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Foreword

The JALT Learner Development SIG's 20th anniversary conference, Exploring Learner Development: Practices, Pedagogies, Puzzles and Research, was held at Gakushuin University, Tokyo on November 23-24 2013 to explore issues in learner development and to celebrate the achievements of the SIG over the previous twenty years. Guest speakers included two founding members of the group, Naoko Aoki and Richard Smith, as well as Kensaku Yoshida, Professor and Director, Center of Language Education and Research, Sophia University, and Phil Benson, Professor in Linguistics and Director of the Centre for Popular Culture in the Humanities, Hong Kong Institute of Education. In addition to the plenary sessions, more than 50 concurrent sessions ran over the two days in presentation, colloquium, forum, discussion, workshop and poster formats. The papers in this collection are written by presenters at six of these sessions and reflect the diversity of themes explored at the conference and the range of interests among the LD SIG community.

The editors would like to thank all the contributors for their patience and hard work throughout the revision and production process. They would also like to thank James Underwood for formatting this special issue of *Learning Learning*.

Tim Ashwell & Glenn Magee

September 2015

Community Outreach From Within: Bringing Service Learning to Language Classrooms via Peer Tutoring

Sarah Lee

This paper describes how a successful peer-tutoring program served as the framework for a service learning project, with implications for potential use in Japan. The case discussed is a service learning program at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. The program, initiated in 2006 and continuing today, aims at matching the needs of lower-proficiency language learners with more experienced learners in a peer-tutoring program. Experienced learners are introduced to the project within the framework of a service learning project, encouraging reflection on their own experiences and journey as language learners, while reinforcing the importance of service learning. This model can be used as a transition to larger service learning projects while also reinforcing language learners' needs.

この論文は、ある成功したピア・チュータリングのシステムがどのようにサービスラーニングのフレームワークとして役立ったか、そしてその日本で将来的な適用の可能性について論じる。議論されるのは、イリノイ州シカゴのデポール大学において実施されたサービスラーニングのプログラムである。2006年に始まり今日も続くこのプログラムは、ピア・チュータリングにおいて、熟達度の高い言語学習者が熟達度の低い学習者の必要に応じることを狙いとしている。熟達学習者はサービスラーニングの枠組みの中でこのプロジェクトに参加し、サービスラーニングの重要性を補足されるとともに、自分自身の経験と言語学習者としての遍歴の内省が促される。このモデルは、言語学習者のニーズを強化するとともに、より大きなサービスラーニングのプロジェクトへの橋渡しとしても用いることができる。

Introduction: The Importance and Relevance of Service Learning for ELLs

Increasingly, Service Learning (SL) programs are being implemented in higher education as a means of providing hands-on, experiential learning. These programs typically aim to bridge the gap between the academic experience and real world experience outside of the classroom. In an SL program, students typically work and interact with a diverse population outside their academic frame of reference. SL programs generally

involve organized volunteer (service) activities, which take place in a variety of venues, such as schools, senior assisted living communities, food pantries (centers where donated food is collected for redistribution to those in need), or community gardens. Among the expected outcomes are that SL experience will open students' minds, promote respect for service and community involvement, and offer a broader range of contexts for learning and applying knowledge.

The National Youth Leadership Council stresses that an effective SL program should provide a context-rich experience which is appropriate, accessible, meaningful and enriching. The experience is appropriate in the sense that the requirements for the activity should match the students' language level and confidence in communicating. An SL program for English Language Learners (ELLs) should be accessible in that it suits their context, schedule and lifestyle. In terms of relevance, the project should correspond, on some level, to the students' interests and their course of study. Finally, the SL project should provide some degree of intrinsic satisfaction, which could lead to deeper investment in the project as well as a more meaningful experience.

Incorporating SL methodology in the field of ESL/ EFL is becoming more common. Where in the past ELLs were often the subjects or recipients of SL projects, it is now recognized that ELLs receive inherent benefit in active participation in SL programs. In a diverse, context-rich learning situation, ELLs can experience the empowerment and autonomy which accompanies self-directed application of skills and knowledge in real world situations. According to Bringle and Clayton (2012), service learning can promote critical thinking, academic engagement and intrinsic motivation. Moreover, SL makes a meaningful contribution to local community needs.

Implementing Service Learning in a Japanese University

While teaching at a Japanese university four years ago, I was asked to research, plan, and implement a SL program for our study abroad students. Implementing SL in a rigorous academic English language program such as an Intensive English Program (IEP) can pose challenges in time and resource allocation for SL activities. Creating a SL framework which fits within a given curriculum can be time- consuming, and

mobilizing administrators, teachers (particularly those on short or part-time contracts), and students can be a large undertaking. Further, some might question the fundamental pedagogical validity in requiring students to participate in SL projects.

In conceptualizing a SL model for that particular program, I needed to take into account the students' time constraints, teachers' schedules, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, as well as an appropriate way to integrate the English language component. Perhaps foremost, the SL program would need to offer students an opportunity to develop their English communicative skills, which might increase the students' motivation and participation. However, finding SL opportunities in Japan which met this language criteria proved to be a challenge.

This conceptualization process led me to reflect on my prior participation in a successful peer- tutoring SL program at DePaul University's English Language Academy (ELA) in Chicago, IL. The ELA is an intensive English program (IEP) which provides academic English courses for international students hoping to improve TOEFL and TOEIC scores and to enter undergraduate and graduate-level degree programs. In the fall of 2007, recognizing the potential value of both SL and peer tutoring, a small group of teachers initiated a Peer Tutoring Lab as an SL project. I participated with the initial implementation of the program, which was conceptualized and organized by Kathy Larson, the Associate Director for Curriculum at the ELA. Larson's SL program strives to address the aforementioned challenges of time and resource allocation, mobilization, and relevance. In addition, it effectively meets the communicative language criteria. This paper will briefly outline the program's design, objectives, continuing success, and implications for use in Japanese universities.

Service Learning Case Study: The Peer Tutoring Lab

Several needs prompted the creation of this peer-tutoring program. The first was to address the students' needs in a fast-paced, rigorous IEP. A number of beginning/novice ELLs were not successfully progressing through the curriculum in one term, and many were repeating multiple courses. Teachers had limited ability to address these students' needs through additional contact hours and conferencing. While these beginner ELLs struggled to master course content, many advanced-level students were making no apparent progress in their language

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development after reaching a certain language proficiency or TOEFL score. The outcome for some was a sense of being stuck at a given language level with no hope of appreciable development or growth. In addition to addressing the needs of students and teachers, the peer-tutoring program aimed to integrate a meaningful SL project into the curriculum of a rigorous IEP in a university which promotes service and community involvement as one of its core values.

Larson's concept for the Peer Tutoring Lab addresses ELLs' needs by matching advanced students with beginning students in a twice-weekly peer tutoring program. Students at all levels are able to practice and reinforce their language skills while participating in a voluntary service learning program. Training sessions are provided for advanced students (tutors) prior to the sessions, which take place outside of regularly scheduled class time during students' personal study periods. Once the schedule is established, tutors volunteer once a week on a rotational basis. Beginning students (tutees) are encouraged to attend tutoring sessions as often as they like. Teachers from the ELA supervise the tutoring sessions on a rotational basis.

Tutoring sessions aim to create a relaxed but studious atmosphere where students can chat, become acquainted, and study at their own pace. To promote the relaxed atmosphere, snacks and drinks are provided and tutees are allowed to choose their focus for the sessions. In some cases, this would be grammar, reading, writing, or just English conversation.

One benefit of participation for tutees is that they receive additional language support from a near-peer tutor. A secondary aim of this tutor-tutee relationship is to encourage and empower tutees who are learning from someone who has experience as an ELL. By learning from their peers, students potentially become more confident and optimistic regarding their language development. Finally, by attending tutoring sessions and having some meta-awareness of their own needs, tutees become more autonomous. Goals for the tutors are slightly more complex. The SL component is reinforced through selected readings about service learning as well as weekly reflections. Reflection is an important element of effective SL programs, and tutors are periodically asked to reflect on their tutoring experience through in-class writing assignments and discussions

as a part of their University Bridge research writing course. Additionally, by applying their knowledge of grammar and usage in a direct way, tutors are effectively reinforcing their own language ability and knowledge. Finally, tutors can assume more responsibility and accountability by helping others, while also increasing their communication and social skills (Falchikov, 2001).

In general, the objectives of the Peer Tutoring Lab are mutually beneficial for the tutees and tutors. It has been suggested that studying with peers can be more productive than studying alone (Falchikov, 2001), and that students tend to retain more information in collaborative learning sessions while developing critical thinking skills and motivation (Prince, 2004). In addition to these intrinsic benefits, there are a number of incentives in place for participants of this program. Both tutors and tutees receive participation grades for attending tutoring sessions. Tutors publish reflective essays in a class publication at the end of the term and receive certificates of completion. Both tutors and tutees participate in an end-of-term party and award ceremony to celebrate their accomplishments and give some closure to the term.

The Peer Tutoring Lab Today

Now in its 7th year, the Peer Tutoring Lab at DePaul University continues to run successfully today, though my association with the program ended in 2009. Larson reports that the program is now somewhat self-sustaining, with “former tutors who help with the beginning of term tutor training... (and) talk about the benefits to their own learning. Tutors also write reflections on their service learning and we ask them to share highlights of their experience” (K. Larson, personal communication, November 13, 2013). Of course, the program faces some challenges. Initial investment in the program is critical, requiring buy-in from both tutors and tutees. Often, Larson reports, the program is a hard-sell for beginning students, for whom interpersonal dynamics (i.e., being matched with a tutor whom they can relate to) and motivation toward learning English can be determining factors in their participation and success. Additionally, while tutors’ investment and participation in the program is essential, Larson points out that “Occasionally we do have tutors who resent the requirement, who are only focused on getting through the program and into a university.” However, most tutors, according to Larson, are

motivated, “holding themselves to more precise standards of what they know, but may not be able to explain/clarify for another, and to realize they DO know a lot already” (K. Larson, personal communication, November 13, 2013).

Despite these challenges, many participants in the program are able to acknowledge the benefits of their involvement over the term, building meaningful relationships and developing cross- cultural understanding.

Implications for Japanese Universities

Within the context of higher education in Japan, would it be feasible to implement this type of SL program? Certainly there are significant differences between the context in which this program was created and a typical Japanese university. Most English classrooms in Japan, for example, lack the diverse, multi-lingual and cross-cultural component which enriches the program at DePaul. Among administrators in Japan, there might be more resistance to or lack of knowledge about service learning, as well as a lack of resources or facilities. Finally, persuading students to spend more hours at school outside of their busy schedules and part-time jobs could stymie the initial buy-in.

