習者 63名 を対象とし、9つの音素対立について、自身の認識に基づいた難易度と実際のパフォーマンスによって示された難易度を、ミニマル・ペアを用いたテストによって比較した。この事前テストでは、/r/と/l/のように度々議論される難易度の高い音素対立に関しては、被験者はその難しさをよく理解している一方、末尾の鼻音に見られる音素対立のような他の音素対立の難易度については、その認識度の低さが示された。簡単な練習の後にフィードバックを行い、その1か月後に実施した事後テストでは、被験者のパフォーマンスは有意に向上していた (p = .002)。この結果を、英語の母語話者および非母語話者の指導者が持つ、学習者の音素弁別の難易度に関する認識とも比較した。最後に、得られた結果を説明し得る要素および教授法の提案も行った。

An extensive body of research has examined L2 learners' ability to distinguish phonemic contrasts in English. Much of this work has focused on Japanese learners, who are known to experience problems in distinguishing specific English sounds. An unexplored question is the degree to which learners are aware of which sounds pose the greatest difficulty. The current research attempted to bridge this gap by using survey responses to compare participants' awareness of phonemes with their actual ability to distinguish English phonemes, as assessed through a minimal pairs test.

Literature Review

A major hurdle in learning a second language is acquiring sensitivity to target language contrasts that are nonphonemic in the L1. Previous research has shown that for L1 Japanese learners, a number of English sounds are particularly problematic. Perhaps the most infamous among these is the distinction between English /r/ and /l/ (Bradlow, 2008). Japanese speakers who lack intensive input from native instructors have been shown to have virtually no ability to distinguish English /r/ and /l/ sounds (Goto, 1971; MacKain, Best, & Strange, 1981). In part, this appears to be because Japanese speakers who learn English as a foreign language tend to initially assimilate English /r/ and /l/ (and especially /l/) to the Japanese alveolar tap (Aoyama, Flege, Guion, Akahane-Yamada, & Yamada, 2004; Guion, Flege, Akahane-Yamada, & Pruitt, 2000), the intervocalic consonant often heard in the American pronunciation of words such as *better*.

L1 Japanese learners also find it difficult to distinguish English nasals that appear in the coda position, as Japanese sounds in this position are allophones that assimilate to the place of articulation of the following consonant (Labrune, 2012). The /b/ and /v/ contrast is also difficult (Guion et al., 2000). Although Japanese has a voiced bilabial plosive, it lacks any sound akin to English /v/, so /v/ is often assimilated to /b/. Teachers are apparently aware of this. In a survey of 48 Japanese teachers of English, Saito (2011) reported that they listed /v/ along with /θ/ as the most difficult sounds for their students. Further support comes from empirical research (e.g., Hazan, Sennema, Iba, & Faulkner, 2005) that has directly measured learners' discrimination of these sounds.

A similar problem occurs with the distinction between English /f/ and /h/. The Japanese fricative /h/ is realized differently depending on the vowel it precedes. Before /a/, /e/, and /o/, it is similar to the English /h/. However, before /u/ and /i:/, it can be pronounced as a fricative or palatal respectively (Labrune, 2012). As Japanese does not have a sepa-

rate contrasting fricative, Japanese speakers often perceive English /h/ and /f/ as the same sound.

Other sound contrasts are difficult due to their distribution. Japanese has sounds similar to English /s/ and /ʃ/, but because the two sounds do not form a contrast within the Japanese phonemic inventory when they precede the vowel /i:/ (in which case Japanese requires palatalization), Japanese speakers can find it difficult to distinguish the initial sounds in English words such as *seat* and *sheet* (Lambacher, Martens, Brian, & Berman, 2001).

Japanese has sounds equivalent to the English obstruents /k/, /t/, and /p/ (e.g., the final sounds in *hawk*, *hot*, and *hop*), but these sounds cannot occur in the coda position. Hence, it does not allow stops without an audible release (i.e., [p̚, t̚, k̚]). Moreover, Japanese /p/ is relatively rare in terms of frequency of occurrence (Labrune, 2012). Perhaps for these reasons, Japanese speakers sometimes find it difficult to distinguish English unreleased stops.

Among English vowels, Japanese English learners also struggle with certain vowels that are absent from Japanese, particularly the mid and low vowels of American English (Lambacher, Martens, Kakehi, Marasinghe, & Moltholt, 2005). Many find /æ/ (the vowel in *hat*) difficult, for example. In Saito's (2011) research, Japanese English teachers listed this sound as fifth most difficult among 20 sounds. The sounds /ʌ/, /ʊ/, /ɛ/, and /ɪ/ (the vowels in *buck*, *book*, *bet*, and *bit*, respectively) can also be difficult as they are nonphonemic in Japanese.

In summary, in contrast to English, Japanese has a more limited vowel and consonant inventory. The paucity of vowel and consonant phonemes is offset by a distinction between short and long vowels and the use of pitch accent, which are two features that are absent from English. Due to the mismatch between Japanese and English, EFL learners are faced with the challenge of developing sensitivity to many L2 phonemic contrasts that are unfamiliar to them.

Purpose of the Study

The current research examined Japanese EFL learners' perceptions of the learning challenge posed by various phoneme contrasts and then determined whether these perceptions corresponded to the actual difficulty as measured via a phoneme discrimination task. The research thus contributes to research on phonological acquisition by (a) assessing EFL learners' awareness of learning challenges, (b) clarifying phonemes to be included as targets of instruction, and (c) testing the effectiveness of a short in-class minimal pairs task.

Method

Participants (N = 63) were from four intact required English classes for first-year students at two Japanese universities. Only participants who completed all stages of the study were included. Participants were asked to rank the difficulty of 10 minimal pair contrasts (see Table 1) from 1 (easy) to 10 (difficult). Following the ranking task, it was found that some participants when responding to the ninth contrast were influenced by the example (i.e., *see* versus *she*), and thus only considered the ninth contrast (i.e., /s/ vs. /ʃ/) when it was followed by /i:/. Due to this apparent confusion among some participants, the ninth contrast was omitted from the analysis related to participants' rankings. The same survey was given to six native English teachers (all but one was a university teacher) with between eight and 30 years of experience teaching Japanese students.

A week after they made the rankings, the EFL participants were given a pretest consisting of 200 items, with 20 items for each of the target contrasts (α = .84). Each set of 20 items targeted only one contrast and was printed on a separate sheet of the test. For each item, two words (i.e., a minimal pair such as *red* and *led*) appeared after the number of the item. The directions asked participants to circle the word that they heard. Correct answers occurred in pseudo-random order with half targeting one of the contrasted sounds (e.g., /r/) and half the other (e.g., /l/). The pretest and all other materials were presented orally by the instructor, who was a speaker of standard American English.

During the intervention following the pretest, participants received an identical blank copy of the test. The instructor then followed the same procedure as during the test, but this time, immediately after each set of 20 items, the instructor went over each item, asking participants if they selected the left or right choice. When participants gave the wrong answer, the instructor repeated the item, rapidly alternating between the two target phonemes until the participant was able to distinguish the target phoneme. Approximately one month after the pretest (29 days for two classes and 31 days for two classes), participants were given a surprise posttest using the same test forms as on the pretest.

Results

Following the training, participants improved slightly, going from a mean score of 165.7 (SD = 12.3; range = 130-194) on the pretest to a mean score of 169.7 (SD = 10.8; range = 133-191) on the posttest. A paired samples t-test showed that this improvement was significant at an alpha of .05 and that the effect

size was from small to medium, $t(62) = 3.22$, $p = .002$, 95% CI: [1.49, 6.36], $d = 0.41$.

Participants' performance on each of the 10 contrasts on the pretest and posttest is shown in Table 1. When interpreting the pretest and posttest scores, it should be noted that a score of 50% correct (a score of 10 for each contrast) would be expected if participants were only guessing.

As can be seen, the most difficult phonemic contrasts involved final nasals, the /r/ versus /l/ distinction, and, to a lesser extent, the /v/ versus /b/ distinction. These distinctions were also relatively less amenable to improvement following the intervention.

A key concern in the present study was learners' awareness of the relative difficulty of phonemic contrasts. Figure 1 shows the comparison between the ranking of phoneme contrasts based on participants' scores on the pretest with the ranking provided by the participants (the gray bars). As was expected, participants were aware that the /r/ vs. /l/ distinction is extremely difficult for Japanese learners. On the other hand, there were notable discrepancies related to final nasals. Whereas the participants rated these as being only somewhat difficult, they proved to be extremely challenging. On both tests, the distinction between /ŋ/ and /n/ was clearly the most difficult contrast with participants scoring only 66% on the posttest.

The six English instructors surveyed also ranked the /r/ vs. /l/ distinction as the most difficult. In contrast with learners' actual performance, they reported the /v/ vs. /b/ distinction as the second most difficult, and ranked the two contrasts involving final nasals as moderately difficult. In other words, they showed the same tendency as the EFL participants to underestimate the difficulty of final nasals.

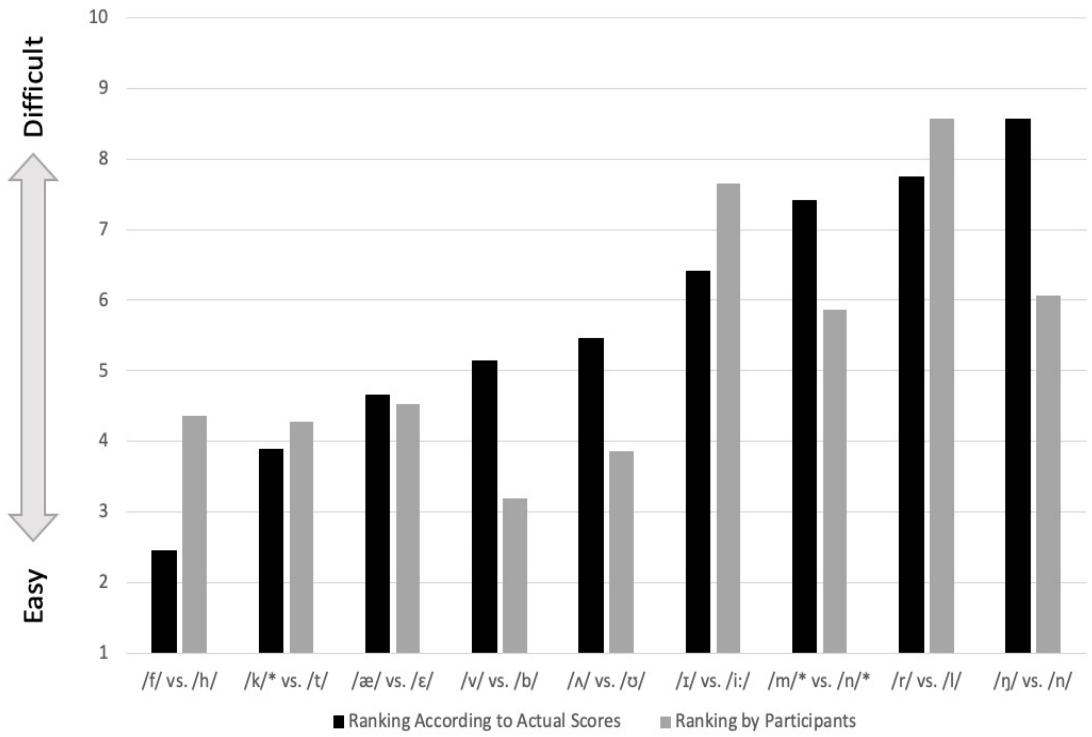
Discussion

The current study examined learners' awareness of difficulties in discriminating various target phonemes known to be challenging to Japanese learners. The results show that although learners are conscious of certain difficult contrasts (e.g., /r/ vs. /l/), they underestimate the difficulty of final nasals, as do both foreign and native instructors. What could explain this? One possibility is that learners' perception of difficulty is closely tied with their awareness of pronunciation difficulties. Learners are likely to be consciously aware that their production of /l/ and /r/ (and /r/ in particular) sounds different than native speakers' production of these sounds. The final nasals present a different problem. Japanese learners produce sounds indistinguishable from the English final nasals constantly when speaking Japanese. However, they do not need to produce different nasals within the same phonological environment because these sounds are nonphonemic in Japanese. Moreover, Japanese loan words often use epenthesis to discriminate final nasals occurring in English loan words. In the case of final /m/, this appears to be invariably followed by /ɯ/ in English words entering Japanese (e.g., English balsam is rendered as *barusamu* in Japanese), and it also appears after /n/ (e.g., Madeleine cake is rendered *madore-nu*). Because the vowel /ɯ/ is most likely to

Table 1. *Targeted Phonemic Contrasts and Participant Scores on These Contrasts*

	Target A	Example	Target B	Example	Pretest Score *M* (*SD*)	Posttest Score *M* (*SD*)
1.	/æ/	bat	/ɛ/	bet	17.6 (1.9)	18.0 (1.9)
2.	/ɪ/	hit	/i:/	heat	17.3 (1.9)	17.0 (1.7)
3.	/ʌ/	buck	/ʊ/	book	16.9 (2.2)	17.9 (2.1)
4.	/f/	fat	/h/	hat	19.1 (1.7)	19.4 (1.0)
5.	/k/*	sack	/t/*	sat	18.2 (2.0)	19.2 (0.9)
6.	/m/*	same	/n/*	sane	14.9 (2.4)	14.9 (2.4)
7.	/ŋ/*	sing	/n/*	seen	13.6 (2.3)	13.2 (2.2)
8.	/r/	red	/l/	led	13.8 (3.8)	14.0 (4.0)
9.	/s/	see	/ʃ/	she	18.4 (2.2)	19.0 (1.2)
10.	/v/	vat	/b/	bat	15.8 (3.2)	17.0 (2.3)

Note. * In final position only.



