THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEAM-TEACHING METHODS IN UTILIZING JAPANESE AND NATIVE-SPEAKING INSTRUCTORS

by Soo-im Lee (Reiko Takeo)

I. Introduction

Today Japanese interest in English is stronger than ever before. The mass media here often refers to the present "heat wave" of English conversation as the third crest in the English learning boom, following the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and the 1970 Exposition in Osaka. With the idea of "internationalization" enjoying unprecedented vogue, English education is reaching the proportions of a national obsession that has taken three distinct directions. Firstly, in the private sector, the language school industry has expanded enormously. Secondly, in the realm of higher education, many Japanese universities have started emphasizing "communicative competence" in English by employing native-speaking instructors. Finally, in the public sector, the Ministry of Education has substantiated its concern with English education by initiating the JET and AET programs, which have brought a large influx of native speakers in contact with junior and senior high school students and their Japanese teachers.

As evidenced by the JET and AET programs, structural problems in successfully integrating native speakers with tenured Japanese teachers remain to be solved. Although there are many well-trained native speaking instructors already residing in Japan, it has been found that many schools are employing teachers without prior experience or training in ESL/EFL and with little knowledge of Japan, Japanese students and existing English programs in Japanese schools. On the other hand, Japanese

instructors have been offered little curricular support to help their students improve communicative skills. With no adequate methodological program to support the efforts of both parties, only limited success could be accomplished in these programs. The problems in the public sector may have ready-made solutions in the other two directions that English learning has taken, where in language schools and higher education, more substantial methodological innovations have been explored.

Using these observations on the state of English teaching in Japan, an effective method of team teaching which combines the benefits and strengths of having both foreign and bilingual instructors will be introduced and discussed in this paper.

II. The Problems of English Education in Japan

In the Japanese language, the fact that two terms exist to refer to the English language reveals the most fundamental problem of English education in Japan. On the one hand, Eigo is the generic term literally meaning "English language." In the classroom, Eigo conveys the much-dreaded image of heavy emphasis on complex grammatical structures and vocabulary lists running in the thousands, all in preparation for university entrance examinations. In contrast, Eikaiwa is a neologism coined to describe spoken English, "English conversation," as taught at colleges, universities and language schools, often by native speakers.

This distinction, while quite familiar to all ESL/EFL teachers in Japan, is still not addressed in the current formulation of goals and methodology for English education. The most disturbing implication of this fact is that no solution realistically assessing the needs of both student and teacher has been applied in a methodologically consistent and effective way. Ignoring the facts about English education is a sure road to ruin. The greatest danger to English education in Japan is that Eigo teaching can become an exercise in learning a dead language when

deprived of the vital character of Eikaiwa communication. A parallel situation may be found in describing the place of Latin or Greek in what was once considered a "classical education" in the West: essential while these languages are vital in the life and culture of a people, archaic and alienating once their relevance has been surpassed by the events of history.

It seems unlikely that Eigo, studied as a dead language, will suit the needs of either the present or future Japanese society. A higher integration of the two components- - Eigo and Eikaiwa is needed. To improve the learning situation, English education needs to attack the moribundity and frustration that first gave rise to the expression Eikaiwa. In the first place, goals need to be clarified that give direction and form to the students' progress.

Secondly, a methodological program that brings these goals into contact with the means to their achievement needs formulation. Finally, this methodology needs to create a classroom environment conductive to creative learning that draws on the strengths of teachers and meets the needs of students.

III. What are the goals shared by English teachers ?

The following three aims have been established for the curriculum of English education for junior and senior high schools in Japan (Gendai no Kyoiku, 1988) :
1. Learners should be able to comprehend and express themselves in the target language.
2 Learners should deepen their interests in the target language.
3 Learners should comprehend the culture of the target language and the people's ways of thinking or values.

The first aim is to facilitate the learner's communicative competence in

the target language. Clearly, this implies that written and spoken forms of English must be addressed. The second aim is to broaden the learner's consciousness of the target language. Underlying this aim is the assumption that English will be taught in a manner that psychologically engages the students. The third aim is to deepen the learner's cultural understanding of the target language. It is dubious whether this last goal can be realistically achieved without substantial contact with native speakers. Furthermore, these aims taken together, while noble in intent, seem difficult to achieve without a substantial methodological framework to unify the efforts of students and teachers. In fact, the curriculum provides little in the way of such framework. Instead, instructors are nearly abandoned in the classroom, and are merely urged on their own efforts to design their own methodologies to meet these goals and needs.