The perspective-broadening aspects of SL are needed in Japanese universities, and the potential for increasing learner autonomy and motivation could be enormously beneficial to university students in Japan. Certainly there is always a need for opportunities to communicate in English within authentic contexts.

While I was unable to successfully launch a peer-tutoring program described in this paper due to unrelated constraints, I continue to actively consider its viability in a Japanese university. One possible approach would be to pilot a tutoring program in a university with an established study abroad program. Study abroad returnees are generally eager to maintain the language abilities they have acquired abroad. In this case, pairing returnees with freshman students or novice English speakers could be mutually beneficial. In addition to language support, it could provide mentoring and encouragement for beginning students, bolstering confidence in their communicative ability. In this way, study abroad returnees could become a valuable resource for universities while also adding qualifications to resumes for their future job search.

Programs such as the Peer Tutoring Lab at DePaul demonstrate that SL projects can be implemented successfully with little cost and minimal resources. Initiating an SL project can be time-consuming, but the program can become self-sustaining over time. In a diverse, context-rich environment, the SL experience can reinforce language skills and knowledge. On an interpersonal level, effective SL reinforces communication skills and can position students to take a more active, autonomous role in their own language learning. More importantly, the experience provides a meaningful, memorable accomplishment of service that can be carried forward to enrich lives and careers in the future.

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How Can We Motivate Students Through Our Non-native Speaker Teacher Identities?

Agnes Patko

Research has revealed the strengths and weaknesses of both native (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) teachers and proved that native language is not the primary factor that determines a teacher's efficacy. Nevertheless, in Japan, there are still many people who believe that the only reliable source to learn a foreign language from is a NS teacher. This paper gives an account of the identity of NNS teachers and introduces how they can benefit from their previous learning experiences when teaching and motivating their learners. The aim of this article is to encourage the discussion on native and non-native teachers, as well as how to make classes effective and motivating.

研究はネイティブスピーカーと非ネイティブスピーカー教師両方の長所と短所を明らかにしており、母国語が教師の能力を決定づける主要な要因ではないということを証明しています。それにもかかわらず日本では、ネイティブスピーカーの教師から外国語を学ぶことが唯一の信頼できる方法であると信じる人がたくさんいます。この論文は非ネイティブスピーカー教師のアイデンティティーについて説明し、彼らのこれまでの学習経験が、生徒に教える時、モチベーションを与える時に、どのように役立っているかを紹介します。この論文の目的は、ネイティブ教師と非ネイティブ教師に関すること、さらに効果的で、モチベーションの出る授業をとるのように作るかを議論することを奨励することです。

Introduction

Back in Europe, I never thought about my non-native speaker teacher identity. There, it was evident that people from various countries teach English. I never faced criticism, not even outside Hungary, just because I was not a native speaker (NS). However, in Japan, many people are surprised when they discover that I am an English teacher in spite of the fact that I am not a NS.

In Japan, there are three types of English teachers categorized by their native language: Japanese English teachers, English native speaker teachers, and non-Japanese non-natives (NNS). Although, widely recognised and employed outside their home countries in Europe, NNS teachers are still facing criticism and rejection in Japan (Akiyoshi, 2010; Sutherland, 2012). EFL teaching positions are generally advertised as positions for Japanese English teachers and NSs, which leaves very little, or no space for the NNS EFL teachers, and presupposes that they are ineffective. National curricula and textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) also assume native speaker norms, which affects learners' attitudes and objectives. On almost every train there are advertisements for language schools merchandizing themselves by having only native speaker teachers and thus adding to the impression that English can only be mastered from NSs. All these factors contribute to the Japanese general public's preference for native speakers.

Living in Japan makes me think about who I am as a NNS EFL teacher and how I can use this initially perceived disadvantage to my advantage in motivating my students. In this paper I draw together some of the ways in which I am trying to realize the benefits of being a NNS teacher. With this account I would like to encourage fellow NNS teachers to think about and make use of their potential, and, at the same time, I would like to broaden the discussion regarding the perceived benefits of NNS and NS teachers.

Native and non-native speaker teachers

Research regarding NNS teachers started in the EFL context in the early 1990s. Since then NNS teachers' self-perceptions, issues of their credibility, and students and administrators' perceptions have been examined outside the EFL context as well. The greatest field of research is ELT, due to the vast number of English language learners and respective NNS teachers trained all around the world; however, it is not exclusive to it.

NSs are credited most for their communicative abilities, pronunciation, fluency and vocabulary, since these are the areas of language competence and knowledge that NNSs find most challenging to master. However, difficult as it may be, it is possible to gain native-like competence. Educated NNSs may emulate the language competence of many native speakers. Moreover, even NSs make ungrammatical utterances, might not know

how to pronounce unfamiliar words, or need time to think how to express themselves appropriately (Mulder & Hulstijn 2011).

Superior knowledge of language structures, grammar and the ability to teach learning strategies are attributed to NNS teachers due to their own experiences of studying the target language. As one's mother language is acquired unconsciously as a child; native speakers need to be trained to be able to understand the system and the structure of their own language. Without such knowledge they might encounter difficulties when they are expected to explain grammatical rules explicitly. However, those NSs who have a solid knowledge of language structures, particularly those who have studied a foreign language themselves may just as well be aware and capable of teaching language structures and learning strategies as NNSs teachers.

Training is crucial for both natives and non-natives. As early as 1992, Phillipson stated that the fact of being a native speaker of a language does not make one capable of teaching it and also that being a capable teacher does not always mean the person is a native speaker. However, Braine (1999) found that course administrators in Japan and Hong Kong still preferred unqualified native speakers to qualified non-natives.

Akiyoshi (2010) investigated whether parents had the same attitude as course administrators in order to learn whether the preference for NS teachers in hiring practices is triggered by parents' expectations. She discovered that parents of preschool aged children considered the teacher's education and experience more important than being a native. In other words, participants in her survey would rather have a trained NNS than a less-educated NS. This may indicate the parents' expectations will remain the same considering their children's foreign language education up to tertiary level, which does not justify course administrators' hiring policies.

Students' preferences have also been examined in various countries. At the beginning of a university EFL course in the USA, Asian learners expressed more positive feelings towards NS than NNS instructors (Moussu 2002, cited by Braine 2005). However, their attitudes gradually changed and became more positive to NNS teachers as well by the end of the course due to positive learning experiences in a NNS teacher's classes. In

terms of non-ELT, specifically in a Spanish language teaching context, the same pattern of preferences was identified by Meadows & Muramatsu (2007). They also discovered a link between the learner's goal of attaining NS fluency and a preference for a NS teacher.

It has been suggested (Medgyes 1992, Árvai & Medgyes 2000, Meadows & Muramatsu 2007, Sampson 2012) that both NS and NNS teachers have their advantages and disadvantages, strengths and weaknesses and that they complement each other; therefore neither can be regarded as superior or inferior to the other. Language proficiency alone is not enough to predict or prove a teacher's effectiveness. Other factors, such as experience, education, empathy, training, and charisma are also important.

Individual differences between people have a far greater impact on their effectiveness as teachers than their status as NNS or NS. Teachers are professionals, consequently, irrespective of being a native or not, they strive to do their best to motivate their learners and create an environment where each learner can achieve their language related goals. There will always be teachers who are more effective or popular than others, yet it is hardly ever a result of their native language.

Motivation

Motivation is a key element in language learning. When foreign language education is made compulsory, there tend to be a great number of uninterested learners. The mere presence of a NS teacher might be motivating for many learners (see Moussu, 2002; Madrid & Canado, 2004; Akiyoshi 2010), especially in Japan where people like the 'original', the 'perfect thing' (e.g. respondents of Sutherland's survey (2012) draw a parallel between Japanese people's desire to possess expensive designer products and their wish to obtain the accent of NSs.) However, the initial eagerness to study may easily disappear if the lessons are boring, or the teacher is unable to raise students' interest in English. Therefore, it is essential that teachers, whether native or not, create a motivating environment, attend to learners' needs and help to establish and meet students' language related objectives.

There have been several conceptualisations of L2 learning motivation over the years. In the following section, I refer to Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System theory (2005, 2009), which has three components: the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to Self and the L2 Learning Experience. The Ideal L2 Self comprises of the aspirations one has towards the L2. It needs to be attainable, possible and realistic within one's particular circumstances (Dörnyei, 2009). A strong Ideal L2 self aids goal setting and motivates one to persist in the activity. Role-models have a crucial role in this. Dörnyei explains that one source of lack of L2 motivation might be the result of the absence of a role-model on which one's Ideal L2 Self can be based. Therefore, it is essential to help students create their vision through awareness raising activities and presenting powerful role models.

Second, the Ought-to Self 'concerns the attributes one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes' (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29). Finally, the L2 learning experience is related to one's own learning experiences and the learning environment. Dörnyei claims that initial language learning motivation might not necessarily come from one's self image, but that the successful engagement with the learning process has a significant role also.

Using my NNS teacher identity to good effect

Relying on my language learning experiences

When I start teaching a new group of learners, I never hide that I am a NNS. Instead, I am trying to emphasise that we are working collaboratively. We must accept that we will never cease to be learners of English. I do not expect them to do anything that I have not done myself.

As a NNS, each aspect of the English language is connected to the memory of trying to learn it. As such, I am constantly aware of possible difficulties that might not be apparent to a NS teacher. When planning a lesson, NNSs can refer to their own encounter with the particular piece of language they are about to cover in class, and try to recall what they or their classmates found complicated.

Moreover, I also consider how that piece of language is used or in what situation it occurs in Japan (e.g., Japanese students usually find it difficult to comprehend the difference between adjectives such as embarrassed – embarrassing as there is no equivalent distinction in Japanese). Anticipating problems in this manner enables me to present new language and activities in the easiest way for learners to grasp. To have students practice and use the new language, NNS teachers can apply activities and games which they did as students. Furthermore, we can introduce students to learning strategies we have discovered ourselves (e.g., how to differentiate adjectives ending in *-ed* or *-ing*; how to remember the spelling of particular words; word order, and how to benefit from our own and our peers' mistakes).

Overcoming negative self-evaluation and language anxiety

When I see students struggling, I often tell them how I struggled with English and reveal what helped me overcome it. For example, at beginner level, I was often stuck in the middle of a sentence because I did not know how to continue. Therefore, I always had the feeling that I could not say anything in English. I have seen my students in the same situation many times. In most cases the problem is either that they are trying to translate something word for word from Japanese but they do not have the vocabulary or that they would like to convey something that is more complicated than they are able to express in English. As a result, many of them form a negative opinion about their own competence and level, which makes them lose confidence and motivation. That is, they have unrealistic objectives and their Ought-to Self is too dominant.