Note. * The target phoneme only occurred in coda position.

Figure 1. Comparison of ranking of the 10 item contrasts as determined by participants' scores with participants' subjective ranking of difficulty.

undergo devoicing among Japanese vowels (Lovins, 1975), the result is that many Japanese speakers might get into the habit of pronouncing English words ending with /m/ and /n/ with a short /ɯ/ and be unaware that the pronunciation of native speakers is different. They might therefore underestimate the difficulty in distinguishing final nasals.

Turning to pedagogical recommendations, the results should be considered in light of functional load (Brown, 1988), that is, the degree to which the distinction is important to distinguish words in the target language. As Brown mentions, the first rule of thumb should be to focus on sounds that are common, and more precisely, sound *contrasts* that are common. For example, the distinction between /ɪ/ and /i:/ would be a candidate for focus of instruction as the cumulative frequency of these two vowels account for over a quarter of all vowels in English. At the same time, instructors would need to consider the probability of each member of the pair. In this case, /ɪ/ is about four times more likely to occur. This imbalanced distribution makes it less likely that the pair will create problems for learners. In short, phoneme contrasts in which the cumulative frequency of phonemes is high and the probability of occurrence of each phoneme roughly the same represent the most important contrasts for learners.

Other factors can make certain contrasts less problematic. For example, the /ɪ/ and /i:/ pair is also highly constrained by particular environments. This is true for some of the nasal contrasts as well: /ŋ/ only occurs in syllables containing short vowel phonemes and is thus less likely to be conflated with /n/ within all phonological contexts (Brown, 1988).

Limitations

The current research has several limitations. First, the set of contrasts investigated was limited, and the sample was limited to EFL Japanese first-year university students. Moreover, a control group was not used, so it is possible that improvements are due to maturation or greater familiarity with the test format on the posttest.

Future research should examine the effects of more prolonged training. Previous research has demonstrated that training in the perception of L2

sounds can lead to medium-sized improvements in perception and can also lead indirectly to improvements in pronunciation (Sakai & Moorman, 2018). Two types of training appear to be very promising. Logan, Lively, and Pisoni (1991) have shown that high variability phonetic training (intensive exposure to natural tokens produced by many speakers) is highly effective. They found significant gains that were extended to untaught exemplars and that were sustained over time. Other researchers have shown that acoustically enhanced input can be highly effective. McCandliss, Fiez, Protopapas, Conway, and McClelland (2002), using this "adaptive" training, showed that it enhanced learning even when feedback was not provided, whereas non-enhanced input only promoted learning when it was accompanied by feedback. They interpret their results as showing that improvement in this domain critically requires that learners are able to distinguish sounds successfully during training.

Because training is highly effective, it is essential that researchers provide language teachers with more information about the particular sounds that carry the most functional load in English, and which of these sounds their particular population of learners is likely to find challenging. Coursework should then be designed to foster learner awareness of ideal targets of learning, which can then be targeted in pedagogical activities. Because phoneme discrimination can be practiced without visual information, much of this training might be done as homework outside of class, ideally with online materials that provide exposure to high variability tokens along with immediate feedback on student responses. Finally, learners are likely to be even more motivated to undertake such training if instructors give them ongoing feedback on their improvement while highlighting areas requiring greater attention.

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#JALT2019 • NAGOYA 11.1–11.4

45th Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exhibition

JALT2019 • *Teacher Efficacy, Learner Agency*

Coming of Age

Every day we meet, work with, teach, and learn from people who are potential change agents. Just think about your favorite teacher, and the impact that teacher had on your learning, or an attentive and innovative student in your classroom, and how that student took ownership of their learning. As teachers and as learners, our beliefs play a key role in the kinds of action we take. JALT2019 offers an ideal opportunity for meaningful discussions and lively debates about better ways to have a positive impact on learning and teaching. Herein lies the core of the theme for this year – *Teacher Efficacy, Learner Agency*.

Teacher Efficacy

Emerging from the work of Albert Bandura on self-efficacy (I believe I can have an impact on my future), teacher efficacy focuses on how much teachers believe that they can have an impact on students' learning. Recently, research has emerged leading to a new concept called collective teacher efficacy. John Hattie explains, "Teachers' Collective Efficacy means teachers working together, building mindsets that all students can make appreciable progress, and then reinforcing these efficacy beliefs with evidence that students do indeed learn by these teachers causing learning." Whether you're working with young learners, elementary, or high school students, educating university students, or assisting adults with business English, efficacy beliefs have a major impact on learning. Ultimately, our job as teachers is more rewarding as we explore how we can help our learners be the best they can be.

Learner Agency

Described as learners "having ownership over their learning" or "having the power to act", the concept of learner agency addresses the increasing need for learners to be able to do more than simply receive instruction. The explosion of information that the Internet continues to make available means that today's learners will need to develop the ability to constantly learn throughout their lives; they need to know when they require new learning, when to unlearn something, and when they need to relearn something to be successful.

Teachers working to increase learner agency are promoting a range of skills and strategies for independent learning: personalizing one's learning, being proactive, learning to choose appropriate resources for one's learning, reflecting on one's learning choices, setting "smart" goals, and ultimately being responsible for creating their own learning for a successful and meaningful life.

Teacher Efficacy and Learner Agency: A Winning Combination

Current research advocates that teachers have an impact well beyond the classroom: think back to some of those influential teachers in your life. Imagine the power of combining collective teacher efficacy and learner agency.

Collective teacher efficacy is argued to have the highest overall effect on student achievement. When students get the same messages from a collaborating team of teachers, learning improves dramatically. The second highest impact on learning is a student's own expectations for themselves, a direct result of improving learner agency. Many approaches we currently promote such as active learning, project-based learning, CLIL, CALL, communicative approaches, and balanced 4-skills programs encourage students to take ownership of their learning.

Join us at JALT2019

Encouraging teacher efficacy and increasing learner agency is clearly a winning combination, and winning combinations are what we hope to deliver in 2019 when the Japan Association for Language Teaching brings the 45th Annual International Conference and Education Materials Exhibition to the WINC in Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture. We look forward to you joining us as we work together to explore the best possible environment for our teachers and learners to grow and thrive.

Steven Herder and Catherine Littlehale Oki
JALT2019 Conference Co-Chairs

Impacts of Introducing Four-Skill English Tests into University Entrance Examinations

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From 2020, four skills English tests administered by external testing companies will be introduced as university entrance examinations throughout Japan (MEXT, 2017a). It has been often claimed that the current state of the English entrance examinations has hindered senior high school teachers from conducting communicative language teaching (Nishino, 2008; O'Donnell, 2005; Taguchi, 2005). The objective of introducing four skills English tests is to bring about positive washback effects and change classroom practice by abolishing the Center Test, which currently evaluates only reading and listening skills, and introducing externally available English tests which can evaluate English four skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing and to cultivate senior high school students' communication abilities in this global society as stated by MEXT's 2009 Course of Study. This paper reviews the background of introducing four skills English tests, possible concerns of introducing four skills English tests, and proposals to resolve those concerns.

外部試験機関が実施する4技能英語試験が2020年から日本の大学入試に導入される（文科省、2017a）。現在の英語の入学試験は、高校教師がコミュニカティブな言語指導を行う妨げとなっている、と頻繁に言われている(Nishino, 2008; O'Donnell, 2005; Taguchi, 2005)。4技能英語試験導入の目的は、リーディングとリスニング技能のみを評価する現在のセンター試験を廃止し、リスニング、リーディング、スピーキング、ライティングといった英語の4技能を評価できる外部テストを導入することにより、肯定的なウオッシュバック効果をもたらし、授業実践を変えることである。また、2009年に文科省から発表された学習指導要領で述べられているように、グローバル化社会に対応して、高校生のコミュニケーション能力を育成することも導入の目的の一つである。本論では、4技能英語試験導入の背景、導入により考えられる懸念とその解決策について検討する。

It has been claimed that the current state of the English entrance examinations has hindered senior high school (hereafter SHS) teachers from conducting communicative language teaching (Nishino, 2008; O'Donnell, 2005; Taguchi, 2005). The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (hereafter MEXT) plans to remedy this problem by introducing externally available tests to evaluate four skills of English, listening, reading, speaking, and writing as university entrance English examinations throughout Japan (2017a). Externally available four skill English tests (hereafter 4 SETs) were selected in terms of how well they provide a well-balanced evaluation of the four skills of English, their consistency with the Course of Study, and correspondence with Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001, hereafter CEFR) (MEXT, 2017b). CEFR is a framework that can be used for syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, and textbooks designed for basic users of language (Level A1) to highly proficient users of language (Level C2) (Council of Europe, 2001). From 2020, the levels of the CEFR will be used in applications of entrance examinations along with results of each test. In 2018, the National Center for University Entrance Examinations (hereafter NCUEE) accredited Cambridge English, EIKEN Tests, GTEC CBT, IELTS, TEAP, TEAP CBT, TOEFL iBT, and TOEIC L&R /TOEIC S&W as 4SETs (2018b). The introduction of 4SETs including a speaking section is expected to bring about positive effects on teaching and learning and to encourage instructors to adopt a more communicative approach to teaching.

Currently, the National Center Test scores reported by the NCUEE are widely used by SHS students when applying to public and private universities. In 2018, 82 national universities, 89 public universities, and 526 private universities used the National Center Test, and 546,712 examinees took its English examination (NCUEE, 2018a). Reflecting MEXT's five-year action plan titled *To Cultivate Japanese with English Ability* (2003), which stressed the need to cultivate English proficiency among Japanese people, the English Test was revised in 2006 by adding a listening section. Although the listening section was added, the focus remains on the reading section. Though the English Test by the NCUEE will be changed in the academic year of 2020, it will not be offered after its implementation in the academic year of 2023. Only 4SETs administered by external testing companies are to be used in place of the NCUEE's English Test from 2024 (MEXT, 2017a).

There has been an increasing demand to reform the National Center Test since the enactment of MEXT's 2009 Course of Study. Its overall English objective is "to develop students' communication abilities such as accurately understanding and appropriately conveying information, ideas, etc., deepening their understanding of language and culture, and fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages" (MEXT, 2010, p. 1). The importance of evaluating students' ability to communicate across the four skills of English is stated in the five proposals to improve English education for keeping up with the rapid pace of globalization (MEXT, 2014). In order to evaluate whether SHS students have acquired adequate communicative skills, tests that can accurately evaluate proficiency in the four skills of English are expected to be introduced.

In the Course of Study, it is stated that "when taking into consideration the characteristics of each English subject, classes, in principle, should be conducted in English in order to enhance the opportunities for students to be exposed to English, transforming classes into real communication scenes" (MEXT, 2010, p. 3). Regarding the language policy, some teachers held negative views because the policy would be introduced without changing the university entrance examinations (Glasgow, 2012). University entrance examinations are expected to change to reflect the language policy in class. In 2017, MEXT released findings about English use in classrooms of SHS teachers who were in charge of Oral Communication classes. Among 6,781 English teachers, 2,687, which is about 39%, answered that less than half of their utterances were in English (MEXT, 2017c). The above findings indicate that even five years after the enactment of the 2009 Course of Study in 2013, many SHS teachers are not using a great deal of English in classes.

Possible causes preventing SHS teachers from conducting English classes in English are the teachers' lack of confidence in teaching English in English and students' low English proficiency (Glasgow, 2012; Nagamine, 2013; Saito, 2015). Another reason why the policy has not been fully implemented by SHS teachers is the presence of the current National Center Test. Kanatani (2012) argued that one reason why English classes cannot be conducted in English is that teachers feel pressured to help their students pass entrance examinations. In Saito's 2017 study of SHS teachers' cognition of the English language policy that involved interviews with three SHS teachers, the results showed that all of their classroom practices were influenced by university entrance examinations. One teacher had to change her classroom practice from communicative teaching to focusing on drill practice in order to prepare students to pass entrance examinations when the students were in the third year of high school. Another teacher shared a similar experience, as he had to change his classroom practice by taking entrance examinations into consideration because his second-year students expected to prepare for the entrance examinations by using controlled activities. Given that some SHS teachers change how they teach English because of the form of university entrance examinations, introducing 4SETs that include a speaking section might create a washback effect. Washback, which is "the extent to which the test influences language teachers and learners to do things that they would not necessarily otherwise to" (Messick, 1996, p. 243), can be positive or negative (Alderson & Wall, 1993). One example of positive washback is the inclusion of an oral interview in a final examination in a conversational course (Bachman, 1990) that causes students to engage in communicative practice.

Washback Effects of High-Stakes Examinations

According to Cheng and Watanabe (2004), high-stakes tests have strong washback effects on teaching and learning. If the tests are changed and bring about beneficial change, it is called positive washback. On the contrary, if contents of tests are based on restricted definitions and they constrain teaching and learning contexts, it can be negative washback (Sukyadi & Mardiani, 2011). The current status quo of university entrance examinations has led to situations in which some SHS teachers focus on test preparation for university entrance examinations, an approach to education called "teaching to the test." Teaching to the test involves using materials that mimic the format and cover the same curriculum territory as the test (Smith, 1991).