IV. The importance of the teaching environment

Common teaching methodologies may be classified into three groups : The Translation Group, The Direct Method Group, and The Cognitive Method Group. The Translation Method relies heavily on contrastive analysis and is the most common method used in public English education; it characterizes Eigo teaching. The Direct Method, as exemplified by the Audio-lingual Approach, relies extensively on over-learning or rote learning. Both methods fail to consider the behavioral elements of learning or, for that matter, learners as humans.

On the other hand, the Cognitive Method Group and in particular the Psychodynamic Record Method emphasizes a consideration of the learner's feelings and learning style and posits that a curriculum should be designed to effect the learner's psychological ease in the classroom. Past methods made no special distinction between linguistic elements and a learner's psychological elements. In light of the above discussion of the rupture between Eigo and Eikaiwa, it seems that using such methods

separately can no longer be considered effective or useful for English education in Japan. This is not to say that they should be discarded in a wholesale manner, but rather be given a radical revitalization through a new approach.

The Psychodynamic Record Method is the first Method which emphasizes the learner's psychological needs and the psychological context of learning as a human activity. It focuses on respect for human concerns and the learner's personality. Individual ability and originality are also considered as essential to the learning process. Considering the increasing demand from various sectors of Japanese society for exactly these qualities, this method seems particularly well-suited for anticipating future needs in Japan.

The relationships among the learners themselves, and trust between learners and instructors, are considered paramount contextual elements in this method. Stevick summarizes the basic principles of psychodynamic interpretation as follows :

1. Language is one kind of purposeful behavior between people.
2. Language behavior is intertwined with other kinds of purposive behavior between people.
3. The human mind learns new behavior rapidly at any age,
4. Learning will be slowed down when the learner is busy defending himself from someone else.
5. Instructors should help the student to stay in contact with the language.
6. Instructors should help the student to maintain a wholesome attitude.
7. In preparing materials, principles 1 through 6 should be taken into consideration by instructors.

The most important element emphasized here is that when learners relax in their environment, their achievement level increases. Suggestopedia extends this theory to its fullest implications, and tries to achieve the

learner's maximum ability by inducing an altered state of consciousness in the learner and teaching the target language through subliminal suggestion.

Considered from a more classroom-oriented perspective, Stevick's sixth principle stresses that instructors must help learners maintain a sound learning attitude. According to the goals established for junior and senior high school teachers, such an attitude is of fundamental importance, and should also, as mentioned above, be facilitated by contact with native speakers as outlined above. It is our belief that the Cognitive Method Group and Psychodynamic Record Method can be effectively used in the Japanese context by means of the Team Teaching Method.

The Team Teaching Method, as discussed elsewhere enhances the Japanese classroom with considerable effectiveness and provides learners with viable, vital contact with the target language. (Lee, 1985) A learner with a sound learning attitude will be naturally motivated to participate, if relaxed, and the goals of English teaching will be much more readily achieved in such a setting. The Team Teaching Method helps relax and motivate students, as we will see below. In order to create such an environment, less reflectivity, such as repetition or pattern practice, and more productivity, such as creative dialogue, enhances learning in the classroom.

Altogether, these form a workable and effective methodology that enhances student achievement and teacher satisfaction. With emphasis on the learning process itself and the establishment of an optimal learning context, all parties benefit from the Psychodynamic Approach utilized in the Team Teaching Method as described below.

V. The Effectiveness of the Team Teaching Method

As Dr. James Asher has pointed out, language learning is very stressful and that is the main reason why learners often do not reach an

acceptable proficiency level (Cline 1987). At the same time, many teachers also feel uncomfortable in the classroom for various reasons. Together, these factors combine to inhibit language learning in a multitude of ways. In order to examine how teachers viewed their own strengths and weaknesses in terms of dealing with the psychological and cultural aspects of teaching English in Japan, it might be appropriate to introduce data that examines how both Japanese and native teachers describe their classroom performance.

A questionnaire was given to fifty native ‐ English-speaking instructors and fifty bilingual Japanese instructors who teach English to Japanese learners, in which they were asked to describe in detail the advantages of their respective situations in the classroom. The results of this questionnaire were very instructive. First let us look at what the native speaking instructors had to say.

When asked what they felt were the disadvantages of being native speaking instructors, forty‐five out of the fifty native-speaking instructors said that they felt their presence in the classroom intimidated many beginning-level students, rendering them passive, shy, and seemingly unable to participate creatively in the class. These same instructors complained of a frustrating inability to deal with this problem. Thirty ‐ five of the instructors went on to say that they often had trouble explaining the complexities of English grammar, especially to beginners, and twenty ‐seven instructors mentioned "cultural gaps" as an obstacle to communication.