I overcame this difficulty by changing my way of thinking in my native language. Especially at the early stages of learning a foreign language, it is inevitable to strive to translate one's thoughts. In our native language we can fully express ourselves without much effort. By contrast, in the target language it takes considerable time to become able to do so. Therefore, if we stop being desperate about expressing all of our elaborate thoughts, we will not be devastated by not being able to communicate them in the target language. With this technique, I managed to protect my self-esteem and evaluate my progress positively, which were essential to me in maintaining the balance between my current level at that time and my Ought-to and Ideal selves. I encourage

my students to try out such strategies as well as think about other ways in which they could cope with their own difficulties.

Anxiety is present in every classroom to some extent and increased anxiety might decrease motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). A supportive learning environment and peers have always helped me to overcome anxiety and regain motivation when it was fading away. Therefore, as a teacher I put great effort into creating a cohesive learner group and give time for students to get to know each other. I have found, as Dörnyei (2001, 2007) suggests, this time to be extremely beneficial for a more conducive class dynamic. Although there are individual and cultural differences between students in Japan and Hungary, particular activities, tasks or topics can also increase or decrease students' anxiety and motivation. My own learning experiences regularly help me judge what activities will bring about a more positive effect.

Role-models aid goal-setting

Dörnyei (2005, 2009) argues that role-models have a crucial role in creating one's Ideal L2 Self as it helps to attain one's objectives. However, if one does not select the right role-models, it may also correspond to posing oneself unrealistic goals. NNS teachers like myself, Japanese English teachers, senior students or L2 learners from other countries can be ideal role-models of successful language learners. As NSs acquired the language naturally through their ears from their direct environment as a child, they cannot serve as model English language learners (Medgyes, 1994); instead, they can be English language models. If such distinctions are made clear to students, they can be prevented from setting unobtainable Ideal L2 selves for themselves.

My role model as an English language learner is my high school teacher. I decided to become a teacher because I wanted to be like her. Her vast knowledge of English and compassion for her students' difficulties absolutely impressed me. Now, as a teacher, I attempt to serve as a role model for my learners and motivate them to find their own, attainable objectives and approach them step by step as I did.

I introduce my own culture in class and emphasise how English has been a means of self-actualisation for me. That is, if it had not been for English, I would not have had the possibility of making friends with foreigners

visiting Hungary and I would not live and work in Japan now. In fact, to me, besides hoping to become a teacher, the major motivation to improve my English was to be able to keep in touch with my foreign friends – none of whom were native English speakers, yet the only way we could communicate was through English. I attempt to call students' attention to chances to use English in Japan, not only with native speakers.

Setting goals and building an Ideal L2 Self are key aspects to keep up one's motivation. In class, I stress the importance of goal setting and checking of the goals which have been achieved. It helps learners realise how they are gradually getting closer to their ideal selves. Even if learners do not have a clear future goal, there are several opportunities to set goals in class, such as before activities (e.g., try to make a 2-minute conversation without using Japanese), projects, or at the beginning of a new unit and so on. I often give examples of what goals I had when I was at their stage (e.g., not to make any mistakes in a vocabulary test, being able to speak for one minute without stopping, trying to circumvent problems instead of stopping when not knowing specific words). What is crucial is to check the achievement of these goals. Feedback from the teacher and peers, self-reflection, positive evaluation of the task and the learning process and feelings of achievement will gradually increase learners' motivation. In addition, I let students know my current objectives and disclose that even the teacher has space to improve her language abilities. Through this we develop mutual compassion towards each other.

Speakers of English

I draw attention to world Englishes and to English as a Lingua Franca. As a NNS, I can effectively highlight and serve as proof that English is not only spoken by native speakers. Meisei University actively promotes world Englishes: besides NSs, the International Studies Centre employs NNS EFL teachers from various countries too. Students have the opportunity to encounter several accents of native, as well as non-native English. In such an internationally diverse environment, students realise that there is not only one accent, and they can become more confident in their pronunciation and more willing to engage in communication in English. Furthermore, they can experience that English can bring people of various countries and cultures

together. Therefore, this learning environment can help to provide learners with further role-models who may help them develop their views of their Ideal L2 Self. They also realize more easily that their Ideal L2 Self does not need to be one which emulates only a native speaker's language abilities.

Summary

Some people in Japan might think that NS teachers are the only reliable sources to learn a foreign language from, but there is plenty of evidence that NNS teachers can be just as effective as NSs and can exploit their own language learning experiences for the benefit of their students. Although motivation depends on various factors, teachers – regardless of being a NS or not – are able to create an environment in the classroom where students can more easily find and maintain motivation and set achievable L2 related objectives. Teachers need to assist learners in goal setting and encourage self-evaluation. When creating one's Ideal L2 Self, role models have a great influence on what learners project or dream themselves to be. NNS role models might be as powerful if not more powerful than natives. Furthermore, NNS teachers can attempt to make use of their prior English learning experiences. We can use our own learning process as an example and introduce how we managed to overcome anxiety, how we set goals and take responsibility in our own learning. In addition, raising students' awareness of world Englishes helps them accept their own accent and makes them more confident in themselves.

The aim of this article was to raise awareness of some of the characteristics of NNS speaker teachers. It did not mean to criticize or question the importance of NS teachers in any way.

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A Case Study of a Social Education Class

Debjani Ray

This paper is a case study of a social education class for senior citizens. It gives an account of the students and their relationship with their teacher and what motivated the teacher to do the study. It tries to clarify what social education is and the relationship between that and adult learners. The study was conducted using a questionnaire and follow-up interviews. The results of the questionnaire and the interviews were analyzed and revealed many more and different outcomes than expected. The results show that the learners mostly approved the content of the class, which was the main concern of the teacher. They show that the learners were mainly interested in keeping themselves occupied rather than in learning the language. The results also underline the necessity of using special social and communication skills to connect with older learners.

この論文は、シニア市民の社会教育クラスに関するケーススタディである。生徒について、生徒と教師の関係について、そしてこのような研究を行ったきっかけについて述べている。社会教育とは何であるか、社会教育と社会人学生との関係はどのようなものであるかを明らかにしようとしている。研究は、アンケートとインタビューによって行われた。結果の分析では、予想外の回答が多く得られた。生徒のほとんどが、授業の内容を好んでいたことが分かった。また言語を学ぶことよりも、自身を忙しくしておくことに興味があったことを示していた。さらに、高齢な生徒とは特別なコミュニケーション、接し方が必要であることも明らかにされた。

Introduction

The present study discusses the achievements and challenges of a social education class. Social education classes present particular challenges for teachers because of the important role the experience and knowledge of adult learners plays (Dewey, 1938). Influenced by their past education and expertise, the adult learners bring a vast experience to the class that needs to be considered while planning lessons for them (Knowles, 1980). Knowles (1980, p.4) also notes that adult learners exhibit a higher degree of “internal motivation”.

This is a case study about the perception of their class by a group of retired professionals that I have been teaching for over a decade at a community center in Saitama, Japan. This was quite a long time to teach a class,

with some old learners leaving and some new learners joining in. My teaching style was mostly the same throughout this period, except for one time, around the third year, when I tried to incorporate some basic grammar exercises into the teaching material, thinking it would be helpful to improve and raise their general English level. It did not meet with much enthusiasm from the learners and after four times of trying hard, I realized that they were not happy to do anything with grammar, even if it was only some easy grammar worksheets to practice grammar in use, not any way teaching grammatical rules explicitly.

I decided to conduct this study in my eighth year teaching these students as I was curious over the way the learners of this particular group might perceive their English class. I wanted to know their perception of the class so that I could make any amendments that might be necessary to improve the class as the teaching style was the same all along. Over this extended period I came to see that they were not really interested in improving their English at all. Thus, my other intention was to throw some light on the underlying reasons for their joining and continuing the class. I tried to find out what they thought of the class and the class activities and thought that this way the answers might lead to understand their motivation. I collected data through a questionnaire to investigate about the group, and semi-structured interviews were conducted to more fully understand the responses that were given.

Social Education

The term social education is a relatively new one and is easy to confuse with education for the society/social uplifting. It encompasses everything within a broad spectrum of adult education. Adult education itself is not a crystal-clear term and creates confusion. As McCullough (1980) puts it, it is difficult to determine if it is a practice or a program, a methodology or an organization, a 'science' or a system, a process or a profession and also if it differs from the other forms of education, e.g., continuing education, vocational education and higher education. He even goes as far as saying that adult education might be "everywhere and yet nowhere in particular". (McCullough 1980 quoted in Jarvis 1987, p. 3).

Courtney (1989, p. 17-23) gives five basic perspectives on adult education, which overlap in some areas. The perspectives are: 1. the activities of certain institutions and organizations, 2. a special kind of relationship, as Brookfield (1986) explains, between the external conditions and the internal change in adults that is learning, 3. a profession or scientific discipline, 4. it stems from spontaneous social movements with historical significance, such as the women's movement and anti-colonial movements (Lovett 1988), 5. its goals and functions are distinctly different than the other kinds of education. According to Darkenwald and Merriam (1982), three elements exist in adult education: working with adults, learning for adulthood, and adults working to help others (who might not be adults). The definition of adult education by Merriam and Brockett (2007, p. 8) is well-rounded: it is "activities intentionally designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles, or self-perception define them as adults." Adult education is concerned not with preparing people for life, but rather with helping people to live more successfully. Thus if there is to be an overarching function of adult education, it is to assist adults to increase competence, or negotiate transitions. It also supports people in their social roles (worker, parent, retiree etc.), to help them gain greater fulfillment in their personal lives, and to assist them in solving personal and community problems. (Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982, p. 9)

In a nutshell, any kind of adult education, non-formal education, out-of-school education, or community-based educational activities fit into the frame of social education. It is also called lifelong education and in the UK and in Ireland, further education. Social education basically differs from formal education in that it does not contain the educational activities of the school curriculum and it does not focus on competitiveness and employability. Although, in some cases adult education is considered as a component of lifelong learning (European Commission, 2006), here both are treated as the same. The notion of lifelong learning that came into prominence in the late 1960s has been emphasized in Japan in recent years. According to the Fundamental Law of Education in Japan, the principle of lifelong learning is that, individual citizens can learn anywhere and anytime throughout their entire lives to have better personalities and to enjoy rich lives (MEXT, Japan, 2011).

Moreover, it is a way of “community development and networking with participation and initiatives of local people” (UNESCO).