Both positive and negative washback have been reported for high-stakes tests. Sukyadi and Mardiani (2011) investigated washback effects of the English National Examination on teaching and learning in Indonesia and found negative washback on teachers' methods of instruction because many were teaching to the test to prepare students for the examination. Shohamy (1993) reported positive washback for an oral test introduced in the Israeli educational system in 1986 where teachers spent more time teaching oral language as a result of the test. Shohamy, Donista-Schmidt, and Ferman (1996) later reported positive washback by slightly modifying an oral test, as the modification resulted in more oral teaching activities. On the contrary, a

public examination in Spain, the English Test (ET) of the Spanish University Entrance Examinations (SUEE), which only had a reading section, saw most teachers reducing the amount of time dedicated to oral production (Pizarro, 2009).

Possible Positive and Negative Washback of Introducing 4SETs

The introduction of 4SETs will likely bring about both positive and negative washback. One possible positive washback is for teachers to change classroom practice focusing more on students' acquiring speaking skills, as a speaking section is included in all of the adopted 4SETs. In fact, one of the 4 SETs, TEAP, was designed to bring about positive washback on classrooms (Green, 2014). Positive washback effects of 4SETs have also been reported. One example is positive washback on students' learning of productive skills by introducing IELTS in a university in Japan (Allen, 2016). Increasing to have a more communicative focus by introducing 4SETs as university entrance examinations can have positive washback effects on high school English teachers' instruction (Hama and Okabe, 2016). Although the 2009 Course of Study states that English classes should be conducted in English to increase opportunities for students to be exposed to English and to change classes into actual communication contexts (MEXT, 2010), the policy has not been fully implemented (MEXT, 2017b). The introduction of 4SETs can encourage SHS teachers to use more English to maximize the students' opportunities to listen to and speak English.

However, the introduction of 4SETs pose some problems because it is unprecedented in English education in Japan. The currently accredited 4SETs, Cambridge English, EIKEN Tests, GTEC CBT, IELTS, TEAP, TEAP CBT, TOEFL iBT, and TOEIC L&R/ TOEIC S&W, vary in terms of their contents and level of difficulty. For example, TOEIC focuses on business English, while TOEFL iBT and TEAP are focused on academic English. SHS teachers can be expected to be familiar with several of these tests so that their students can choose appropriate tests for them. However, understanding different test styles and the contents of each test can be challenging given their number. Another concern is that SHS teachers might teach to the test by focusing mainly on techniques and strategies that their students can use to pass the 4SETs. However, currently, the skills required in the speaking sections of 4SETs are limited. For example, expressing opinions is part of the speaking sections of most of the 4SETs, but there is a limitation in communication skills that the speaking sections of 4SETs can cover. Many characteristics observed in communicative interactions such as multiple turns and turn-taking are not assessed in most of the 4SETs. If teachers focus only on the skills that 4 SETs cover, their students cannot have an opportunity to improve other areas of speaking in classes. Finally, though 4SETs were selected in terms of their consistency with the Course of Study and correspondence with CEFR (MEXT, 2017b), there are issues whether they are consistent with the Course of Study and correspondent with CEFR.

Encouraging Positive Washback and Discouraging Negative Washback

In order to encourage positive washback, SHS teachers can incorporate some parts of speaking sections of 4SETs. As one example, the speaking sections of 4SETs such as the sections of EIKEN and TEAP include parts in which students have to express their opinions about various topics. These can be used for module speaking activities as pair or group work during classes. SHS teachers play an important role in maximizing positive washback and are thus expected to make an environment in which English is spoken as much as possible in the classroom.

Because some might assume that SHS teachers need to be familiar with all of the adopted 4SETs to help their students prepare for those tests, opportunities for SHS teachers to become familiar with 4SETs should be increased. Detailed information about 4SETs should be easily accessible, so MEXT and the institutions that administer 4SETs should offer as much information as possible in various ways, such as sharing details about 4SETs on the MEXT website and the homepages of the testing institutions. In addition, offering workshops where teachers can learn about the accredited tests may be another solution. Also, SHS teachers can learn about 4SETs from each other by setting up a peer-support system within schools. Teachers can learn from other teachers through talking to them, observing them, and sharing teaching activities (Nishino, 2012). For instance, if there are several English teachers at one school, each teacher can be assigned to a different 4SET to focus on developing expert knowledge of it, and all this knowledge could then be shared amongst the teachers.

It should be acknowledged that there are limitations concerning the contents that can be covered in 4SETs. For example, in the speaking sections of 4SETs, test-takers rarely engage in multiple turns, initiate and end conversations, or use language functions, such as making an invitation, accept-

ing or refusing invitations, showing gratitude, or making apologies. However, these functions are observed in communicative interactions. Although these features of language are not fully covered in 4SETs, they arguably need to be taught and learned in classrooms. These language functions are also mentioned in the new Course of Study as functions that should be dealt with (MEXT, 2018).

Conclusion

In 2020, university entrance examinations will undergo substantial changes as a result of the introduction of 4SETs that have the potential to change classroom practice by causing greater focus on developing students' English communicative skills. In the past, many measures such as the introduction of the listening section in the National Center Test and the enactment of the language policy of teaching English in English were taken to change classroom practice and cultivate students' English communicative skills. However, the current state of university entrance examinations hindered SHS teachers from conducting communicative language teaching (Nishino, 2008; O'Donnell, 2005; Taguchi, 2005). Though the English language policy stated in MEXT's 2009 Course of Study has not been fully introduced by teachers (MEXT, 2017c), 4SETs that include speaking sections might also change SHS teachers' medium of instruction from Japanese to English as a result of positive washback effects. Teachers' roles are important for its effective introduction of 4 SETs because teachers can determine whether to allow washback to operate (Spratt, 2005). Thus, it is necessary to create opportunities for teachers to learn about 4SETs and their limitations and help them maximize positive washback and minimize negative washback.

Prior to the introduction of 4SETs, recognizing possible problems and solving each problem step by step will be a pressing issue. In fact, Kyoto University announced that submitting scores of 4SETs is not mandatory because 4SETs themselves are not clearly visible and concerns about unforeseen circumstances such as regional and economic circumstances and disasters have remained (Nikkei, 2018). This decision follows Tokyo University's decision not to make 4 SETs mandatory (Tokyo University, 2018). In addition, it is also necessary to analyze and review 4SETs in terms of consistency with the Course of Study. The present Course of Study, which was issued in 2009 and has been enacted in 2013, was used as a reference for selecting the 4SETs; however, a new Course of Study was announced in 2018 and will be enacted in 2022. Whether 4SETs are consistent with the 2009 Course of Study and the new Course of Study will need to be further investigated.

Regarding 4SETs'correspondence with the CEFR, it is argued that the use of the CFFR is not appropriate (Torikai, 2018). The CEFR itself, which was used as a reference to the new Course of Study and 4SETs, has been revised in the CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018) with more emphasis on mediation, the addition of written and online interaction and new descriptors, and revisions to the 2001 CEFR descriptors. At the launching conference of the CEFR Companion Volume held at the Council of Europe in 2018, North (2018) addressed the shift from learning and teaching four skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing to learning and teaching four modes of reception, production, interaction, and mediation because communication is an integral part of tasks where participants engage in the four modes or a combination of two or more of these. Reviewing and reflecting the additions and revisions in the CEFR Companion Volume will be necessary in the future. Addressing the issues and other possible concerns is an urgent matter for the introduction of 4SETs to be implemented effectively so that SHS teachers are encouraged to adopt a more communicative approach and to help SHS students to cultivate the four skills in English communication.

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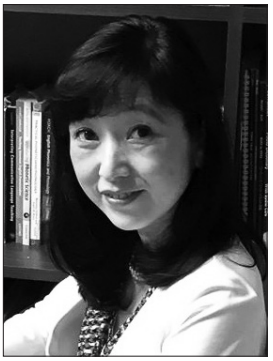

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[JALT PRAXIS] TLT INTERVIEWS

Torrin Shimono & James Nobis

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An Interview with Rod Ellis on Performance-Assisted Learning

David Kluge

Nanzan University

Welcome to TLT Interviews! For the March/April issue, we present a very special interview with Rod Ellis, a renowned linguist who received his Doctorate from the University of London and his Master of Education from the University of Bristol. A former professor at Temple University both in Japan and the US, Dr. Ellis has taught in numerous positions in England, Japan, the US, Zambia and New Zealand, and has published extensively. He is presently in the Department of Education at Curtin University in Perth, Australia. He was interviewed by David Kluge. Mr. Kluge has been teaching English for over 35 years and currently works at Nanzan University. His research interests include oral interpretation, speech, drama, debate, composition, and materials development. He has co-authored three books on composition with Matthew Taylor (National Geographic Learning) and one book on oral communication (Macmillan Language House). So, without further ado, to the interview!

David Kluge*: Hello, Rod. Thank you for agreeing to this interview.*

Rod Ellis: You're welcome.

What do you think of a topic of particular interest to me, that is Performance-Assisted Learning — performance activities to help learn, consolidate learning, and evaluate learning across the curriculum?

It seems to me that one of the essential features of Performance-Assisted Learning activities is that they make the expression of meaning, the conveyance of meaningful messages, primary. They also require learners to make use of whatever linguistic resources they have in order to carry out the performance, right? So, there is potentially a spontaneity, although I think there is a danger that a perfor-

mance can be memorized and then performed as a memorized performance. I would much rather prefer to see performances be extemporary.

What is your own experience with Performance-Assisted Learning activities as a student, teacher, and researcher?

As a student, both at secondary school and at university, I engaged greatly in acting, taking quite major roles, in fact.

For example?

I performed in Ben Jonson plays, an Auden and Isherwood play. I performed in several plays at university. I was so keen on drama that, for some time, I thought about trying to become a professional actor when I left university. But I think I was also aware of my limitations as an actor, and I was aware that it's a terribly difficult profession to establish yourself in, and therefore, I opted for a much easier life as a teacher.

What was your most memorable acting experience?

I remember I played Little Monk in Brecht's *Galileo*, and that was a memorable experience. Also, I have quite clear memories of the various roles that I took part in at school. In *School for Scandal* by Sheridan, I played a major role. I certainly enjoyed being on stage and having an audience captivated.

I'm sure! How about as a teacher? Did you have experience in teaching debate, drama, or speech?

As a teacher, speech, no, I never was engaged in any formal-type speech events. Nor did I use, as a technique in my classes, asking students to prepare speeches on topics. Drama? Yes. As a teacher I used to function as a director, and I directed a number of small plays with my students.

For example, what plays?

These were short plays, and they were largely specially-written, improvised plays rather than published plays. What I do remember most vividly is when I was a teacher educator, I elected to direct the annual play for the college I was working in, in Zambia. I chose a Brecht play, *Caucasian Chalk Circle*. But, what I elected to do was not use a script, but rather to produce a synopsis of the story, and then work with the actors to enact the story using their own words as much as possible.

Very good.

I have to say that that was very ambitious with those particular students. I'm not sure that as a piece of drama, it was terribly successful. I wasn't really satisfied with the final product. It wasn't smooth enough for my liking. But was it better than having people memorize lines and then just perform them? Maybe as an educational experience, it was better for those students to have had to act without a script.

How about Oral Interpretation or Readers Theater with a script in hand, and interpretive reading?

No. Never done it. I've never been involved in Readers Theater, reading scripts, and so on. I'm not sure I have a lot of belief in that because I don't think that it involves students in the fundamental processing of language that contributes to language learning. I could be wrong.

That also brings up a common language teaching activity which is to have students in pairs read a dialog aloud.

I think that's useless as well. I give that as an example of what is not a task, and what is arguably not going to contribute very much to language learning. I think that the only thing that it could possibly help a little is with pronunciation. I don't think it's going to help with fundamental processes of enabling communication in a foreign language.

One topic we haven't mentioned so far is debate.

Yes, I have used debates in class. Not extensively, but I have used them. I have some reservations about debates used in a whole class situation because let's assume it more or less follows a standard pattern of having a main speaker and a supporting speaker for and against the motion, and then perhaps having the situation where people from the floor can either ask questions or make statements. My reservation was that it typically only involves a fairly small number of students in a large class. For that reason, I wasn't entirely convinced that using debate was the most effective use of class time, but I have used them when I taught in Africa. I think also we did organize one or two formal debates as well.

As a teacher, of the four areas of speech, drama, oral interpretation or readers theater, and debate, is drama the one that you find most valuable?

No, I'm not sure that that's correct. It's just that perhaps drama is the one I've been most actively involved in as a student and as a teacher. I think I can see merit in students giving speeches. And I think it would be quite interesting to actually

develop a methodology for using speeches that both involve the opportunity for students to prepare and perform their speeches, and also give extemporary speeches as well. I would be quite interested to see whether letting students practice a planned performed speech has an effect on their ability to do extemporary speeches.

That would be a good research topic.

I think that would be a good one because, ultimately, I think it's all about what people can do when they are not simply performing a prepared script or prepared speech.

Let's move to your experience as a researcher. Have you done research on Performance-Assisted Learning?