When considering the advantages of being a native ‐speaking inst-ructor, forty ‐ seven of the fifty felt they could offer their students an environment of real cross-cultural learning. Thirty ‐ eight answered that they could teach precise and natural-sounding expressions, pronunciation and intonation. Thirty ‐ five responded that they could stimulate motivation in their students by giving them a real sense of communication in English.

And the Japanese instructors ? Fourty ‐three out of the fifty said

the main disadvantage of being non-native instructor was that they were unable to offer their students a true cross-cultural communication experience, and because of this, found it difficult to motivate their students. Thirty -nine answered that students did not always believe what they were taught, which suggested some students were not fully confident in their abilities. Thirty - three said that they were sometimes unable to explain the underlying meaning of English expressions. The same number felt limited in their abilities to teach correct English pronunciation and intonation.

On the other hand, forty - eight Japanese instructors claimed that one of their biggest advantages was that students could question them freely, especially about foreign people or countries, inquiries that they might be too shy or embarrassed to ask a foreigner face-to-face. Fourty - four responded that they could teach English grammar systematically with the help of explanations in Japanese, and thirty -five said their own learning experience could be used to help students avoid common pitfalls in learning English.

As a collation of this data shows, the weaknesses of either native-English speaking or Japanese instructors can be fully compensated by the strengths of the other. By combining the strengths of both, we believe we have found the "ideal" teacher, the team teacher.

VI. The benefits of both instructors

In choosing a teaching method for an EFL country, it is important to investigate the methods already used there. That is, those who try to improve the English language education of an EFL country should not ignore its indigenous educational traditions. Earlier, we discussed the fundamental problem of Eigo versus Eikaiwa teaching, and it should be noted that such traditions may become obstacles to the diffusion and implementation of the innovations which reformers promote

(Henriches, 1988).

Japanese learners are often so-called "false" beginners of spoken English, because most of them have taken only grammar-oriented lessons (so-called Eigo learning) in junior and senior high schools. Many foreign instructors employed to teach spoken English have had no prior experience or training in EFL/ESL and only limited knowledge of Japanese learners. It is difficult for them to devise a teaching technique most effective for those Japanese learners who already have a fair amount of English learning under their belts.

Ignoring the students' background of English education can lead to disastrous results, such as intimidating the students or increasing the learners' frustration. Japanese bilingual instructors can help diffuse these potential learning hazards because they have traversed the same process of learning English and they can easily empathize with the students' problems. Japanese bilingual instructors can therefore compensate for the native speaking instructors' weaknesses, and can form an important conduit for native speakers to acquire greater competency in crossing the cultural hurdles encountered in the classroom. In this way, the most desirable learning environment can be achieved. Japanese instructors who use contrastive analysis efficiently between the two languages can anticipate those structural or phonological points difficult for Japanese learners. And at the same time, they can build students' self-confidence by easing their way through the linguistic tribulations of learning English.

As was said earlier, many Japanese students suffer from a tendency to be passive, which all too often results in uncreative classroom situations. This problem may have its roots in habits formed in high school, or it may be a more general reflection of Japanese culture. Whatever the cause, the presence of a foreign instructor seems only to increase the effect. Japanese instructors can be very effective in turning this tendency around by helping students to lay a firm foundation

beneath the material to be learned and to assist them in building build confidence in their newly acquired skills. A better-prepared student is a more comfortable, more creative student.

There are some teaching strategies Japanese instructors should use frequently in the classroom. The most important strategy is the paraphrasing technique. Despite the fact that many Japanese instructors possess excellent verbal abilities in English, it is still difficult for Japanese instructors to reach a native speakers' vocabulary level. By encouraging students to find new ways to express their ideas when their active vocabulary fails them, the Japanese instructor can help students communicate more effectively. Thus, the paraphrasing technique is extremely useful when speaking a second language and basic level students should be particularly encouraged to use this strategy.

The second strategy is called Classroom Expressions. A few examples include : "I beg your pardon." "Could you repeat that sentence, please ? " "How do you say (   ) in English ? " and "What does (   ) mean ? " Students should not be allowed to retreat into Japanese unless absolutely necessary; crutches only get in the way when the goal is to waltz, not walk. Instructors who are native-speakers are also essential to compensate for the weaknesses of Japanese bilingual instructors, not only by teaching up-to-date English with correct pronunciation and intonation, but also by giving cross-cultural experiences to Japanese learners. If the students are relaxed enough in the classroom, this cross-cultural experiences with native speaking instructors will heighten the students' motivation.