Adult Learners

Different societies and cultures might have contrasting understandings of what it is to be an adult. The term ‘adult’ can be set against ‘child’. In between adult and child or overlapping between them, there may be an idea of ‘youth’. At base adults are older than children. Therefore, a set of expectations automatically get attached to it. They are not necessarily mature, but ‘they are supposed to be mature, and it is on this necessary supposition that their adulthood justifiably rests’ (Paterson, 1979, p. 13). Other scholars state that “psychological maturity and social role” define an adult (Merriam & Brockett, 2007, p. 7). As Lindeman (1926, p. 4) puts it: “This new venture is called adult education not because it is confined to adults but because adulthood, maturity, defines its limits.”

Andragogy, a well-known theoretical approach to adult learning by Knowles (1984), gives a five-point framework regarding the characteristics of adult learners. One of them assumes that the adults bring vast experience to the learning context that is a resource for learning/education.

Background

The learners in the English class which is the focus of this study join the class as a form of recreation in their retired lives, as social education helps them in improving their lives with a range of useful activities to engage in. The number of people in the class varies usually between 5 and 12 as some people leave and some other people join. Members leave the class either because of fragile health and health-related problems or the death of a spouse. Only one of the class members has attended throughout the ten years I have taught the class. The rest of the members have been switched and at present they are seven in total. Almost all of them are retired professionals and are of the same age group. Initially the title of the class, chosen by the members, was Silver English Conversation. I was asked by a city hall employee to carry on with this class after their former teacher had left Japan twelve years ago. Three years ago, in an effort to attract new and younger members, they decided

to change the title of the class. The members put their heads together and after a long and heated discussion the title was changed to Friendship English Lounge. Unfortunately, it did not fulfil its purpose of attracting young/younger members but it did bring some young visitors to the class and finally two not-so-young members.

The class meets twice a month, the first and third Friday afternoon for an hour and a half. Depending on the members' schedule, the day and the time might change sometime. In class we generally engage in simple conversation on a variety of topics, sometimes chosen by the teacher, sometimes by the students. Usually they start with telling each other about what they did in the past week or weekend. The students never have a shortage of news as they really enjoy doing things. They do things individually or with their families and at the same time they often go out with their classmates. In their outside activities with the classmates, going to the movies, eating out, having tea/coffee are common, next comes going to a garden or a park and going to a concert or a play. Once in a while they might take trips as a group, although everybody might not join every time. They might go to another place in Japan, like, Kyoto or Hokkaido, or a nearby country, like, Taiwan or Singapore. When they have little to report, they talk about recent news or TV programs.

After they finish talking about their activities or the news, which usually takes about 30 minutes to half of the class time, they usually do an activity that I have brought in. It might be a simple worksheet to read and write a little or it might contain a little reading and then discussion. They are all college graduates and their level might be the same as the present college students. Occasionally, someone starts saying something totally different and the other joins in and they might get carried away. They basically keep talking in English, except for a few Japanese words thrown in here and there.

The Study

The Questionnaire

The people who took part in this study were seven retired professional women over the age of sixty- five who were taking the class with me at that time. I used a questionnaire consisting of seven questions. The questions focused on what they thought of the contents of the class activities and how to make the class better for them to

enjoy the experience. They were asked to fill out the questionnaires distributed to them while they were in the class and return it to me upon completion.

The Interviews

The other method used was semi-structured interviews, a qualitative method of inquiry, with pre-determined, open-ended questions, conducted a few times over the course of six months. All of the people in the class were interviewed. I asked for their permission to let me interview them and they co-operated without a question. I conducted the interviews in total three times after the class in a cafeteria. The purpose of the interview was to clarify the answers of the questionnaire and to get more information.

The data I collected consisted of the answers to the questionnaire and the notes that I took in the interviews. I tried to gain consent for recording the interview but they said that they 'did not like their own recorded voices'. This way it was a lengthy process and the data organization, analysis and managing was difficult and time consuming. The data was of a 'nonnumerical kind' expressed in words/non-numbers. This kind of data is very useful in helping "to pin down the facts about people" (De Munck and Sobo, 1998, p. 16).

According to Bernard (1994), 'Hanging out' is the process through which a researcher can gain trust and is able to establish a relationship with the participants over time. Hanging out is also proposed by DeMunck and Sobo (1998) by which people might "get to know you outside your 'professional' role" (p. 41). I hung out with the group at the cafes close to the venue of the class over an extended period of time and did the semi-structured interviews there. I was fully aware that they might not say anything unpleasant to my face, so I tried to make careful questions and hide any strong attachments I had to them. I analyzed the data of their written and verbal responses.

The Findings

First I present the results of the questionnaire, then I discuss the information gleaned from the interviews. I have chosen to present only the answers that were most revealing and most useful to me in understanding how the students viewed this class.

The Questionnaire

The first question asked in what way they studied outside the class, if they did at all. The replies were all positive, and the prominent ones were by watching English language TV programs (mainly news, almost every day) and sometimes movies in English with/without subtitles, by listening to the English language radio programs/music, from Japan and/or abroad, by reading easy books/graded readers written/translated in English, singing English songs, and talking with foreigners.

In answer to the sixth question, which asked if they liked anything particular about the class, they said that they liked the opportunity to use their English and the environment that was made of wonderful classmates and the cheerful and energetic young teacher. I was very flattered by this last comment. Some liked discussions on music, art, movies and culture in different countries and Japan. Most of them were not sure about acquiring English or developing their English competency but they were happy keeping in touch with English through the class. Some said they came to know a lot about other countries and cultures and even about Japan through some activities and discussions in the class.

The last question asked what should be changed to improve the lessons. Some were neutral or had no opinion. Overall, most of them felt nothing needed to be changed and a few felt that one area might be changed, but the results differed as to which area should be changed.

The Interviews

One of my queries, apart from the questionnaire, was why they were taking English lessons. The answer varied but the main points were, for communicating with foreigners in Japan, for talking with local people while traveling abroad and especially for ‘bokeboushi’ (guarding against senility).

I mainly tried to emphasize the same questions as in the questionnaire to clarify the answers I received. I got mostly the same replies. The added information I got was that they were happy to attend the class because they could make long-term friends through the class. Several people said that they did some talking in English with their Japanese classmates before and/or after the class as well as during the class which could not have been possible if they were not classmates on friendly terms. They said that it helped them to keep up their English because except for that they had very little chance of speaking in English in Japan.

About changes to improve the lessons, one asked for clarifications on grammar and another wanted to have their pronunciation ‘corrected’. What most of them did not like was doing the tongue-twisters as their ‘tongues did not move’. The reason two of them gave was while practicing them they were awfully worried that their false teeth might fall out.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the learners’ opinions about the class. The results show the learners were motivated and practiced English outside the class (once a month or more) and were supportive of the content of the class. Most felt there was no need to change the materials used or the way of using them. They thought the skills they were developing were speaking and some listening. Most of them thought getting the chance of ‘keeping in touch’ with English was very useful for them. They did not dislike much of the practices of the class except for doing tongue-twisters for some special reason. All of them liked the environment of the class that supported their language practices (see Table 1).

The findings of the interviews reinforced the results of the questionnaire survey. I tried to identify and interpret the common and recurrent themes and analyze prominent patterns in the themes. The reasons why they were

studying English became clear. Many of them described it as useful for communicating with foreigners, in Japan and abroad. Moreover, all strongly felt it was an effective way of giving some exercise to the brain to keep it active, so it was helpful to their actual life.

Table 1.

Response Analysis

General	Learners practice English outside the class Learners like the materials used in the class Learners like the environment of the class Learners develop speaking & listening skills through the class
Specific	Learners think that English is useful for communication with foreigners in and out of Japan Learners think that learning English is specifically important for them for keeping their brains active

This study tried to find out the perception of the learners of their class regarding its activities and materials, which directly connects to the teacher. It is difficult to feel confident to be the teacher of a group where everyone has a good level of education along with immense life experience. I discovered some things that I was not expecting and I feel that I have obtained a greater insight into these learners' motivations for attending the class as well as some insight into how I as a teacher need to adapt to their learning styles.

Bohonos (2013) says that understanding the life experiences of adult learners is particularly important. I learned many things from the group, especially, regarding social skills and communication strategies to be used while dealing with older people. For example, when I suggested that we talk about our weekends, they reminded me politely that, they did not have any weekends anymore. As retired people they could not differentiate between their weekdays and weekends. On another occasion, when they were talking about having special discounts for the movies, I bluntly commented on that as a great opportunity. They grimly told me that they would rather have their youth than having discounted movie tickets. Having discounted tickets was not a happy thing for them as that comes with aging. Again I was reminded to be careful when talking with the elderly.

From this study it is hard to tell if the class and the materials used have any major impact on the learners' English communication skills, but it might have become clear that more than their linguistic performance this

group of learners put emphasis on spending quality time in a nice environment and in good company, and that they are more concerned about keeping their minds lively and are eager to remain active members of the community. I hope that the story of my journey to this greater appreciation of the needs of a social education class might be of some potential interest to other teachers.

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LD20 Exploring Learning Development: Practices, Pedagogies, Puzzles and Research.

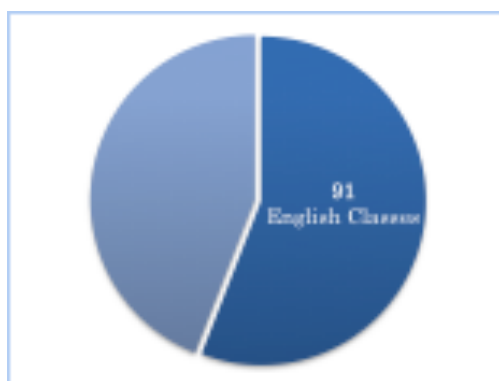
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Appendix

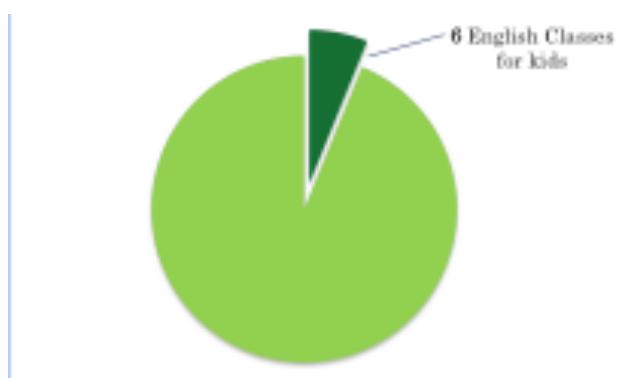
Questionnaire

1. Do you study English outside the class? If yes, what and how do you do?
2. Does this class help you to acquire English or any kind of knowledge?
3. Do you think the class materials are appropriate for you?
4. Does this class help you to develop the skills you want to develop?
5. Was there anything ever that made you feel uneasy during the class?
6. Is there anything you particularly like about the class? If yes, what is it?
7. Is there anything you think needs to be changed to improve this lesson?