No, I haven't, mainly because most of my research is focused on the role of interaction in language learning, and it seems to me that what you are looking at here is non-interactive language use, rather than interactive language use. That's not entirely true because drama does involve interactive use, but certainly, formal debates, readers theater, speeches, etcetera., do not involve interactive language use. This really comes from my work in second language acquisition where interaction is seen as one of the principle motors for language learning.

Obviously, I think that there is a case for research. One thing I mentioned to you the other day, is that many of these performances involve what I call long turns. Maybe the emphasis on interaction, which typically involves short turns, often only very short turns, has led to the neglect of the value of performance involving long turns. There is some research that's looked at long turns. Some of the research on task-based language teaching has looked at learners performing monologic narratives where they're given pictures, or they watch a video, and then they have to tell the narrative, so that involves a long turn. To my mind, that's the equivalent of a performance. There has been research that has looked to see what factors are likely to influence effective performance of long turns like the role of planning.

That brings me to my next question, which is how has the experience with performance you've had as a student and as a teacher affected you? In other words, what do you think are the benefits of these experiences?

Has my drama experience at school and university benefited me? Well, probably yes, because if you are going to act, you need to project your voice, you need to have a very clear voice, and one of the things that I'm constantly told by students all over the world is that I am very easy to listen to. I'm very clear, so in terms of enunciation, I think that my drama experience was quite valuable to me and has fed into my role as a teacher and my role as a teacher educator.

That's what I was wondering, if the performance experiences you've had apply to the talks you give.

Well, I think that learning to give a talk in front of a large audience is something that I have acquired through giving talks in front of large audiences. The only way that my drama experience has fed into it is really in terms of enunciation.

Yes, but you say when you perform your presentations at conferences or in front of large groups of people, that's your performance . . .

I consider them a sort of performance. You know, it would come under your label of speeches, yeah?

Do you have any final words that you would like to leave us in terms of our work in speech, drama, and debate?

I think probably if I was to sort of get involved in this, what I would like to do is to sit down and figure out how performances could be researched and evaluated. That would be my academic interest. Obviously, the main purpose of speeches or performances is to enhance proficiency. Along with possibly some affective reasons like increasing people's motivation and confidence for actually using the language as well. By and large, I would see that these performances are directed at proficiency, in particular, fluency and self-expression, and confidence in so doing. So, I think it would be quite interesting to investigate to what extent engaging learners in these performances does contribute to proficiency, does contribute to increased confidence, or does it just lead to more anxiety?

Do you have any words for researchers who want to research the efficacy of these techniques? Is there anything in particular they should be looking at, looking for, or doing?

I think that one of the big issues with performance is to think about how you can match the type of performance to the proficiency level of the students, right? I mean a speech, for example, could be an hour, or a half an hour, or ten minutes, or two minutes, right? I think it would be quite interesting to look at the issue of time: are you giving one-minute speeches, two-minute speeches, etcetera? I think that time is a potentially quite an important issue. The other issue that I think is quite important is planning, and there's a huge amount of research

that's looked at what's called pre-task planning which would be equally applicable to this. What is the role of planning, does it actually improve performances, in what ways does it improve performances, in what ways would performance people be interested in measuring the effect that planning might have on improvement of performances. These are the kinds of issues that I would probably be interested in.

It seems to me that performances of these various kinds are probably going to be a lot more useful for enhancing language proficiency than a lot of other things that go on inside a Japanese English language classroom, right? But maybe there is a need to collect evidence about that.

And that's our mission for the near future. Thank you very much.

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An Interview with Lindsay Clandfield

Robert Sheridan

Kindai University

Kathryn M. Tanaka

Otemae University

Our second interview is with Lindsay Clandfield, an award-winning writer, teacher, teacher trainer, and international speaker. He has written more than ten course books for language learners and is the co-author of various methodology books for teachers, including the new book Interaction Online *by Cambridge University Press. He is also involved in self-publishing projects, notably The Round <http://the-round.com> and Extreme Language Teaching <http://exlt.wordpress.com>. Mr. Clandfied was interviewed by Robert Sheridan and Kathryn M. Tanaka at the JALT2018 International Conference in November. Robert Sheridan has a Master's degree in TESOL and is a tenured lecturer in the Faculty of Agriculture at Kindai University in Nara. He serves as the program chair of Osaka JALT. His research interests include vocabulary acquisition, CLIL, extensive reading, motivation, and culture in education. Kathryn M. Tanaka has a Ph.D. in Japanese literature from the University of Chicago is a tenured lecturer in the department of Cultural and Historical Studies at Otemae University. Her research interests include illness and human rights in modern Japanese literature, and the place of human rights education, culture, and literature in EFL and CLIL courses. They can be contacted at: robert@nara.kindai.ac.jp; k.tanaka@otemae.ac.jp.*

Robert Sheridan/Kathryn M. Tanaka: *Thank you for agreeing to share your thoughts on ELT materials design. To start, could you tell us about how you came to the field and how your work has evolved over the years?*

Lindsay Clandfield: I started as a language teacher from a liberal arts background. I studied international relations and politics at the University of Toronto, then I travelled around Latin America. I decided that was where I wanted to settle down, so I went back to Canada in order to get a teaching certificate. After teaching at university in the south of Mexico for a few years, I moved to Spain. I chose Barcelona because in the late 90s/early 2000s, Barcelona was one of the hotspots for teacher training. Scott Thornberry was just starting out there at the time. There were also a lot of authors of course books who were based in Spain. There was *International House Barcelona* and other teacher training schools, so it seemed to be a place that was developing exciting new things. After a few years in Barcelona, I wrote my first articles for a Macmillan website called *Onestopenglish* (<www.onestopenglish.com>) when it was just starting out—it's huge now. I wrote my first two course books with Macmillan. I then moved to the south of Spain to teach English and to focus more on teacher training. CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) is a big thing in Spain, so lots of the teachers have to learn English in order to teach other subjects. Now, I teach a lot of methodology and do many talks on this, which has led me to do a lot of travel. That is the evolution of my work—starting off being a teacher in Mexico, and then becoming a writer and teacher trainer based in Spain.

You mentioned that Barcelona in the late 1990s was cutting edge, so I wonder where you would say is cutting-edge now in English language pedagogy.

I don't think it's Barcelona anymore. There are a few places where there are cutting-edge things happening. For example, for quite some time, Brazil was the place to study technology and English language teaching. There was a huge influx of interest in

learning English when they got the Olympics—just like I anticipate may happen here in Japan. Brazil actually got the World Cup and the Olympics back to back, which also helped. A lot of money, interest, and motivation—those are all of the ingredients that are perfect for people to try out new things. Turkey is another place that has some cutting-edge ELT research, however, recent political events have dampered that a bit. Japan and Thailand seem poised to be the next big loci of EFL pedagogy and research in Asia. We should all be paying attention to Japan, with the Olympics and World Cup approaching.

What kind of teaching methodologies/theories do you incorporate into your work?

I've always written four skills coursebooks, which are integrated with a heavy emphasis on speaking, usually at the end of every lesson. The coursebooks that I have written have been with big publishers, so there has been a tendency to follow the PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production) methodology. I do think PPP has a lot to offer, but I am also excited to see other textbooks use different methodological things like task-based learning—I have heard that is being explored more here in Asia than in Europe.

You mentioned that your favorite book to teach with might be the book called Studio (Campbell & Clandfield, 2019) that you are working on now. Could you tell us about this?

It is highly communicative. In this book, we go from topic-based units to topic-based lessons. Every topic is a lesson tied to a channel, so we had 12 channels, which means you have lots of topic variety. One thing that frustrated me as a teacher was when books became more unit oriented. One unit could cover four lessons, so you had four classes on sports, for example. It could be too much, so our approach was to view each lesson as its own thing, allowing for frequent changes of topics. I also enjoyed doing the video work for this book because we used the video in some innovative ways. For example, the actors did the video in front of a green screen with the background projected behind them. At the end of the video, we include that background with sound effects so the teacher can project the scene on the board, and then they can use our video backgrounds for students to reenact our role-play or create their own. It gives a lot of freedom for creative use. This book will be out in early 2019.

When making a textbook like this, are there any things that you try to avoid?

For all of my books, I impose a ban on using celebrities. Teachers think students enjoy learning about the life of someone like Madonna, David Beckham, or Richard Branson. I see three problems with this. First, it dates the textbook. Second, the students don't always know who it is. Third, the celebrity could do something really bad. For example, there is a popular EFL textbook that includes a lesson on Oscar Pistorius, and he went from hero to murderer. That text is no longer a feel-good story, but a dated tragedy. This is especially true when you have to write things in simple English like, "He is a hero." I try to avoid this type of writing as much as possible, and I recommend this in my teacher training courses.

What inspired you to move into online work?

It was not so much what inspired me; it was where the field was going. I feel that anyone in this line of work who wishes to advance their career needs to eventually do something technology oriented. Today, to advance the curriculum at university, many classes need to have some form of online platform or online activities. It's getting harder to avoid this in any class.

What should educators pay attention to when they create material for use online versus traditional paper materials?

This ties into one of the books that I wrote with Jill Hadfield for Cambridge, a methodology book called *Interaction Online* (Clandfield & Hadfield, 2017). We were frustrated when we were asked to do more interactive activities in our online courses. To us, interactive activities meant writing or speaking to one another. However, our universities thought interactive meant putting in a *Quizlet*-style (<https://quizlet.com>) quiz or a test in *Moodle* (<https://moodle.org>). Although there is a place for all of that, this is a weak form of interaction for language classes. When making materials for online courses compared to traditional paper-based materials, we are in danger of forgetting about communicative language teaching. For example, to say the app *Duolingo* (<https://www.duolingo.com>) is a new model for language learning is like saying "let's just forget about pedagogical shifts from 1970 onwards toward communicative language teaching and go back to scaffold drills." The only difference now is those scaffold drills are more attractive because they are online and look great. We are forgetting about the messiness of communicating with each other, something that a computer still has a lot of trouble correcting. So, for language teachers who are creating online materials, it is important to not

just include things such as quizzes that can be easily graded, but also to include activities where students have to communicate with each other.

Another thing that we have learned, and social media has taught us, is that people enjoy communicating online. They enjoy writing to one another and they also enjoy reading when somebody else has commented on something. There are ways this can be meaningfully incorporated into online classes.

Could you give us an example of an online communicative activity?

Here's an example for a forum. The traditional or default model for a forum tends to be, "Read this and post a comment about it." What always happens with something like this, based on years of experience, is: (a) no one posts anything, or (b) if they are forced to, they do it on the very last day. Or another problem with this is the keen student posts a really good comment, and then everyone just agrees with it. This is the model that almost every university discussion forum uses. This is equivalent to a language teacher saying something like, "Okay everyone, let's talk about sports," but we don't do that. We know learning is more successful with some kind of support and structure to an activity. So, here is one example to support a forum task. The instructor asks students to post their thoughts about an article, and at the end, they must ask a follow-up question. The next person that comes along reads that question and after answering that question, asks a new question. To recap, your task is two-fold: you need to answer the question in the post above you, and then ask a question for the next person to answer. This way the question is constantly changing, and you don't get the stuff like, "That student already gave the perfect answer." Also, it is important to tell students that everyone must participate by a certain day. It is important to give a clear deadline and instructions. You could also stagger it so that you put a list of the students' names and begin by asking the first student a question, and then they add to the question and write a follow-up question for the next person on the list and continue that way. Also, it is important to set a time limit so everyone knows that they have to check in regularly to see if it has reached their turn. Doing it this way means that everybody will be able to see the flow of the conversation. The teacher could help to facilitate this activity by giving a summary of the conversation or maybe even correcting common errors. This is just a simple model from a large variety of methods that can be done.

A good reference book for types of activities like this is *Interaction Online* (Clandfield & Hadfield, 2017). It is an activity book that also has a full chapter called *Tasks Design for Online Instruction* that gives models of interaction patterns. Another type of weeklong forum activity/game that you could play is something like, "Where in the world am I?" This is where one student posts a photo online and the other students have 25 questions to figure out where it is. The student who posts the photo is only allowed to answer "yes" or "no." Therefore, the other students need to form close-ended yes or no questions. If anybody guesses the correct answer before the 25 questions have been asked, it becomes their turn. It continues that way for a week.

You have a lot of innovative and engaging ideas for activities. I think that this is also reflective in your new Extreme Language Teaching series (Campbell & Clandfield, 2018). Could you tell us more about it?

Well, it started with a frustration I was having while trying to write an introductory book where my co-author and I had to write something about the grammar points, using "There is/There are," and food. We both thought it's going to be another fridge check again, isn't it? To change things up a bit, I started thinking that we could actually do it in a post-apocalyptic situation. For example, two people have encountered an abandoned house, and one person is standing guard while the other goes to check the fridge and the pantry for supplies. The person standing guard calls out, "Is there any water? We need to find water! What about food? Are there any peaches?" At first, my coauthor and I were joking about it, but then we thought that it could actually make a very interesting lesson. From there we started thinking about how we could use every day English and put it into these really weird and unique situations. Instead of the typical "Meeting people for the first time" lesson, we changed it up to meeting fellow survivors. Instead of asking where they are from, we have them ask, "What did you do before this?" For asking directions, we could change the scene to using this grammar point to escape out of a ruined city. The students say things such as, "We need to get out of here now. Do you know how to get to the highway?" or "It is too dangerous that way!" We also thought such a textbook could be fun if we modeled it on a "found" military manual, like the training manuals they use that just teach basic language that you need in order to survive. So, we created a book using non-traditional situations with traditional methodology: read the dialogue, repeat the phrases, listen to the audio that extends the story, and create your own dialogue. We also

did English for an alien invasion as a follow-up. We have moved into using English in adventures. For these, we created PowerPoints with music and sound effects as well as board games, so you are adventuring into places like a tomb, or having to survive on a deserted island.