VII. Team Teaching Japanese Learners of English : Pros and Cons

Why is the team teaching method suitable for Japanese learners of English in Japan ? Eleanor Harz Jordan, a professor at Cornell

University, has long used the team teaching method to teach Japanese to Americans. Her research papers show the team teaching method is very efficient and yields impressive results. However, it is often difficult to use this method to teach English in the U.S.A. because of the great variance in the linguistic background of ESL learners. A basic precondition for the team teaching method to work effectively is that the linguistic background of learners must be more or less the same. With the heavy predominance of false beginners, the teaching environment in Japan suits this basic condition of the team teaching method perfectly.

Does the team teaching method work effectively in all cases ? Kume suggests one source of intercultural friction in team teaching that may arise between AET's (Aids of English Teachers) and Japanese teachers of English. He explains why and how such potential conflicts are likely to occur from the viewpoint of three factors (The Language Teacher, 1989) :

1. Different sets of expectations regarding roles and positions ;
2. The goals of English instruction in Japan ; and
3. Different approaches to teaching English.

The number of native speakers in Japan is rapidly increasing mainly due to the appreciation of the yen. The AET program brought 817 peoplein 1987 and 1,384 people in 1988 sponsored by the Ministry of Education (The Asahi Shinbun, 1988). Most of them are in their early twenties and have completed their university education. They participate in a few days of orientation and then are assigned to teach in several senior high schools. Often they expect that the classes will be based on the communicative approach and they assume that the Japanese teachers of English have the same goals as they do for this program.

On the other hand, Japanese teachers of English expect that these native speakers will take an auxiliary role to their teaching by correcting learner's pronunciation and improving their reading skills which will be useful when the students take the university entrance examinations.

Kume emphasizes that this kind of intercultural friction occurs between the two teachers frequently. He concludes that the team teaching method only works efficiently in a situation where both teachers share the same goals and assist each other to compensate for each other's weak points, while complementing the other's benefits and strengths.

VIII. Team Teaching at Osaka Jogakuin Junior College

The Team Teaching Method is used in a program called "the integrated program" for freshmen at OJJC. There, they introduce three different classes : a reading class, an oral class, and a composition class. One Japanese instructor and two native speaking instructors work as a team. The Japanese instructor provides students with articles to read and assists students with the articles to deepen their knowledge about the assigned topic for each unit.

Such topics as discrimination or internationalization are introduced in the reading classes as well as passages about composition skills, i. e., paragraph development, the writing process, comparison /contrast strategies and illustration techniques. After reading the articles, the students practice terms and expressions learned in their reading class with a native speaking instructor and discuss the topic that they have already studied in the reading class again.

The composition instructor, another native speaker, then asks students to write a short composition in which the students have to use the paragraph development techniques learned in the unit. The three different instructors give information about their classes to each other, such as particular problems which occur in their classes. This example of team teaching shows that both Japanese and native speaking instructors can share common goals and can effectively compensate for the other's weak points.

Naruse states that "a well-established fact about successful language

learning is that it takes active interaction, passive participation not being enough. In this light, most English classes in Japanese colleges and universities fall short of this rudimentary requirement out of a lack of cognitive challenges. In fact, being honest with ourselves, they are a dismal combination of students' apathy and instructors' monologue."

However, Team Teaching at OJJC reverses a negative process of learning and creates active interaction in the classroom. If the classes taught by Japanese instructors and native-speaking instructors are well integrated, the tendency to distinguish between Eigo and Eikaiwa will disappear.

IX. Conclusion

The idea of having both native-speaking instructors and Japanese bilingual teachers as a teaching method is not new. There are several ways of using this team teaching, for example, one can send both instructors to the classroom at the same time and have the native-speaking instructors act as assistants to the Japanese instructors. This style of teaching is seen in the AET program and in some language schools which use this method when teaching younger children English.

Another style of team teaching is to have Japanese instructors teach basic grammar in the first part of the language course, sometimes the first three months. This basic grammar, essential to engaging in a beginning level of conversation, will be practiced by students later with native speaking instructors in a conversational atmosphere.

Yet another style of team teaching can be taught in a two hour class; the first hour is taught by a Japanese instructor and the second hour by an instructor who is a native-speaker. Each instructor covers the same material from different points of view and by the time the students come to the second hour, they should already be relaxed and, with the Japanese instructor's help, have solved any problems they may

encounter in the second session.

There are many ways of designing team teaching. However, the most important element is that both instructors' classes should be well integrated and compensate for each other's weak points, and faciliate both the students' and the teachers' strong points. By creating a classroom environment that helps students relax, team teaching leads to a more creative and effective learning experience for everybody.

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