Questionnaire Response Analysis



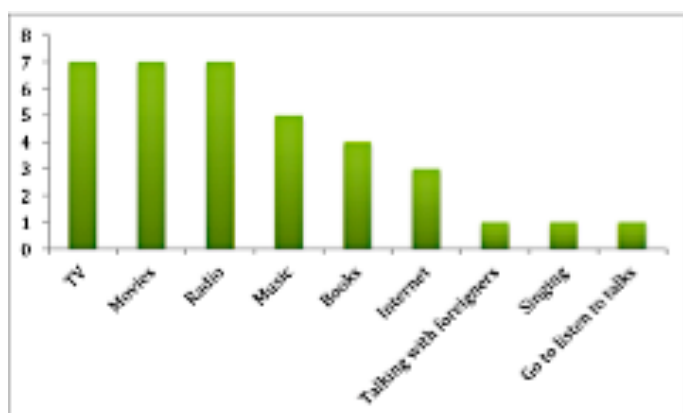
English classes among the 158 Language Classes held at Saitama City Kominkan



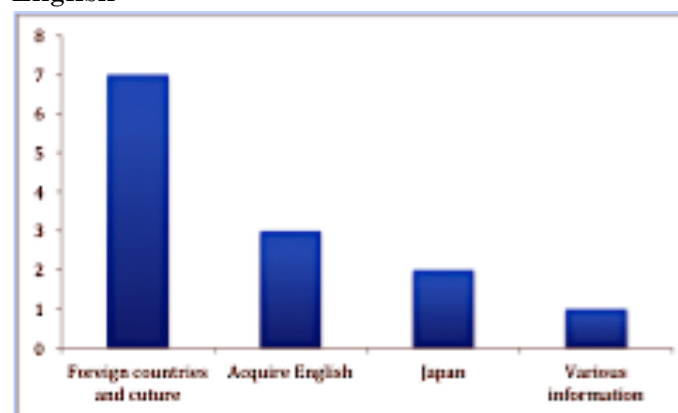
English Classes for kids among the 91 English Classes mentioned above

Courtesy: shogaigakushu center, Saitama City, Saitama

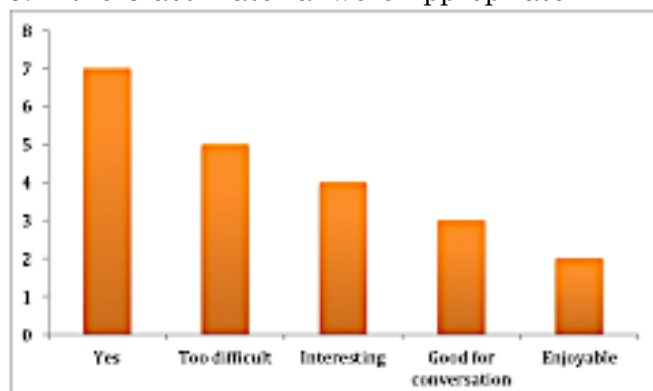
1. Ways English is Studied Outside the Class



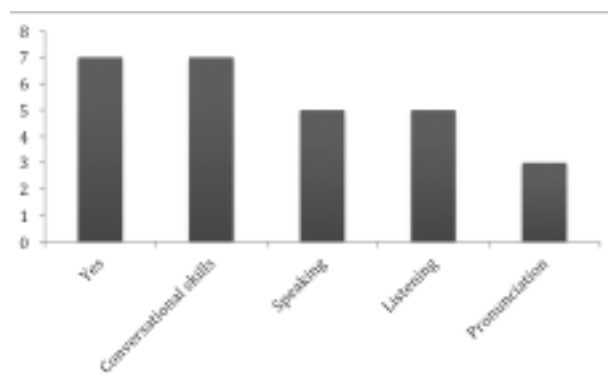
2. If and How the Class Helped in Learning English



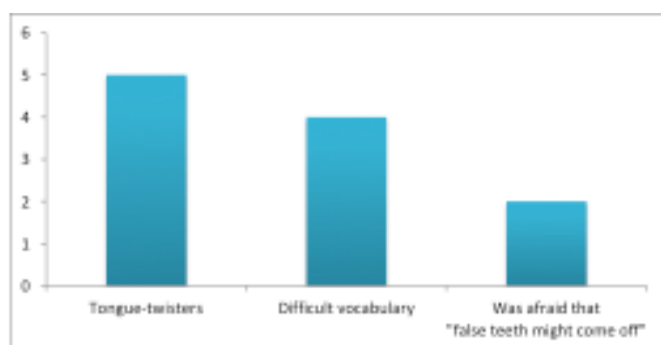
3. If the Class Material were Appropriate



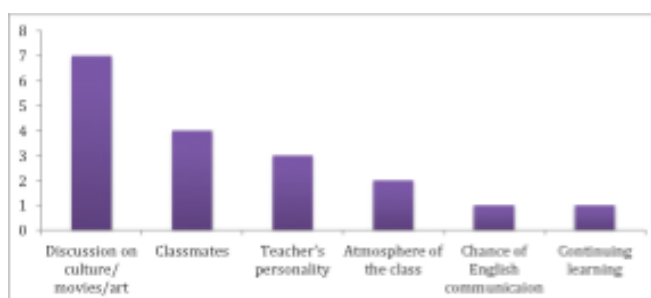
4. If the Class Helped in Developing any Skills



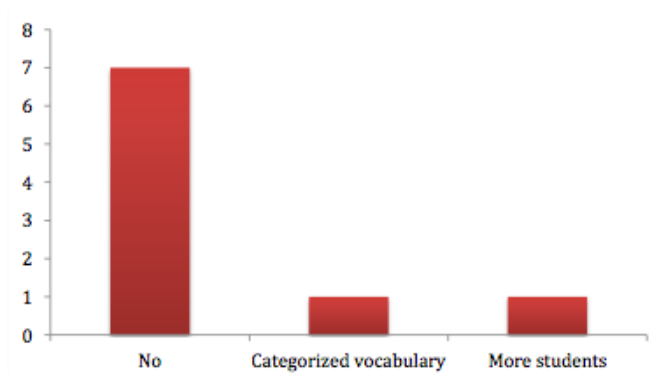
5 If the Class caused any Uncomfortable Moments



6. If and What they Liked about the Class



7. If and What to Change to Make the Lesson Better



Writing Center Challenges: A Case Study

Maho Sano and Ritsuko Rita

Acquiring English academic writing skills is challenging for many learners. A self-access writing center was established at a private university in Tokyo and offers one-on-one sessions where learners can consult more proficient tutors, discuss their writing issues and gain advice. The Writing Center has helped many learners improve their writing skills such as coherence and cohesion as well as linguistic issues, functioning as a valuable place where students can learn how to improve their writing skills outside class. However, some operational issues have arisen. After outlining some logistical challenges, this paper introduces some measures that the Writing Center has taken in order to ensure that quality sessions are provided to learners.

学術的なライティング`スキル習得は多くの学習者にとって努力を要するものである。京の私立大学にある東京の私立大学にあるライティング`センターで`は、高い語学力を持つ学生`チューター`高い英語力をもつ学生`チューターに相談し、ライティング`の問題点を話しあい`アト`ハ`イスを得ることので`きる1対1のセッションを提供している。このライティング`センター`は言語的な課題にとと`まらず`、文の整合性等、学術文章スキルの向上において多くの学習者`の手助けをし、授業外において学習者`イティンク`スキルを磨く`価値的な場として機能してきた。しかしなか`ら、センターの運営においてはいくつかの問題も生じ`ている。本稿で`は、運`営面で`の問題点の概要に触れ、当センターか`セッションの質の確保のために実施してきた対`策を紹介する。

Introduction

Acquiring the skills of English academic writing is a challenging task for many learners. In order to overcome some of their difficulties, university students can consult more experienced tutors in a dedicated writing center (Cassidy, Gillespie, Glasgow, Kobayashi and Roloff-Rothman, 2011). In recent years, writing centers have become places where writing issues are discussed and advice is provided, in contrast to traditional ones that focused on error correction (McKinley, 2010). This paper will discuss some of the common challenges experienced at a self-access writing center at a private university in Tokyo. In the Writing Center, there is a focus (heavy emphasis) on cohesion and coherence as part of academic writing conventions in general because these are both common areas which challenge university learners. The Writing Center was established to help

university EFL learners to write academically. However, there are several operational challenges that the Writing Center needs to overcome in order to provide quality sessions for learners. After briefly introducing the university's Writing Center, this paper will outline several operational challenges that the Writing Center is facing and what measures have been taken to address those logistical problems.

About the Writing Center

The Writing Center at our university was established in 1999 as a part of the university's self-access programs with the purpose of helping learners improve their academic writing skills. Japanese EFL learners of elementary to intermediate proficiency levels mainly visit the Writing Center. Learners often come to the sessions to improve their paragraphs or essays that are assigned as homework in their English classes. Many of the learners coming to the Writing Center have linguistic problems in their writing such as mistakes in certain aspects of grammar and the use of informal language in their academic writing. Although those linguistic challenges are dealt with in the Writing Center sessions, the Writing Center focuses more on the conventions of English academic writing. For example, the correct usage, in writing, of cohesion and coherence is challenging for many Japanese EFL learners. The Writing Center is an internally funded self-access program holding sessions from Monday to Friday, and each session runs for a duration of 30 minutes. The Writing Center tutors are paid undergraduate students, graduate students, and international students who work two to three shifts a week. In order to have a session, students make a reservation online. When students come to the Writing Center sessions, they bring their writing and get feedback on it. The language of instruction in the Writing Center sessions is either Japanese or English depending on the tutors. Thus the Writing Center functions as a place where learners can improve their academic writing skills outside class. However, in terms of the operation of the Writing Center, there are several challenges that need to be overcome if the Writing Center is to better help learners be more successful in their English academic writing.

The Writing Center's Operational Challenges

The first challenge is the recruitment of new Writing Center tutors. Currently, half of the tutors are Japanese students and the other half are international students. Ideally, it would be better if the Writing Center could hire Japanese tutors with high English proficiency and a background of formal academic writing instruction, or international students who have received formal instruction in academic writing and have a good command of Japanese. In reality, however, sometimes the Writing Center has no choice other than to employ all applicants when the number of positions available and the number of applicants are equal. In this situation, the Writing Center cannot choose based on the experience and education of the applicants.