Thank you so much for your time.

Thank you! I hope to have more chances to visit Japan in the future!

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[JALT PRAXIS] MY SHARE


Steven Asquith & Nicole Gallagher

We welcome submissions for the My Share column. Submissions should be up to 600 words describing a successful technique or lesson plan you have used that can be replicated by readers, and should conform to the My Share format (see the guidelines on our website below).

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

Welcome to the March/April edition of the My Share column, where we introduce novel teaching ideas sent in by educators from around Japan and abroad. As the school year winds down and we look ahead to a fresh start in April, many teachers may be looking for some new ideas to try out in class. In this edition of My Share, we are excited to share with you three unique suggestions that will surely spark creativity in the classroom.

First, David Bracke presents us with an interesting take on a self-introduction warm-up, perfect for the beginning of any course. By utilizing a class party scenario and prompting students to use questions, the students take on a conversational approach to a self-introduction activity. In the second article, Luke Houghton shares an alternative way to approach self-introductions that incorporates all four language skills in a high-energy environment. I'm sure this icebreaker would also work well to reinforce the atmosphere of a communicative language classroom. Lastly, we have Andrew Innes's colourful activity called Sharing Superlatives through World Records, a communicative grammar exercise, which encourages students to use their imagination and share interesting ideas from around the world. This activity seems particularly well suited for learners to practice their vocabulary and writing skills in a communicative way. We hope you enjoy learning about these great ideas!

— Nicole Gallagher

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Who Are You?

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Quick Guide

- Keywords: *Icebreaker, student reflection, sentence transformation*
- Learner English level: *False beginners, Intermediate, Advanced*
- Learner maturity: *Junior High School, High School, University*
- Preparation time: *5 minutes*
- Activity time: *30-40 minutes, depending on class size*
- Materials: *Whiteboard, blank A4 paper, scissors, pens*

This popular activity is a perfect introductory warmer for getting to know new classes. It's very easy to prepare and can be used in many different contexts with various levels. In addition, it's also an opportunity to build rapport with the students and set a comfortable learning environment while at the same time evaluating the level and needs of the students. It's a combination of secret introductory sentences and casual mingling, while at the same time allowing students to practice simple sentence transformation.

Preparation

Step 1: Cut A4 paper into strips of equal size — three strips for each student. If need be, prepare pens as well.

Procedure

Step 1: On the first day of a new class, handout three strips of paper to each student. Take 3 strips of paper for yourself as well. Set the goal of *Introducing myself to my classmates at a party.*

Step 2: Have students write one full sentence about themselves on each strip of paper. Demonstrate by writing three example sentences on the board. In addition, write example topics on the board: hobbies, family, travel, food, and so on. Students should not write their name on the paper. Give the students 5-10 minutes to write their sentences.

Step 3: Once they have written their sentences instruct students to fold each strip of paper in half, so their sentences are hidden. Demonstrate with your own strips of paper.

Step 4: Designate a space, like a central desk, and have all the students put their folded strips of paper in a pile. Include your own strips as well. Then, mix up the secret papers.

Step 5: Instruct everyone to stand up and make a circle around the pile of folded paper. Ask each student to take one strip, open it and read it to themselves. Wait until everyone has a sentence, which is not their own. Instruct them to transform their sentence into a question. Then go and ask another student this question. If the answer is no they put the sentence back in the pile and try again, but if the sentence is yes they write the other students name on it and keep it. In the case of larger classes students can ask a few students before they put the paper back. Continue the activity until all, or almost all, of the sentences are claimed. As an added incentive, the student with the most sentences at the end is the winner.

Extensions

Once all the sentences have been matched to their writer have the students sit down in groups of 3 or 4. Each student takes a turn to report on whose sentences they have. For example, *Jun likes to play tennis*. For further practice, other students can ask follow-up questions.

Conclusion

This icebreaker allows students to introduce themselves and get to know each other, while at the same time practicing simple language transformation. It is also a way for shier students to introduce themselves without being the center of attention. In addition, the goal setting can help motivate students to view class activities in relation to their language learning goals. Finally, it allows teachers to get an immediate sense of a student's personality, language level and what areas they need to improve.

Noisy Introductions

Luke Houghton
British Hills
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Quick Guide

- Keywords: *Forming questions, listening for gist, note-taking, introducing others*
- Learner English Level: *Upper-beginner and above*
- Learner maturity: *High school and above*
- Preparation time: *Less than 5 minutes*
- Activity time: *10 - 15 minutes*
- Materials: *Paper*

A loud, energising activity that is level-flexible and encourages non-verbal communication skills. This activity is a good way to start a class or even a new semester. It demonstrates to learners that they are able to communicate in a foreign language even in difficult situations. It also fosters an understanding, cooperative atmosphere where speaking aloud or making mistakes is no longer embarrassing.

Procedure

Step 1: Ask learners to take out, or give each student, a piece of blank paper. Ask them to draw lines to divide it into six boxes. Demonstrate this on the board.

Step 2: On the board, label each box with one of the following categories: family, food, animals, sports, hometown, dream. Explain learners will make a simple poster of a classmate.

Step 3: Choose one of the learners to be your partner for the demonstration, and ask them to stand *across the classroom from you.* The further away the better – they should be stood against the wall.

Step 4: Shout questions related to the themes of each box on your paper across the room to your partner. For example, for "family" you could ask

how many siblings they have, for "animals", if they like spiders. Record their answers in *note form* in the relevant box. Ask follow-up questions and elicit as much detail as possible.

Step 5: Once learners have seen your demonstration, split the class into two groups with each group stood either side of the room opposite the other. *Do not let them arrange themselves with a friend.*

Step 6: Set a time limit of 3 – 4 minutes. Learners now shout across the classroom and interview their partner. The class will become extremely loud, and they will need to use gestures and emphasis to make their questions/answers clear, as everyone is speaking at the same time.

Step 7: Once the time is up, ask pairs to come together. They now introduce *their partner* to other pairs – "This is Anna. She is from Sendai but lives in Ueno..." Again, demonstrate before starting the activity.

Step 8: Set either a time limit *or* the number of people they must introduce their partner to. Monitor carefully for any language needs that become evident as the activity progresses.

Step 9: Once the activity has finished, address any language needs noted.

Extension

This is easily extendable or modifiable by changing the labels of each box. Topics such as "perfect vacation" or "music" can lead into a discussion-based lesson around these topics. You could also exploit the posters produced by collecting them, mixing, and having learners try to find the subject of each poster, or the posters could be used as the basis for an impromptu mini-presentation.

Conclusion

This activity provides learners with the opportunity to use language at their level, drawing on both verbal and non-verbal resources in a high-energy, communicative environment that provides a boost to both motivation and willingness to speak out. It is also an excellent ice-breaker, and a good way to start a lesson, whilst being flexible enough to work with a variety of topics and lesson goals.

Teaching Superlatives Through World Records

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Quick Guide

- Keywords: *Superlatives, collaboration, world records*
- Learner English level: *Beginner to medium*
- Learner maturity: *Senior high school to first year University*
- Preparation time: *15 minutes*
- Materials: *Internet access/mobile phones, pen and paper, Guinness book (optional)*

Teaching superlatives can be a rather dry and formulaic activity for both teacher and students when not grounded within a theme which sparks interest and motivation. This lesson plan is an attempt to get around this barrier by maximizing peer collaboration, utilizing a fun topic, and getting students to research and present their own ideas. While the topic is primarily aimed at lower level students getting a foot in the door of these basic skills, expectations of clause complexity and utterance length can be adjusted for higher level classes. In its simplest form, the activity comprises an initial listening activity detailing several world records, a discussion and vote on whether they are true, a short research session, and a reproduction of the activity by the students using their own world records.

Preparation

Step 1: Create a worksheet which lists between five and ten world records taken from either the Guinness Book of Records or a trustworthy website (see Appendix). For example, the oldest cat in the world was called Crème Puff, lived to be 38 years old, and lived on a diet of broccoli, asparagus, bacon, eggs, and coffee with lots of cream (true).

Procedure

Step 1: Present the world records to the students twice, making sure to give them time to make notes after each one, after which they discuss and vote on which are true.

Step 2: Get students to work in groups and find three of their own world records from either the internet or photocopied pages of the Guinness Book of Records, if you have access to one. One of the records should be fake. The latter can help avoid the pitfall of the students choosing the first three world records at the top of the search. As an alternative, assign different websites to students.

Step 3: Get each group to move around the room and present their ideas to the other groups, essentially repeating step one. More confident students or those needing presentation skills can read their findings to the whole class.

Step 4: If you have more time, you might want to include a wrap up activity following the theme of superlatives by getting students to ask each other which record they found the most surprising, the funniest, the stupidest, etc.

Conclusion

While talk of giant daikon radishes, unusual cats, and beagles playing with footballs may sound like the latest Haruki Murakami novel, it also serves as interesting material to jolt students out of the idea that English is boring. While the pedagogical value of this activity is essentially reinforcing a grammar point many students will have covered at school, the overall flow of the activity serves to acclimatize students to more advanced skills which they will need later on. Small cohort-to-cohort work also provokes a more dialogic exchange between students where each member is encouraged to expand on their opinions rather than simply giving a formulaic response (Alexander, 2008).

Reference

Alexander, R. (2008). Talking, teaching, learning. In Alexander, R. (Ed.), *Essays on pedagogy* (pp. 92-120). Abingdon, England: Routledge.

Appendix

1. The world's tallest dog in recorded history was called Zeus, a great dane that measured 1.12 metres (44in) tall until his death last year. When he stood on his back legs, he was 2.2m.
2. The world's heaviest daikon radish weighed 8.5kg (18lb 12oz) and was grown by Ryouma Sakamoto in Gifu. (False, it was an onion).
3. The oldest cat in the world was called Creme Puff. She died aged 38 years and 3 days and ate an unusual diet of bacon and eggs, asparagus, broccoli, and coffee with lots of cream.
4. One of the most recent records set was in August. A 50-year-old Welsh builder called Carlton Williams completed an incredible 2,220 press-ups in an hour and hurt his shoulder during the record.
5. The tallest man in history died 75 years ago. When Robert Wadlow from Illinois was measured shortly before his death in 1940, he was 2.72m (8ft 11in) tall. He was always hungry and ate and drank around 8000 calories daily.
6. Jeanne Calment, a French woman, was the oldest woman and lived to be 122 years and 164 days. Mrs. Calment led an active life and started cycling when she was 100.
7. Purin the dog set a new world record for most balls caught by a dog using its paws in one minute. The nine-year-old female beagle caught 14 mini footballs, smashing the previous record of 11.
8. The most boiled eggs to be peeled and eaten in a minute is 16. (False, it's 6)
9. In the first-ever World Hard Boiled Egg-Eating Championship, a man called Joey Chestnut broke the world record by eating 141 eggs in 8 minutes.
10. Kouji Sakamoto from Osaka is the fastest sushi eater in Japan. In 2017 he ate twenty plates of sushi in two minutes.


Edo Forsythe & Paul Raine

In this column, we explore the issue of teachers and technology—not just as it relates to CALL solutions, but also to Internet, software, and hardware concerns that all teachers face. We invite readers to submit articles on their areas of interest. Please contact the editor before submitting.

Email: tlt-wired@jalt-publications.org
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The Digital Keyword Method

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Acquiring a large enough vocabulary to communicate is arguably the most challenging part of learning a second language, even more so in an EFL context where the majority of words will invariably be learnt from vocabulary lists. However, by combining a mnemonic technique called the Keyword Method (Atkinson, 1975) with the collaborative writing software Google Docs, an image-manipulation application like Pic Collage, and a social media platform such as Instagram, you can create an engaging way to encourage your students to use their imagination and digital savvy to remember vocabulary.

The Keyword Method

The Keyword Method is a two-step process that creates a link between an L2 word and its L1 translation (see Figure 1). The first step, known as the acoustic link, is only concerned with the sound of the L2 word. It is a word (or words) in the L1 that sounds the same as (or very similar to) the L2 word. The second step of the method is to imagine the keyword interacting with the L1 translation. This is called the imagery link.

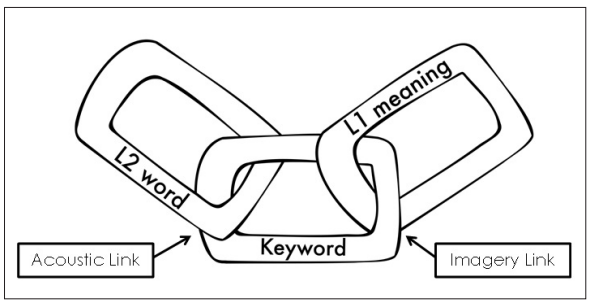

Figure 1. The Keyword Method.

A practical example from my Japanese-learning experience might help explain the process more clearly (see Figure 2). The Japanese word for "fatigue" is 疲労, written in *rōmaji* as *hirō*. The acoustic link is the English word, *hero*, and the imagery link is a fatigued superhero taking a rest on his sofa after a long day of saving the world.