The most compelling issue at the Writing Center is the inconsistent quality of the sessions conducted by different tutors. First, the sessions conducted by Japanese tutors and international tutors vary considerably. One of the primary problems is that learners often do not understand the feedback provided in English. Currently, half of the staff are international students, including native English speakers and those who speak English as their second or third language. Most international students are in the process of learning Japanese, and their Japanese proficiency is not necessarily high. Therefore, many conduct sessions in English or mix English and Japanese. However, even if they mix languages, it is often difficult to provide explanations and comments in a comprehensible way because tutors need to be familiar with certain vocabulary or expressions used in discussing writing and grammar. Some students have difficulty expressing where they need help because of their low English proficiency.

Another cause of inconsistency between Japanese tutors and international tutors stems from whether or not they have experience of writing in a second language themselves. For those who have no experience of second language writing, it is often difficult to understand the difficulties that students are facing. Indeed, the Writing Center coordinator also is of the opinion that those tutors who have received English writing instruction seem to be able to offer more effective feedback on learners' writing.

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A second area of inconsistency is that some tutors only focus on grammar and vocabulary issues whereas some focus on the organization and structure of learners' writing. In the university academic English writing courses, the focus of instruction is to help students understand the organization and structure of academic writing. Therefore, tutors are expected to help students with these higher level issues. However, despite the Writing Center mission to help learners to be autonomous, some tutors just check grammar and vocabulary during the sessions. This inconsistency between classroom instruction and Writing Center sessions affects the trust between instructors and students. Indeed, the Writing Center has received some complaints regarding this issue from both teachers and students. For example, there was a case where a student came back from a Writing Center session with their grammar mistakes fixed but not the organizational or structural issues which should have been the focus of the Writing Center session. Because many students bring their course assignments to the Writing Center, this issue can affect students' academic grades.

The third inconsistency is the difference in motivational level among tutors, a problem which the Writing Center coordinator himself recognizes. Some tutors are very keen, motivated, and serious about the sessions. However, some tutors seem to consider themselves as just 'part-timers.' Their level of dedication to the work is not as high as expected. This results in inconsistent quality of feedback. Such motivational and attitudinal differences can influence the quality of the sessions.

Another inconsistency among sessions is time management. In the Writing Center, each session is 30 minutes-long, and there are four sessions back to back each day. The last five minutes are usually used for signing the Writing Center log sheets that students bring, sending students off, recording session logs for Writing Center administration purposes, and calling the next student in. As a result, there is only 25 minutes to work on the student's writing. Within this 25 minutes, the tutors ask students what their assignments are and what they would like to improve upon, read the student's writing, make comments and suggestions, and have time for questions and answers. Completing these tasks within 25 minutes is very challenging, and tutors are required to work efficiently. Some tutors, especially novice tutors, sometimes go over time or cannot check students'

writing entirely. The Writing Center coordinator explains that if tutors only check a part of students' writing, many students feel dissatisfied and worry about their writing.

The last operational challenge that the Writing Center is facing is that some students reserve Writing Center sessions, but then they do not show up. This means that students who really want to attend the Writing Center sometimes lose a chance to have a Writing Center session. In the current system, students make a reservation online in advance. Since the Writing Center offers one-on-one sessions, if a student reserves a session online, other students cannot make a reservation. There are a number of students who come to the Writing Center as a part of their English course requirements. As proof of their visit to the Writing Center, students can get one stamp per session on their Writing Center attendance log. However, since students sometimes skip their sessions without canceling their reservation online, other students who need to have Writing Center sessions cannot make a reservation. Therefore, the Writing Center receives complaints regarding its session availability.

Addressing the Challenges

To solve the issues related to the inconsistency of session quality, the Writing Center holds training sessions several times throughout a semester. The purpose of the training sessions is to standardize tutoring sessions as much as possible so that there is consistency in terms of the quality of sessions. In the training sessions, tutors have opportunities to share difficulties they face during the tutoring sessions, suggest solutions, and discuss time management techniques. In addition, tutors have an opportunity to provide feedback on sample writing and compare what kind of feedback they have given on the sample written work. Then, with the Writing Center coordinator, tutors check what should be focused on in giving feedback. The training sessions can positively affect the issue of feedback inconsistency among tutors and moderately influence time-management issues. However, issues related to motivation and language proficiency are hard to directly address during the training sessions because those issues depend on personal factors rather than on their skills.

As a way to address the issue of students' no-shows that negatively affect other learners who really need to attend the Writing Center, it has been requested that the Writing Center should increase the number of sessions

so that the center can better accommodate learners. However, student no-shows affect what percentage of the Writing Center shifts are actually used. Since the Writing Center staff are paid part-time workers, increasing the number of sessions offered necessitates an increase in the budget for the Writing Center. Consequently, the Writing Center has faced a dilemma. The Writing Center wishes to offer more sessions, but if the session's utility rate is lowered due to student no-shows the Writing Center cannot increase the number of sessions. To solve this problem, the online reservation system has changed: if a student does not show up, the student will be locked out for 2 weeks and will be unable to use the center.

Conclusion

The Writing Center has been facing several operational challenges. The biggest challenge is the inconsistency in feedback quality arising from various factors such as tutors' linguistic and writing-related educational background, and time-management. Training sessions have been held as a means of assuring greater consistency in feedback quality. Other minor issues such as the varying experience and education of Writing Center tutors and students' no-shows have been pointed out. Nevertheless, the benefits for students far outweigh these operational challenges because the Writing Center offers students vital opportunities for them to improve their academic writing skills outside class. Therefore, although the Writing Center is currently facing these challenges, it will continue developing its sessions in order to better support learners in their English academic writing.

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Making Graphic Organizers of Graph Vocabulary

Michael T. Sullivan

This study investigated the use of a modified version of the Frayer model as graphic organizer to improve the vocabulary comprehension of Japanese university students. Students were separated into test and control groups. Pre- and posttests on graph vocabulary comprehension were administered to both groups. The test group alone used model cards with the modified framework, but both groups completed the assigned graph exercises. A questionnaire was then administered to assess student feelings of the modified model's usefulness. Although results showed improvement in both groups, the test group showed a larger gain in mean scores, and they found the model helpful in graph vocabulary comprehension. Findings suggest the modified Frayer model has potential to help students better understand graph vocabulary.

日本人大学生による語彙の理解を高めるためのグラフフィックオーガナイザーとして、修正したFrayer modelを使用することについて調査した。学生を試験群・対照群に分け、両群に対し事前と事後にグラフ用語の理解度を測定するテストを実施した。両群は指定されたグラフ演習を行ったか、試験群の学生だけが修正された枠組みに従ってモデルカードを使用した。演習後、修正モデルの有効性に対する学生の反応を調べるためにアンケートを実施した。両群ともに理解度の向上が認められたか、試験群の平均値がより大きく上昇し、学生は、グラフ用語を理解するのに本モデルの使用が有効であると感じていた。これらの結果から、修正したFrayer modelの使用によって、グラフ用語に対する学生の理解を高められる可能性が示唆される。

This paper came about in part from my talk at the 20th Anniversary Conference, Tokyo in an attempt to develop a student-generated approach that would improve learner comprehension of graph vocabulary. In my short talk, I introduced a word card based on the original Frayer model for vocabulary acquisition, providing participants with reasons why the model as graphic organizer was developed, and a step-by-step procedure on how to create and use the model effectively in class. As in my talk, I start this paper by defining a graphic organizer, by explaining the original Frayer model word card and why it should be corrected, and by introducing a modified

version of the Frayer model. This is followed by an outline of my study which sets out to determine the usefulness of my version of the Frayer model word card for learners. Finally, I draw some conclusions from the study, reflect on the model's relevance to learner development and then go over how use of the model has impacted classes since the conference talk.

Introduction

A graphic organizer is defined as a two-dimensional visual framework that presents conceptual relationships (Rice, 1994; Vaughan, Vos, & Schumm, 2007). The basic structure of an organizer has boxes or circles, or both, with connecting lines that can visually represent the ways in which ideas link with one another and how words can be classified and described.

The Frayer model word card is one type of graphic organizer. It assists students in describing vocabulary in detail. The model (see Figure 1) is a large square made up of four quadrants with a circle in the middle. Inside each quadrant is a category by which the given word can be described (Greenwood, 2002; Nessel & Graham, 2007), and these categories help explain which characteristics relate and do not relate to a concept (Frayer, Frederick, & Klausmeier, 1969).

Relevant Attributes <ul style="list-style-type: none">- measured in grams- property of all matter- an object's weight is different from its mass	Irrelevant Attributes <ul style="list-style-type: none">- static forces- projectile motion
Example <p>An American penny has a mass of 2.50 grams</p>	Non-Example <p>A carton of milk contains 1 liter (volume, not mass)</p>

Figure 1. Example of original Frayer model.

When used in the original model, the irrelevant attributes and non-examples of a math concept (such as *yard*) or a social studies concept (such as *states' rights*) were found to be as useful for student comprehension as the term's relevant attributes and examples (Monroe & Pendergrass, 1997; Peters, 1974). However, could the same

model apply to abstract vocabulary used to describe graphs, such as *slightly*? I assumed that the model might not work because many possible non-examples and irrelevant attributes of a graph word could exist—for example, the representation of the concept *slightly* may vary based on perception (Wiemer-Hastings & Xu, 2005)—and therefore, the model would not necessarily promote a clearer, deeper understanding of the targeted graph vocabulary. It seemed that the original Frayer model may be somewhat incompatible with abstract graph terms, and so a modified form was deemed more appropriate.

The Study

The purpose for developing an alternative graphic organizer based on the original Frayer model was to find an effective way of helping students comprehend abstract graph vocabulary. In the modified version of the Frayer model, new headings were assigned to each of the four quadrants. That is, it retains the original box-like structure of the original, with a circle in the middle, but the categories in each box differ (see Figure 2).

Definition (in own words)	Synonym/Antonym
Visual Representation	Example Sentence (in own words)

Figure 2. Example of graphic organizer based on original Frayer model.

Research Questions

1. What effect would this modified graphic organizer based on the original Frayer model have on student comprehension of graph vocabulary?

2. Would the students find this modified version of the Frayer model useful?

Context

The study was conducted in two compulsory English Technical Writing classes for first-year Masters Chemistry students at a university in western Japan. The students met once a week for 90 minutes. Thirty-six students participated in the study and were divided equally into two classes (based on pre- existing class allocations) at roughly the same, relatively low English proficiency level. The study took place near the end of the second half of the term during the two-week unit on describing graphs.

Procedure

For the purposes of the study, students were divided into two groups: the test group and the control group. Twenty graph vocabulary items (Figure 3) were chosen for the study. The targeted words were selected because they were required terms for the final exam and were neither used nor discussed in any previous units in the textbook (Mann & Wever, 2007). All vocabulary items were chosen to have the same relative language burden for students (see Nation, 2006). One way to assure this is to restrict the words by grammatical category (Dodigovic, 2013), so verbs and adverbs were chosen as they represented the majority of words to be tested.

Figure 3. List of graph vocabulary words

Both the control group and the test group were given the same multiple-choice test on the targeted words before

swiftly	considerably	fluctuate	collapse
substantially	dramatically	climb	plunge
abruptly	gradually	soar	crash
steadily	significantly	flatten out	bounce back
moderately	slightly	shoot up	level off

and after the graph unit (see Appendix). Between these test sessions, the instructor gave both groups identical graph description exercises to learn the graph vocabulary. In addition, both groups were given the time and encouragement to study the targeted vocabulary.

After the pretest, each student in the test group was given 20 word cards based on the new version of the Frayer model, on each of which was written one of the targeted graph terms. These students were instructed to fill out the cards. They were also encouraged to write L1 equivalents on the cards (in the *Definition* quadrant), as it would support a form-meaning link between the L2 word and the L1 word already present in memory (Nation, 2001). Once completed, the cards were examined by the instructor to check that all quadrants were filled. Upon examination, all test group students had written information in each quadrant. However, some only wrote single-word entries for three of the four quadrants (excluding visual representation), while others provided more details (e.g. short lists). For each graph exercise (e.g. a pair work graph description exercise using no numbers) over the course of the unit, the students were asked to refer to their own model cards to help them describe/explain the graph data.

At the end of the unit, a multiple choice posttest was administered to both groups. The questions on the posttest were identical to those on the pretest. Afterwards, a questionnaire was distributed to all test group students to determine if they felt the model cards were useful.

Results

Research Question One

Table 1 shows the results of the pre- and posttests of 36 test and control group students.

Table 1 Results of Pre- and Posttests Evaluating Graph Vocabulary Comprehension

Note. Tests were on 20 multiple-choice vocabulary items. The maximum score for each test was 20.

According to the results of paired sample (2-tailed) *t* tests, carried out to judge whether the students improved

Group	<i>n</i>	Test	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Control	18	Pre	9.72	2.78
		Post	14.94	2.78
Test	18	Pre	7.72	2.08
		Post	13.78	3.49

their comprehension with or without the new version of the Frayer model, a statistical significant change

between the pre- to posttest scores for both the control group and the test group resulted: $t(17) = -5.958, p < .05$ for the control group and $t(17) = -6.882, p < .05$ for the test group.

Although the test group's pretest and posttest mean scores were lower than those of the control group, there was a larger gain in mean score on the posttests by the test group than by the control group. This is further evident after examining the test data in histograms (Figures 4 and 5), which show a greater positive shift in test scores for most of the students in the test group compared to the control group.

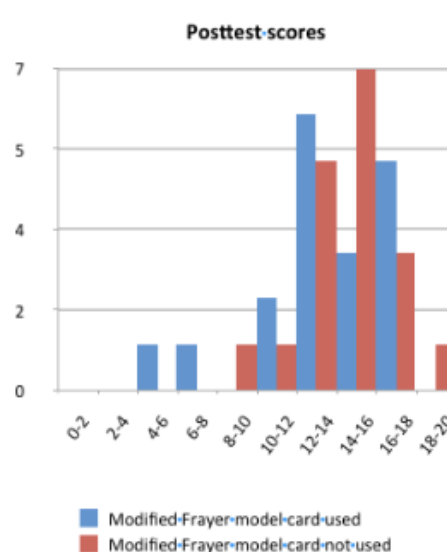
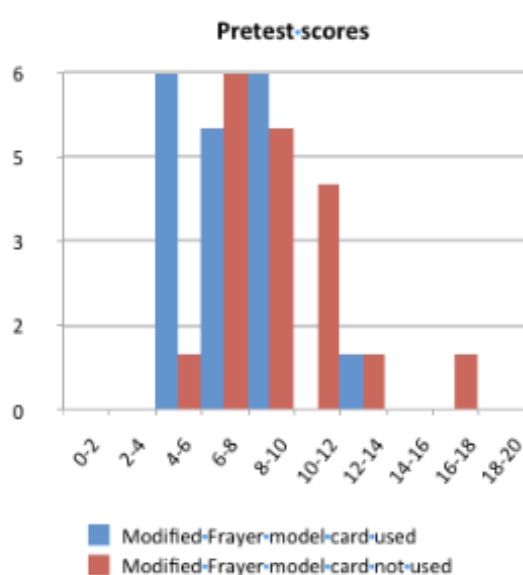


Figure 4.
Pretest scores of test and control groups ($n = 18$).

Figure 5.
Posttest scores of test and control groups ($n = 18$).

As for the standard deviation of both groups, the test group experienced a greater deviation from the average score on the posttest than the control group, implying that some students in the test group scored much better or worse than the average. In fact, two-thirds of the test group students—the very students who wrote many more details than the others in each of the four card quadrants—made significant improvement gains (50% or higher) on their test scores, while the rest made smaller increases or none at all (see Table 2).

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Table 2

Results of Individual Test Group Pre- and Posttest Scores

Student	Pretest	Posttest
1	6	14
2	6	17
3	6	15
4	7	14
5	5	13
6	9	15
7	10	17
8	10	18
9	7	5
10	7	14
11	13	13
12	7	18
13	9	12
14	8	11
15	9	13
16	8	15
17	6	17
18	5	7

Research Question Two

Table 3 shows the results of a two-part student feedback questionnaire, completed by test group students only at the end of the graph description unit. In answer to the first question, all students in the group affirmed they had a better understanding of the vocabulary. As for the second part, all feedback on card use was positive, mainly focusing on the card's usefulness in aiding comprehension and recall of the graph vocabulary.

Table 3

Questionnaire Feedback from Test Group on the use of new model cards

Question	Yes	No
1. Do you have a better understanding of the vocabulary using the cards?	18	0
2. Write feedback on the use of the graph cards.	Sample Feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition and illustration are useful for me • Graph cards (have) many words, so I can explain graph details • I can also understand synonyms • I understand meaning of graph vocabulary • Easy to remember using graph cards • I can study not only definitions (of the word) but also synonyms 	

Discussion

Results from this study provided evidence to help answer the two research questions. The first question asked what effect this modified graphic organizer based on the Frayer model would have on the learner's understanding of the graph vocabulary. Results revealed that based on posttest mean scores, the test group using this modified version based on the Frayer model with graph-related textbook exercises did not do better in comprehending concepts than the textbook-focused control group. Yet, in considering *the size of the improvement* between the two groups, the test group showed slightly more improvement in mean score than the control group, lending (partial, at least) support to Peters' (1974) claim that the Frayer model helps facilitate the understanding of concepts (p. 108).

The second research question asked if the students found the modified version of the model to be useful. The students responded positively to the modified graphic organizer based on the Frayer model and appreciated its usefulness in deepening their knowledge of the vocabulary, and this matched teacher expectations. What may have accounted for this positive feedback was that each student's set of model cards was developed by the student him- or herself, and that they were encouraged to use, share, and discuss card information with other students while doing graph-related activities in class.

Conclusion

The findings in this study suggest that the use of my alternative graphic organizer based on the Frayer model to help students themselves understand graph vocabulary has potential. In studying this modified version of the model's usefulness to students and its effect on their comprehension, it is fair to conclude that (a) the test group students found the modified version of the Frayer model useful, largely because this model aided them in arranging, describing and explaining, and remembering a great deal of known and new lexical information about each graph word, that (b) the student group using the cards made relatively greater improvement in their comprehension of the graph vocabulary than the group using textbook exercises alone, and that (c) the test group students who made the greatest improvement on the posttests had written the most information in each quadrant on their word cards.

Upon reflection, I feel the model presented in this study had relevance to the learner development group and conference. Despite the criticism that the model is laborious and a large use of student time (Greenwood, 2002), the model is *learner-generated* and *learner-directed*. The number of details the students write on each of their own cards depends on student input and interest; the teacher merely serves to give feedback on what they have written and provide activities that encourage the use of the model cards. Second, in line with the theme of the LD20 conference, the model presented a somewhat different perspective or way of thinking—in this case, on vocabulary comprehension. This alternative graphic organizer based on the Frayer model is unlike a dictionary or simple word card entry, as it encourages students to efficiently compile a great deal of appropriate, meaningful and detailed information about a (graph) term on a single card.

Post Script

Since presenting this study at the LD20 conference, my modified graphic organizer based on the original Frayer model has continued to positively impact on student comprehension of the targeted graph vocabulary. My current students are required to give a presentation (general or technical) using graphs, and so, to better understand graph language, these cards have been both created and used by the students. What I have found, as

before, is that with the help of the cards, all of the students improved in graph-related exercises in the graph description unit and in their explanations of the graphs in their own presentations at the end of the class term. Several students have reported to me that although it took time for them to write out details on the graph model cards for themselves the cards have been useful in more fully comprehending the targeted vocabulary. Moving forward, I plan to keep using these cards as self-study aids for students to help them remain engaged in the learning process. I would further encourage the students to create other categories if they wish in order to better understand the key terms.

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Appendix
Graph Vocabulary Comprehension Test

Graph Vocabulary Test Name: _____ **Class #:** _____ **Score:** _____

Task: The following 20 words are used in describing graphs. For each of the words below, circle the definition that best describes its meaning.

1. Swiftly a. to move slowly b. to move quickly c. to move at a constant rate d. None of the above	11. Crash a. to decrease slowly b. to move up and down c. to decrease sharply d. None of the above
2. Fluctuate a. to move slowly b. to move up and down c. to move quickly d. None of the above	12. Soar a. to increase little by little b. to decrease sharply c. to increase sharply d. None of the above
3. Level off a. to move slowly b. to move up and down continuously c. to move quickly upward d. None of the above	13. Flatten out a. to move up and down continuously b. to go up slowly c. to go down quickly d. None of the above
4. Substantially a. to make a very large change b. to make a large change c. to make a small change d. None of the above	14. Dramatically a. to make a very large change b. to make a large change c. to make a small change d. None of the above
5. Abruptly a. to move sharply b. to move slowly c. to move at a regular pace d. None of the above	15. Shoot up a. to increase little by little b. to increase sharply c. to increase then decrease d. None of the above
6. Plunge a. to decrease sharply b. to increase sharply c. to decrease little by little d. None of the above	16. Moderately a. to make a very large change b. to make a large change c. to make a small change d. None of the above
7. Steadily a. to move up and down b. to move quickly c. to move slowly d. None of the above	17. Climb a. to go down slowly b. to go up c. c. to move up and down d. None of the above
8. Considerably a. to make a very large change b. to make a small change c. to make a large charge d. None of the above	18. Gradually a. to move sharply b. to move slowly c. to move suddenly d. None of the above
9. Slightly a. to make a small change b. to make a large change c. to make a very large change d. None of the above	19. Significantly a. to make a very small change b. to make a very large change c. to make a large change d. None of the above
10. Bounce back a. to increase slowly b. to move sharply c. to decrease sharply d. None of the above	20. Collapse a. to decrease sharply b. to move up and down c. to decrease slowly d. None of the above

“A different version of this article first appears in *JALT2013 Conference Proceedings*, published by the Japan Association for Language Teaching.”