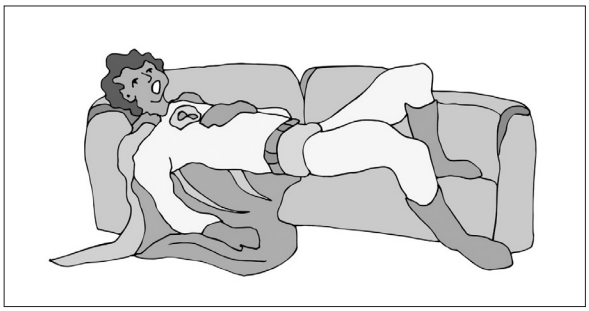

Figure 2. A fatigued superhero mnemonic for the Japanese target vocabulary 疲労 (hirō).

Collaborative Creation of Keyword Sentences

To begin creating keyword sentences each week, I create a document in Google Docs that includes 12 English words taken from the TOEIC Service List (Browne & Culligan, 2016) along with their Japanese translations. This word list was chosen because my students need to score at least 650 on the TOEIC test to graduate, but other resources can be used depending on student needs and levels. At the start of each class, this document is shared with each student and they are given access to edit it.

To take advantage of the collaborative environment that Google Docs affords, I recommend breaking students into groups of three or four. Initially, each group is asked to write sentences using two of the vocabulary words. Groups that finish creating sentences quickly are then asked to use their creativity to make keyword sentences for any of the remaining words. A key part of the method is to ensure that the keyword contains all of the sounds of the L2 word with no breaks between the sounds. To reinforce this visually, I ask the students to change the text colour of the keyword. I also ask students to change the colour of the Japanese meaning, so a

completed keyword sentence should contain three colours (see Figure 3).

From Written Text to a Still Image

The imagery step, where the keyword interacts with the L1 definition, should ensure that the sentences are inherently visual, and Google Images and Pic Collage can be used to make this visual element even more salient. After the first class, I create a PDF that combines the keyword sentences and email it to the students. In the next class, they are given time to make a still image that explains their favourite keyword sentence for one of the two words they were initially responsible for. It is unlikely that a Google Image search will yield a single image that perfectly fits the keyword sentence, but multiple images can be mixed together using Pic Collage, a free image manipulation app that is available on both iOS and Android devices.

Once saved on their device, images can be imported into Pic Collage and edited. It is possible to adjust the size, move, rotate, and even flip the images. In addition, if only part of the image is needed, that section can be cut out. When multiple images are used in a collage, they will be layered based on the order they were imported. By default, the most recently imported image will be on the top layer, but this can be changed. Tapping an image once will bring it to the top of the layers, whereas double tapping and choosing *back* sends it to the bottom.

Figure 3. An example of a completed keyword sentence image.

Assembling the Final Mnemonic

Once the image is complete, the written text of the keyword sentence needs to be added. As mentioned earlier, a different colour should be used for the keyword, the L1 translation, and the rest of the sentence to create further visual cues. The L2 word, in yet another colour, should also be added to the image (see Figure 3). I created this video to teach my students how to use Pic Collage to make a keyword image: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_M7vAJf6jOo>

Creating a Learning Community with Social Media

I instruct my students to use their university email address to create an Instagram account. It is not necessary to share any private information when creating the account, but it does need to be set to "Public" to ensure that the hashtag feature works. Hashtags are used to group similar images together, and they can be used to foster a learning community. Each image this year includes the hashtag #kwvocab18, which groups all of the year's images together, as well as a second hashtag that allows students to search the vocabulary words by the week they were created. This second hashtag changes each week, such as #rwkuis9. Time is given in the third class of each week for students to look at that week's posts and then like and/or add positive comments to each post.

Incorporating the Digital Keyword Method Into the Classroom

Incorporating the Digital Keyword Method into your classes will take approximately 45 minutes per week. Creating the keyword sentences as a class using Google Docs usually takes about 15 minutes. In the next class, students are given 15 minutes to turn the sentences into images using Google Images and Pic Collage, and then post them to Instagram with the two hashtags. Students who fail to complete this in the 15 minutes allotted in class need to complete it for homework. In the third class, students interact with the Instagram posts for five minutes. They are encouraged to take screen shots of their favourite images, which they can then save into a vocabulary folder in their Photos app in order to help them study for a quiz at the start of the next class.

Conclusion

The Digital Keyword Method described in this article offers an alternative to the rote learning strate-

gies predominantly used by Japanese students. First, students collaborate in small groups and use Google Docs to make Japanese mnemonic sentences for English words taken from the TOEIC Service List. Visual representations of these sentences are then created using Google Images and an image editor such as Pic Collage. Finally, the images are posted to Instagram with unique hashtags, and time is given in class for students to view and interact with the posts. From informal classroom conversations and looking at the weekly quiz results of students who seem actively engaged in using this technique, it seems that the Digital Keyword Method is helping vocabulary acquisition, and this could be a topic for more detailed research in the future.

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Editor's Note: *This month's tip will help your students improve their vocabulary and hopefully increase their scores on proficiency tests. Practical tech applications such as this will be shared by many at this year's PanSIG 2019 in May and at the JALTCALL2019 conference in early June. Be sure to check out the CALL-related sessions at these conferences—registration is open soon! You're sure to find interesting tips to help you make your lessons Wired! in the coming school year!*

[JALT PRAXIS] YOUNGER LEARNERS


Mari Nakamura & Marian Hara

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

Email: younger-learners@jalt-publications.org

Using Video Interactively in Dialogue with Young Learners

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Some years ago, I read an article about monolingual English-speaking parents in the U.S. who, wanting their toddlers to learn Mandarin, sat them in front of Chinese-language videos for long periods of time, expecting them to absorb the language. Not surprisingly, the children did not learn Chinese. I am not sure what lesson the parents learned. It is possible they attributed their children's "failure" to learn Chinese to the materials rather than the process, but what was missing was the most important element—interaction. Sociocultural and social interactionist theories suggest that children acquire language by interacting with adults and (in particular) other children around them (Bruner, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). No matter how well-produced or attractive audio-visual materials are, to toddlers the language remains background noise. However, when a parent, caregiver, or older child points to the television or Youtube video and interacts with the toddler *about* the program or video, then the magic happens. Then we are on the road to language acquisition. The language acquisition process is social and interactive (Eun & Lim, 2009; Kuhl, 2004; Lytle & Kuhl, 2017; Ramirez-Esparza, Garcia-Sierra & Kuhl, 2017). In the language classroom, the same principles apply. Animation shorts and other videos can be effective tools in foreign language classrooms *if* we interact with them and each other.

Why Video?

As a cinephile, I have long appreciated movies, but seamlessly integrating movies into my lesson plans has not always gone well—even after the invariable technical difficulties were worked out. Moreover, the use of movies and video clips has sometimes been seen, including by some supervisors, as "lazy"—as a way to entertain rather than teach. However, when it comes to young learners, is it necessary to draw a line between entertainment and learning? Ultimately, I believe whatever we can do to engage young learners and support them in developing and communicating their fantasies and ideas is valuable. Learners are all individuals and learning strategies can vary between and among

language learners from different cultures, regions and language groups. As teachers, we should try to activate as many of these strategies as we can in order to meet the diverse needs of learners. Let me be clear; this is not to suggest that each individual has only one "learning style" that must be supported (Hood et al, 2017; Newton & Miah, 2017). Instead, I believe we develop tendencies or preferences for particular learning strategies. Moreover, schooling socializes us into particular ways of learning which are not always effective. So, rather than trying to categorize learners according to their individual styles, we should encourage multiple approaches in teaching and learning. I believe we and our students have the capacity to learn in a number of ways, and we don't yet know the best way to access this potential. By activating and sharing different approaches, we can gain insights into the complexities and possibilities of learning. Moreover, utilizing collaborative learning—working in pairs and small groups—allows for multi-peer feedback and co-construction, active learning activities which support children who enjoy learning with peers. I believe the effective use of videos allows students an opportunity to learn using all these strategies.

So, how should we do it? What is the best way to use videos interactively with children in foreign language classrooms? Although I cannot answer these questions definitively, I hope to provide a roadmap (or small lane) to those of you who, like me, enjoy and want to know more about using videos as a way to engage young learners in interactive, creative play with language.

For the past few years, I have been teaching a university project-based learning (PBL) class on storytelling. The final project is an English (bilingual) storytelling/story sharing event in which my students share stories with children in the local community. Students in the course find or create a story, create visuals, and plan activities to accompany the story in order to engage and interact with the children. In preparing university students to work with children, I ask them to organize their storytelling time and activities into three parts—Before, During, and After (BDA) (Shin & Crandall, 2014). I apply these same principles when sharing short animated stories with children. In the remainder of this article, I will provide an example of how to use videos in language classrooms with elementary school children using *Mouse for Sale*, by Wouter Bongaerts. This short animated film includes music but not dialogue, which allows the instructor and students to create dialogue together and tell the story from different perspectives.

Short Summary of *Mouse for Sale* (4.15 minutes)

This short animation is about a mouse in a pet store who wants a home. He is teased because he has big ears, but he keeps trying to attract someone who will bring him home. Take a few minutes to watch the video and decide if the activities described below will work with the young learners in your classes. The weblink to the video is provided in the reference section.

Before

I usually ask the children to think about the title. For example, I might ask some or all of the following questions: What do you think the story will be about? What will happen in the story? Where do you think the story takes place? Do you have a pet? Do you like pets? What kind of pet would you like to have? Have you ever bought a pet? What kinds of pets have you seen in pet stores?

At this beginning stage, I want to prepare the children to watch the video and allow them a chance to predict what they will see. This is also a good time to review or learn some of the vocabulary they may encounter. In the video, there is a small bug or beetle which is a minor character, so it is possible to introduce this character before watching. The children probably don't know the word "beetle," but some may have kept one as a pet.

During

Approximately one minute into the video, two new characters arrive in the pet store. I usually stop the video here and ask students to work in pairs or small groups. At this stage, it may be a good idea to review and make sure your students are following the story. It is also fun to have students compare their ideas about what they have seen. They don't have to agree on what they think is happening. Rather, it is a good chance to share their diverse *ways of seeing*. At this time, you might ask your students to write or say all the things they have seen up to this point, including the characters, materials, and so on. For example, you might ask them who the main character is, or to describe the mouse, or if they have ever seen a mouse like this before. You could also ask them to explain the things they saw in the order in which they saw them: "First, I saw... Second, I saw...Third, I saw...," and so on. You might ask them who the new characters are and to describe them. What do they know about them? What do they think the characters will do? While they are watching, students can check their predictions.

At about 1:20, after the two boys make fun of the mouse, I sometimes stop the video again. Here, you might ask your students what is happening. Ask them why the boys did what they did and how they think the mouse feels. Also ask them how they feel about the boys' actions.

After the two boys leave, the beetle laughs at the mouse. At this time, another boy enters. The boy is looking at something in a tank. He's wearing headphones so he cannot hear the mouse who is trying everything he can think of to attract the boy's attention. The mouse tries twice to launch a peanut to attract the boy's attention and fails.

At 2:40, after the beetle laughs at the mouse's failure, I usually stop the video again and ask for descriptions, explanations and predictions: What happened after the boy entered? Why didn't the boy notice the mouse? What is the mouse doing? How many times did the mouse try to attract the boy's attention? What will happen next? Alternately, I sometimes stop the video at 2:50 or so, after the mouse launches the beetle at the boy. At this stage, my colleagues and I have asked the children to make a storyboard and to create their own original endings to the story. For the storyboard, I usually provide an A4 or A3-size piece of paper. I divide the paper into 6 to 8 spaces or blocks for students to organize the story as they remember it. Depending on their age and inclination, students can draw and/or write text for the story.

After

Follow-up activities like the previous ones can be geared toward the goals of a particular class or lesson. Storyboards can be used while watching the video or afterwards. I enjoy doing it while the children are watching the video because they often come up with unique and interesting ideas that differ from the original endings. I try to choose videos with a surprise ending, so that even after the children have created their own endings they will remain interested in finding out about the original ending. In the case of *Mouse for Sale*, the ending is quite a happy one, and the children may be excited to compare their versions to the original. Other extension activities may include putting students in pairs and asking them to choose a scene and create dialogue for the characters. Later, they can practice their scene and roleplay it. Alternatively, I ask the class or group to tell or re-tell the story. Someone can act as a "secretary" and write the story down. From these activities, a class book can be created, and this class version of the story can be read, told, and retold.

A Word About Target Language Use

I realize I have said little about the degree to which the target language can or should be used in the classroom, and I understand that there are many contexts in which the target language is the only focus of the language class. However, in the context in which I work, in the community with elementary school students and university students, my "language policy" is that communication is key—all communication. One of the goals of the community projects I am involved in is to allow more children (and adults) access to bilingualism/multilingualism, which, for me, means including English, Japanese, and any other languages children bring with them to these storytelling events. Having said that, it is possible to do these activities in English, to limit the activities to things the children can already do in English or which they can do easily with scaffolding. However, I believe that the storytelling and story-sharing video activities discussed here need not be a one-time event. Repetition is important in language learning, and the same video may be used for a number of different purposes. It can be a stimulus for a wide range of creative and language-generating activities in any language—the more the better. So, what do you think? Are you ready to play with language?

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Julie Kimura & Ryan Barnes

pub-review@jalt-publications.org

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

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Books for Students (reviews published in *TLT*)

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** Complete guide to the TOEIC® test (Fourth edition)* — Rogers, B. Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning, 2018. [Fully updated for the new TOEIC test. Provides learners with a clearly organized, step-by-step program for maximizing their test scores.]

** Discover conversation* — Boon, A., & Harrington, D. Tokyo: Halico Creative Education, 2018. [A 13-unit coursebook that helps break down the complexity of real interactions into small and manageable chunks. Free audio download available.]

English for pharmacists — Miyata, M., & Osawa, S. Tokyo: Houbunshorin, 2016. [15-unit textbook which prepares pharmacy students to help English-speaking patients.]

Flow: Building English fluency — Jackson, J. Leicester, England: Eurasian Editions, 2017. [14-unit speaking textbook that shows students how to build on short answers and develop extended conversations. Additional materials and activities available online.]

Four corners (Second edition) — Bohike, D., & Richards, J. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2018. [An integrated four-skills course for adults who want to be able to effectively communicate in English in their daily lives.]

Prism reading — Adams, K., Ostrowska, S., Lewis, M., O'Neill, R., Baker, L., Westbrook, C., Kennedy, A. S., Sowton, C., & Williams, J. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017. [5-level reading course to help English learners prepare for college courses].

Taking care of business — Craig, T. Ashiya, Japan: BlueSky Publishing, 2018. [A hands-on business English textbook that brings business English to life by having students create and manage their own "virtual" companies. Audio recordings of listening exercises are available online].

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**Widgets Inc.: A task-based course in workplace English* — Benevides, M. & Valvona, C. Tokyo: Atama-ii Books, 2018. [A business-themed communication course using a task-based approach to language learning. Video download available.]

**Winning presentations: 8 types of successful presentation* — Morita, A., Harada, S., Kitamura, K., Sugimoto, S., & Benfield, B. Tokyo: Seibido, 2018. [3-part, 14-unit coursebook covering basic knowledge for presentations, how to make informative presentations, and how to make persuasive presentations. Audio download available.]

Books for Teachers (reviews published in *JALT Journal*)

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

Developing language teachers with exploratory practice: Innovations and explorations in language education — Dikilitas, K. & Hanks, J. (Eds.). Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Introducing English for specific purposes — Anthony, L. Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2018.

David McMurray

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

Email: teach-assist@jalt-publications.org

There are currently 1.3 million foreign workers in various workplaces and training centers across Japan. From April, central and local governments begin implementing strategies to assist an additional 350,000 foreign workers to quickly assimilate into Japanese society and take on jobs in fields as diverse as farming and nursing. Consultation centers offering administrative services and Japanese language classes have been readied. Although there are 40,000 Japanese language teachers in place, more are required according to central government estimates.

Against this backdrop, Wei Huang was recently encouraged to return to Japan to conduct joint research activities into teaching Japanese to speakers of Chinese at Daito Bunka University in Tokyo. Wei Huang first came to Japan to study comparative linguistics and received a doctoral degree from the International University of Kagoshima in 2012. He then started teaching Japanese as a foreign language classes at Anhui University of Finance and Economics in Bengbu, China, which is also where he gathered ideas for this essay.

When learning Japanese as a foreign language in China, the author suggests it is quite important to have a thorough understanding of the effects of the Chinese mother language. He holds that the same is true when Chinese students continue their studies in Japan. Native speaking Chinese teachers can facilitate a positive transition from the Chinese mother tongue to the acquisition of Japanese as a second language. Such qualified teachers can promote Japanese language acquisition by identifying common grammar and writing forms between the target and the mother language. In addressing the matter of negative language transfer, teachers of foreign languages can employ strategies to overcome the effects and promote more efficient learning.

Strategies for Improving the Japanese Writing Ability of Chinese Students

Wei Huang

Anhui University of Finance and Economics, Bengbu, China

The cultivation of writing ability in my students is my primary goal as a Japanese language teacher. I developed several strategies to improve the Japanese language writing ability of Chinese students. Based on my teaching experience in China, this essay summarizes problems that exist in the writing process, and summarizes my strategies to improve Japanese language learners' writing ability.

Insufficient vocabulary, a poor understanding of Japanese culture, and the writing process are the three main obstacles learners face when writing in Japanese. The first problem my students often encounter in the process of writing several sentences and paragraphs is an insufficient reserve of Japanese vocabulary. With limited vocabulary, the learners have trouble trying to express ideas freely and accurately. Therefore, students need to expand the number of words they can access. An additional problem is that Japanese learners tend to use their mother tongue to think or write first. Then they translate their thoughts into Japanese. This often leads to the insertion of Chinese vocabulary and idioms. Therefore, students need to also master certain expressions and Japanese ideas. The ordering of ideas and the manner in which introductions and conclusions are proposed in Japanese are also essential skills for students to acquire. I propose the following strategies to improve the Japanese writing ability of my students in China.

Focus on the Accumulation of Vocabulary and Language Expressions

Accumulating vocabulary and language expression is the basis of writing well. A wide variety of vocabulary and language expressions lays a foundation for composing sentences and writing paragraphs and essays well. Only by using vocabulary and language freely can we express our thoughts accurately and write with pleasing expressions at a high quality level.

Vocabulary can be increased by doing a lot of reading

Reading efforts should be directed not only at Japanese literature, but also at Chinese literature. This

is because Chinese is the mother tongue of my students. Extensive reading can improve our writing ability. Building our general knowledge by reading can help guide our Japanese writing. We can use what we have read in Chinese for reference when writing in Japanese. Reading extensively not only increases vocabulary, but also broadens knowledge, and captures all kinds of information. By reading we can emulate writing styles and cultivate the ability of observation and analysis.

Phased-in and step-by-step training

The cultivation of writing ability draws on whole language learning, including the language skills of listening, speaking and reading. In the initial stages of writing, the composition of short sentences and short paragraphs is enough. With continuous improvement, and the recycling of Japanese vocabulary in listening and speaking activities, one's writing fluency also increases. Step by step students can deepen the contents of what they write about.

Lots of exercises in various forms

Single-form exercises can be boring, so I encourage students to improve their writing ability through various forms of exercises. A variety of practical exercises can best assist students (Hu, 2011; Wang, 2007; Yuan, 2006). For example, I use course books that require students to fill in blanks, write about pictures, drill words, translate Japanese sentences into Chinese, write propositional essays, and so on. Each exercise has specific rules and steps. For example, when using pictures to encourage writing, I ask students to annotate the pictures, writing sentences or paragraphs by interpreting a story found in a series of pictures, and by asking and answering questions about the pictures. This not only helps to cultivate learners' writing ability, but also trains their thinking, promotes creativity and imagination as well as nurture problem-solving skills. The textbooks I use were published by the Beijing Foreign Studies University, the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (FLTRP), which is a foreign language publisher and university press in China. I also depend on books from the Peking University Press, founded by Peking University in 1979. Since its establishment, Peking University Press has published a large number of excellent higher education textbooks which are high quality and can be used with different levels of students.

Attention to revision

Revision is the key to improving writing ability. The sentences, paragraphs and essays that have been written should be carefully revised and revised repeatedly. In addition to modifying inappropriate vocabulary, grammar and language expression I try to help the writer to evaluate their compositions from the perspective of language logic and rhetoric. I recommend students first try to do self-revision before consulting me. I perform teacher-revision of the work as a second step. Modification is not a check of answers. I help students to analyze the causes of their language errors and to understand the differences between accurate sentences and their own sentences.

Writing Requires an Understanding of Japanese Culture and Concepts

I help my students to foster the ability to directly think in Japanese. Learners of Japanese need to be weaned away from thinking in Chinese and should control their translation habits in the process of writing. As a first step, I encourage students to adopt the habit of *pen translation*, a term which means a quick, rough translation from Chinese to Japanese.

Diminishing a reliance on translation

Controlling the ingrained habit to translate from Chinese is best done gradually to develop the ability of students to think and write in Japanese. Learners need to memorize a large number of common Japanese expressions that can be automatically inserted into their compositions.

Rote memory of model essays

I also recommend the memorization of model essays and templates. This increases the speed of writing, if not the ability of thinking of new creative ways to write in Japanese. Through the analysis and study of standard forms of letters and model essays, students can become more aware of Japanese written structures and gradually develop the ability of thinking in Japanese to write more creatively.

Training of writing skills

I explain to my students that if they want to write Japanese well, they need to have the ability to choose appropriate topics, and to organize the structure of their essays in ways that are understandable to Japanese people (Figure 1).

Selection of topics

I suggest two types of writing topics: designated and optional. For the writing of a given topic, first of all, it is necessary to find information about it. Then it

is essential to collect data. It is necessary to forge a link between what students already know and enjoy to what is factual and interesting for a reader who is interested in (designates) a certain topic. For optional topics, students are free to choose an interesting topic. When choosing their own topic, students should start with topics that they are familiar with or interested in, then widen the scope of the topic. Only in these ways can students write with interest and motivation as well as satisfy their readers.

Figure 1. Author (left) with freshmen in a Japanese language writing class.

Conception

Conception is the process of positive thinking. In the process of conception, I suggest that students need to help their readers to associate ideas with certain words, sentences, and phenomena in Japanese culture.

Organizing the structure of essays

When explaining a topic, students should plan concretely. They need to draft what they need to write first, what to write afterwards, how to transit through the main points and how to end an essay. All these steps need to be carefully planned. A preliminary plan should be drafted for writing, so that not only can the material be sorted, but also the writing process can be clearly understood, more effective and methodical. I recommend my students to write from the general to the specific central point they are trying to express in Japanese.

Conclusion

I believe that writing skills best reflect the comprehensive language ability of my university students. Helping students to increase their vocabulary, to better understand Japanese culture, and to learn the writing process can result in the production of well-written Japanese compositions. It is difficult to measure the synergy of asking students to draw on a wide variety of skills to write, however I have found that among my students who are able to write well, many have effectively learned to rely on their abilities to listen, speak, and read the Japanese language.

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[JALT PRAXIS] WRITERS' WORKSHOP

Paul Beaufait

The Writers' Workshop is a collaborative endeavour of the JALT Writers' Peer Support Group (PSG). Articles in the column provide advice and support for novice writers, experienced writers, or nearly anyone who is looking to write for academic purposes. If you would like to submit a paper for consideration, please contact us.

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

Tips for Getting Started in Academics: Creating a Successful Conference Proposal

Theron Muller
Jerry Talandis Jr.
University of Toyama

If you are looking to build a career as a language teacher in Japan, you may have noticed that many job listings require evidence of academic work activities. One way to acquire such experience is through presenting at academic conferences. However, the actual process of preparing a presentation proposal is not necessarily common knowledge or readily transparent. In this article, we outline a few tips on how to approach this important task.

Why Bother Doing an Academic Presentation?

First off, since conference presentations entail a significant investment of time and energy, we would like to address the question of *Why bother?* From the point of view of professional development, giving a presentation helps improve your research abilities. Committing to sharing an academic project can motivate you to improve your practice and clarify what you want to say (Talandis & Stout, 2015). Furthermore, when examining the text histories of six published papers, Theron found all included a conference presentation. In addition, presenting can connect you to colleagues with similar interests, thus enabling you to develop and expand your professional network. These connections can lead to additional future career-building opportunities.

From a pragmatic perspective, if you are looking for a teaching position in higher education in Japan, there often are expectations that all applicants, even for part-time positions, be active in their field. This includes attending and presenting at conferences, writing for publication, and being involved in a teaching organization (such as JALT). Having academic presentations and publications on your record will open more doors than not having such achievements.

How Do I Get Started With an Academic Presentation?

Conferences tend to hold open calls for papers. You submit a proposal that is evaluated by a conference committee. If it is assessed positively, you are invited to present. Note that unless otherwise specified, you do not need to have actually finished a paper to apply. Your presentation can be on something you are still working on. The actual paper can come later, if at all.

Conferences provide various presentation formats. For beginners, we recommend doing either a *short paper* or *poster session*. The former consists of about a 15 or 20 minute oral presentation, then questions for about 10 minutes. Poster sessions are typically longer and less formal—you prepare a large poster of your project, hang it up on a wall, then chat with conference attendees as they walk by. Posters are generally less competitive in terms of the review process and are an excellent way to break into academic presenting. They give you a chance to talk informally to one or two people at a time, thus allowing you to gain experience gradually while honing your message.

After presenting at a conference, you may have an opportunity to publish a paper in a *conference proceedings*. Many conferences have them. In JALT, all presenters are eligible to submit a paper to the *Post-Conference Publication* (PCP). The PCP is not a proceedings per se; it is a peer-reviewed online journal featuring articles based on the presentations from the previous year's conference. This is an excellent and accessible career-building opportunity, as you will be able to list both a conference presentation and a refereed academic article on your CV. See *jalt-publications.org* for more information.

To get your proposal started, you'll need to prepare four separate elements: an abstract, a short summary, a title, and your bio data. Next, we discuss each of these in turn.

What Are Some General Tips for Preparing My First Conference Proposal?

First and foremost, ***follow the submission guidelines***. Check the *Call for Papers* page very carefully. Find the section that explains the instructions, and follow them exactly. This is important because proposals that do not follow the guidelines are more likely to get rejected. Another tip is to clearly connect your proposal to the conference theme. If your topic does not quite match, it may be okay, but do try to make some connection. This may involve looking at your topic from a new point of view to establish a stronger link. Finally, submit on time! Late submissions are generally not accepted, even if they arrive only minutes after the deadline. A good proposal needs to be carefully crafted and proofread, so plan ahead to avoid a last-minute rush.

What Constitutes a Good Abstract?

This is the most important element of your proposal. Conferences tend to ask for abstracts between 150 to 300 words. The abstract is generally what conference committee members assess when deciding whether to accept your proposal. As a result, they need to be written very well, with care taken to follow the expected style of writing. A quick search will yield lots of information on how to write an abstract. Generally, a good rule of thumb is to follow Hoey's (1983) SPRE discourse model: *Situation*, *Problem/Puzzle*, *Response*, and *Evaluation*. For your abstract, the *Situation* involves identifying the general academic area of your topic. Cite a key reference or two here as space allows, keeping in mind that references are included in the overall word count. We would recommend at least one to contextualize your topic within the broader literature.

Next, state the *Problem* or *Puzzle* clearly, to which your topic is the *Response*. In other words, what are you investigating, and how? For the *Evaluation*, clearly lay out any take-aways or benefits your audience may learn from attending your presentation.

Finally, for your conclusion, restating your connection to the conference theme is a good idea. We would recommend against mentioning the SPRE elements or using them as section headings—they are simply guiding underlying principles. The abstract should be a single paragraph, so two or three sentences on each idea should result in a clear and well-balanced statement of your intent.

Another tip: Make sure to use all of your allotted word count. For example, if your limit is 250, then get as close as you can without going over. Also, avoid going way under the word limit, as that makes your abstract look incomplete. Choose your words carefully and polish everything. Scrutinize each sentence and make sure it is as efficient as possible. When you are done, have a colleague read it. Incorporate their feedback that you agree with, then have it proofread by someone other than you.

What About the Short Summary?

The short summary is generally what is printed in the program handbook, while the full abstract is what the conference committee evaluates when deciding whether to accept your proposal. JALT, for example, has a 75-word limit, which makes this a tough challenge. Do your best to boil down your longer abstract into three or four sentences, touching upon the S, P, R, and E, as outlined above. You may be able to pull key sentences from your longer abstract and tweak them a bit to fit. Again, aim to hit the limit right on the nose and do not go over.

What Should I Include in My Bio Data?

Bio profiles are a feature of many conference programs, so you may be asked to prepare one. These are easy to write, as they often follow the same general format. They include: your affiliation, job title, and current research interests. That is enough, especially when you are just getting started. Things to avoid include long lists of organizations you belong to and blatant self-promotion.

How Do I Write a Good Title?

Titles need to communicate the essence of your presentation topic and fit within the allotted space. Avoid overly bland wordings and abbreviations or technical jargon that may be unfamiliar to non-specialists. One common structure is *general area*: *narrow focus*, which is the format we used for this article. If you check online for title writing tips, you'll find other options and advice. Whatever approach you use, you need to choose your words carefully to make them fit. For example, JALT presentations offer only 50 characters, ***including spaces between words***. Come up with several ideas then run them by your colleagues. Getting an outside perspective can help you find the best fit.

That's All, Folks (for now)

In this short article we've touched upon some specific information that can hopefully help you to construct a successful conference proposal. Presentations are a powerful career-building opportunity. Presenting can not only help you secure a better job, but it can also enhance your teaching and research skills, expand your professional networks, and lead to greater overall job satisfaction. There is a lot more that could be said about conference presenting. If you would like to know more, please get in touch with the editor of this column. We would be happy to write a follow-up piece in response to reader feedback.

Authors' Note

This article is a modified extract from a blog post that Theron wrote in November 2017. The original post is available here: http://theronmuller.com/tips-for-getting-started-in-academics-presenting-at-a-language-teachers-conference/

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Theron Muller is an Associate Professor at the University of Toyama, Japan. He is lead editor on two book projects, *Innovating EFL Teaching in Asia* (2012) and *Exploring EFL Fluency in Asia* (2014), both published with Palgrave Macmillan.

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Joël Laurier & Robert Morel

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

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

"INTRODUCING, for Your Enlightenment and Entertainment, . . . The Speech, Drama, & Debate SIG!" (*Drumroll and trumpet fanfare*)

A little too dramatic? Yes, well, that's who we are. Founded in 2012, we are a small SIG with 50+ members. However, this information does not tell you much about who we are. Who are we, you ask?

- *We are Orators.* We teach speech and presentation, and we are unusually good orators. At SIG forums at PanSIG or the JALT international conference, I am amazed at the consistently excellent quality of speakers in the SIG. We practice what we teach!
- *We are Dramatic.* One focus of the SIG is drama. Yes, we do plays, radio dramas, and readers theatre productions, but we also incorporate roleplays, simulations, theatre games, improv activities, and extremely useful process drama techniques into our language and content classes.
- *We are Argumentative.* Debate is another focus of the SIG. Debate teaches important critical thinking and public speaking skills, and the way we teach it is fun, yet challenging.
- *We are Serious Professionals.* In addition to being interesting teachers, we also write articles, textbooks, and performance pieces. We conduct research. We go to great lengths to mentor the younger members. We volunteer in the JALT organization.
- *We are an Active SIG.* Here are our main activities, organized by the different roles we take on:

1. *Publication Producer:* Bulletins are sent out to members every few months, about three per year. *Mask & Gavel* is our official peer-reviewed journal that comes out once a year and *The SDD Resource Journal,* a collection of My Share-type articles, comes out occasionally.
2. *News Station:* Current news relevant to our SIG is featured on our Facebook, Facebook Group, and Facebook Events pages.
3. *Event Producer:* With Oxford University Press we sponsored events with Carolyn Graham (of *Jazz Chants* fame) and Ken Wilson (improv and *Smart Choice*). We have had Ken Wilson present at our events four times in the last seven years. (Thank you, OUP!) At JALT2016 in Nagoya, we co-sponsored the OUP party featuring our coordinator singing *bossa nova*.
4. *Presentation Agent:* We have been asked to provide presenters and one-day mini-conferences for chapters. Please contact us if you are interested in presenting at or sponsoring an SD&D/chapter mini-conference.
5. *Conference Sponsor:* Every year we organize our own family-friendly conferences throughout Japan (Kansai, Tokai, Kanto areas). For three years we have had conferences in Okinawa, and this past February we held a conference in Sapporo during the Snow Festival. We actively welcome students to attend free of charge, give presentations, and participate in performances. In 2019 our "Performance in Education: Research & Practice" conference with plenary speakers Dr. Rod Ellis and Dr. Vivian Bussinguer-Khavari will be held at Nanzan University in Nagoya (June 15-17) and Okinawa (June 20-23) with Okinawa chapter and Materials Writers SIG. The call for papers and registration is still open. (See information box below.)
6. *Club:* Our small SIG of 50+ people had over 20 people meet in a pizza bar on Saturday of JALT2018. It was serious, loud, raucous, humorous; that is to say, it was a family gathering.

Name Change

In our 2018 business meeting, we decided to change our SIG name to the Performance in Education (PIE) SIG because the new name includes more of what our members do. And because, of course, everyone loves PIE. Come join us for a slice of the PIE!

Official Website: https://sites.google.com/site/speechdramaanddebatepublicsite/

Conferences Website : https://sites.google.com/view/sddsigconferences/home

Contact: speechdramadebate.jalt@gmail.com.

Social Media: Twitter: @SigSdd; Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/SpeechDramaDebateSIG/

Publications Info: https://sites.google.com/site/speechdramaanddebatepublicsite/home/mask-gavel-archives

JALT MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

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

http://jalt.org

Annual International Conference

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

http://jalt.org/conference

JALT Publications

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

http://jalt-publications.org

JALT Community

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

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

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

http://jalt.org/main/groups

JALT Partners

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

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

Membership Categories

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

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

http://jalt.org/main/membership

Information

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

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Joining JALT

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

Scott Gardner *old-grammarians@jalt-publications.org*

A Questionable Column

While in high school I would reverently attend repeated midnight showings of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* at the old single-screen movie theater downtown. (I think it was called *Ye Olde Downtowne Single-screene Movie Theatre*.) The Bridge of Death scene near the end of the film, with its fearsome "Three Questions" test to cross the bridge, seemed the height of cinema suspense/comedy at the time, at least to this shallow, cynical, easily bored teenager. I even used that scene as a test of my own in choosing my friends:

POTENTIAL FRIEND: Hey, wanna hang out?

SCOTT: Maybe. You see *Holy Grail*?

PF: Five times at least!

S: Oh yeah? What were the three questions at the Bridge of Death?

PF: What do you mean? Arthur's questions or Lancelot's questions?

S: Ok, let's hang out.

I often tell students in my teacher training classes that asking students the right kinds of questions is a great way to keep them talking—and I mean questions more substantive than what's found in *Holy Grail* (the harrowing Bridge of Death question sequence starts with "What is your name?"). We go through the standard "grammatical" forms—*wh*-, tag, etc—but quickly move into more interesting categorizations: communicative function, pedagogical purpose, rhetoric/sarcasm, and so on. For example, teachers can ask students questions to which they already know the answers ("Mary, what's the title of this book that I'm holding in my hand and whose cover I can clearly see with my own eyes?"), or they can ask questions to which they *don't* know the answers ("Johnny, why were you late for school, and what's that badger trap doing under your seat?")

The latter, sometimes called "referential questions," are thought to be more genuinely communicative, but of course they have the potential of moving into socially and professionally risky territory ("Sally, was that your mom I saw sneaking out of a pachinko place at 3:00 in the morning last weekend?"). The former, "display questions," are much more common in class but often have the feel of a quiz show: "When was the Magna Carta signed?" "June 15, 1215." "Correct for .0004 credits! Just 119.9996 more to go and that shiny new diploma is yours, along with a trip to the Mountains of Student Debt and whatever is behind Door #2!"

Jeopardy is a popular American TV game show which, for no apparent reason, reverses the standard question-and-answer quiz format and instead provides "answers" to which players must construct appropriate questions. For example:

PLAYER: "JALT Publications" for $200, please, Alex.

ALEX: The answer is: "This popular, humorous column graces the back pages of nearly every issue of *The Language Teacher*."

PLAYER: What is "JALT Notices"?

ALEX: Correct for $200.

A friend of mine recently set about developing a quiz game for language teachers, with L2 pedagogy concepts as topics. The gimmick of his game was that questions had to be answered using an assigned linguistic structure. For instance:

Q: How many encounters with a new vocabulary word are necessary for acquisition? (Yes/no question)

A: Would you believe, 10?

Q: Which psychological theory is the basis for repetitive language drilling? (Passive voice sentence)

A: Skinner's behaviorism—particularly operant conditioning—is generally identified by linguists as the rationale behind this pedagogical technique.

Q: Very good! Here's a cookie!

A simplified version of this game might help students practice grammatical structures that don't often find their way into everyday conversation. Or if your students are particularly bright, you could pile on the grammar by making them answer questions about one structure while using another:

TEACHER: The assignment is "Past Perfect Progressive" and the question is "What is a copula?"

STUDENT: I had been thinking it was a "be" verb, but now this stupid game of yours has utterly confused me.

TEACHER: That's correct.

TEACHER
EFFICACY
LEARNER
AGENCY

#JALT2019 • NAGOYA 11.1 – 11.4

We are excited to announce our four plenary speakers for JALT2019 in Nagoya. We believe these people will perfectly complement our theme of *Teacher Efficacy, Learner Agency*.

Mari Nakamura *Sponsored by JALT for JALT Junior*

Mari Nakamura has 25 years' experience in teaching young learners and teenagers at her own language school, English Square, in Kanazawa City, Japan. She has also provided numerous teacher training seminars all around Japan as an author of multiple ELT materials. She earned a master's degree in TEYL from Aston University, and has been volunteering as a co-editor of the JALT *TLT* Younger Learners Column since 2015.

David Barker *Sponsored by englishbooks.jp*

David Barker is the director of the English Center at Gifu University. Originally from Wales, he became a teacher after working for two years as a police officer. He has a PhD in language education and has taught in Singapore, New Zealand, and Japan, where he has lived for 23 years. He is the founder of BTB Press and the author of a wide range of textbooks and Japanese language books for learners of English.

Oussouby Sacko *Sponsored by JALT*

Born in Mali in 1966, Oussouby SACKO studied in China, majoring in architecture. Residing in Japan since 1991, he earned his PhD at Kyoto University's Graduate School of Engineering, Department of Architecture, researching relationships between society and architectural space. His publications include *Literacy and Culture of Knowledge* (Nakanishiya Publishing, 2007). Joining Kyoto Seika University in 2001, he was promoted to professor in 2013. On April 1, 2018, he was inaugurated as president of the university.

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Donna M. Brinton retired in 2006 from her faculty position at the University of California, Los Angeles and currently works as an educational consultant. Her areas of interest and expertise are ESP, content-based instruction, pronunciation teaching, and TESOL methodology. She has written numerous professional articles and texts. Her most recent publication is *Content-Based Instruction: What Every ESL Teacher Needs to Know* (with Marguerite Ann Snow), to be published by the University of Michigan Press.

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