Promoting Self-reflection and Strategy Use with the Strategy Tree

Satomi Yoshimuta, Huw Davies, and Mayumi Abe

This paper describes follow-up practice of the tool for language learners the authors developed, the Strategy Tree. It consists of a tree with roots, water and the sun, which is drawn by learners. Each part of the drawing represents self-perceptions of affective, cognitive, and sociocultural/ interactive second language ability, detailed by Oxford (2011). In order to foster self-regulation, it is shown how a three-phase strategy cycle can be followed with the help of a teacher or MKO. A case study is presented, which describes both the potential of the Strategy Tree, and its limitations, in a language school setting. Finally, the paper reflects on feedback from workshop participants at the LD20 conference.

本発表は、私達かゝ 発案した学習振り返りツールでゝ あるStrategy Treeの追実践でゝ ある。Strategy Tree は、学習者かゝ 描く木を模した絵でゝ ある。その絵には、樹木、根、水、太陽かゝ 描かれる。各ハゝ ーツは、オックスフォートゝ (2011)のaffective, cognitive, sociocultural/interactiveストラテシゝ ーについての 学習者の認識を反映したものでゝ ある。Self-regulationを育むためには、MKOとしての教師の助けに基 つゝ いて三段階のストラテシゝ ー・サイクルを踏まえる必要かゝ ある。それにのつゝ った語学学校のケース スタデゝ イでゝ は、Strategy Treeの可能性と限界を報告する。最後に、本論はLD20 conferenceにおける ワークショッフゝ 参加者のフィートゝ ハゝ ックについて述べゝ る。

Introduction

In our LD20 presentation, the audience was introduced to the “Strategy Tree”, a visual tool created by the authors (see Abe, Davies & Yoshimuta, 2014; Davies, Yoshimuta & Abe, 2014). It was designed to give learners a wide-ranging view of their second language ability, and is based on the Strategic Self-Regulation (S2R) model of language learning (Oxford, 2011). This paper introduces Oxford’s theories, and then looks at how strategies might be implemented into everyday tuition. Next, we describe the Tree’s use in language school and university settings, before finally describing how our thinking about the Strategy Tree has developed since giving our presentation.

The Strategy Tree

The Strategy Tree consists of the images of a tree with subterranean roots, water from a pitcher, and the sun, which relate to Oxford's (2011) affective, cognitive, and sociocultural/interactive strategies respectively (see Abe et al., 2014). Oxford divided the principal language learning strategies into these three dimensions. The affective dimension is mainly related to motivational strategies such as creating positive emotions and attitudes, and maintaining motivation to learn the language. The cognitive dimension includes strategies such as constructing, transforming and applying knowledge to L2 learning. The sociocultural/interactive dimension is related to communication skills across cultures and contexts (Oxford, 2011). Additionally, in our Tree, the trunk represents pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and the branches embody the four skills of listening, reading, speaking and listening.

In pedagogical settings, learners are encouraged to draw their own tree based on their reflections on their L2 ability and learning strategy use. If the learners decide that they have insufficient grammatical knowledge, that part of the trunk becomes narrower, and if learners believe that they lack in reading proficiency, the branches representing reading do not look fully vegetated but hollowed out. Affective traits are illustrated by roots so that if the learner has strong motivation, the root becomes prominent. As for the sociocultural/interactive dimension, the perception of use of English in communicating with people is depicted by the width of the sun's rays. If learners believe that they have acquired good social skills in the L2, the light becomes more powerful. The three dimensions are mutually influential, and meta-strategies orchestrate and manage them.

When we used the Strategy Tree for the first time in our teaching settings, learners were describing their levels of proficiency and visualizing their strengths and weaknesses. However, Oxford details many other uses of strategic reflection.

Strategy assessment can serve as a baseline description, a source of predictions, a diagnostic tool, a foundation for deciding what strategies to teach, or a pre- and post-instruction measure to evaluate strategy instruction (2011, p.140).

Focus on strategies need not be limited to one area, and should be revisited to satisfy a range of teaching and learning objectives.

The role of strategies in the learning cycle

According to Oxford (2011, p. 25), language learners typically follow a sequence of three phases for doing a task or solving a problem: *strategic forethought* (Task-phase 1), *strategic performance* (Task- phase 2), and *strategic reflection and evaluation* (Task-phase 3). In Task-phase 1, learners gain a general view of the task or the problem, set a goal and make a plan. In Task-phase 2, they implement the plan and monitor progress. In Task-phase 3, they reflect on the overall process and the outcomes. Additionally, each learning strategy in the S2R Model is likely to be useful in a certain phase; for instance, strategies related to planning are frequently used in Task-phase 1. With this in mind, we feel that language learning strategies can be learnt effectively within the three phases when teachers and learners select some learning strategies to use at each phase. Making strategic adjustments to planned strategies at each phase can foster self-regulation, which is the ability to make decisions on learning so that it becomes “something they do for themselves rather than [...] something that is done to or for them” (Zimmerman in Benson, 2001, p.41).

Learning strategies can be acquired with the help of others (Oxford, 2011, p.27). When a more knowledgeable other (MKO), like a teacher, advisor or classmate, is planning to help learners adopt a new strategy, she can instruct in the following way. First, during Task-phase 1, the MKO introduces a new strategy to learners and helps them understand the idea of the strategy and consider how and when to use it. Since this phase is for strategic forethought, it might be helpful to encourage the learners to utilize strategies such as *paying attention* and *planning* to provide learners with the means to tackle future problems independently. During Task-phase 2, the learners monitor whether the strategy is working effectively when they use it. At this time they can use strategies such as *implementing plans* and *orchestrating strategy use* while trying out the new strategy. At Task-phase 3, the learners assess the value of the strategy and make a decision whether they will use it again in their future learning, utilizing the learning strategy *evaluating* at the same time. In short,

learners can learn a new learning strategy in the process of the three phases while applying some other learning strategies that they are already familiar with.

Case study: a language school student

This case study was chosen because it illustrates the need to consider all phases of learning when discussing strategy use. The teacher was focused on Task-phase 2, performance or monitoring, while the learner desired assistance with Task-phase 1, planning.

Davies' learners in a language school setting were instructed to produce a baseline description of their current English performance, which was intended to be used as a diagnostic tool to highlight suitable strategies that could be fostered inside and outside the classroom. In an extension to their biannual counseling sessions, which form part of their course, adult learners drew their own Strategy Trees, based on a template (see Figure 1), and an example drawn by the teacher, which was a self-reflection on his own second language ability (see Figure 2). In the week prior to the counseling lesson, learners were asked to fill out a questionnaire designed to facilitate the creation of their own Strategy Tree. They were encouraged to focus on what they were able to do in English at that time and the drawing of the Trees was supplemented by one-to-one discussion with the teacher as the drawing was taking place.

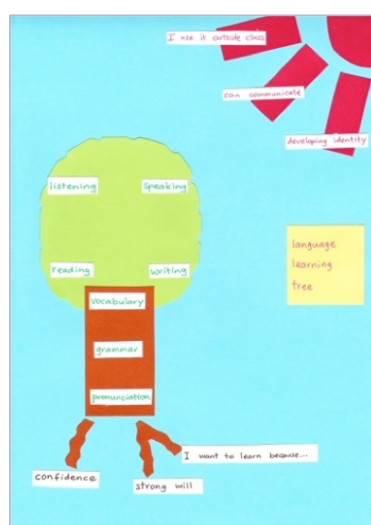


Fig. 1: Template
(Click [here](#) to see full size)



Fig. 2: Teacher's example
(Click [here](#) to see full size)



Fig. 3: Shigeru's tree
(Click [here](#) to see size)

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One learner in particular, Shigeru (a pseudonym) who was a retired gentleman in his late-60s studying in a pre-intermediate group class, seemed not to engage so well with the task, and in discussion with the teacher gave minimal detail regarding his own feelings about his own ability. Initially it was felt that the activity had been of little benefit to him, and that he had not realized the opportunity to self-reflect.

On closer inspection, however, it became clear that Shigeru used the Tree activity to set his own language learning goals. The outcome of this activity was that Shigeru externalized his reasons for study: wanting to read an English newspaper, wanting to be able to write a letter in English, and to be able to speak to foreign people and travel abroad. Goal setting is an element of Task-phase 1, strategic forethought (Oxford, 2011), and by expressing his intentions, Shigeru, aided by the teacher, was able to formulate a learning plan. This also ensured that future lessons were centered on his needs.

The counseling sessions were introduced to both encourage and develop learner self- reflection, and to help each learner and teacher agree on a personalized learning plan for the next six months. Therefore, asking Shigeru to draw his Tree raised his awareness about strategies, both strategies he was using at the time– like listening to NHK radio programs and studying pronunciation – and ones which would enable him to achieve his learning goals. The Strategy Tree use here is, therefore, related to Task-phase 3, strategic reflection and evaluation.

However, perhaps because counseling is only done twice a year and strategy instruction does not feed into the syllabus, this activity seems not to have led to greater self-reflection from Shigeru. One puzzle moving forward is how long-term strategic performance can be encouraged.

Workshop at our LD 20 Presentation

Much like the language school and university students who had produced Strategy Trees in our teaching settings, it seemed the LD20 audience was motivated by the activity and excited to draw with colorful pens. Participants said the process was a lot of fun, very interesting, and the swells and bumps of the tree helped them realize the strong and weak points of their English proficiency.

One of the participants who taught at a language school commented, “It seems the idea of a Strategy Tree can be applicable to my workplace. Like others I really enjoyed drawing my Tree and it is helpful to recognize the current status of my English proficiency and is as well effective in discovering goals in language learning. It can surely be used at educational settings.” Another audience member, who works in a university, contacted us to say how enjoyable and motivating his students had found the Strategy Tree for reflecting on their improvement at the end of the semester. Looking back at the presentation, discussion with the audience reminded us that drawing the Tree for the purpose of promoting self-reflection could engage and motivate learners in a variety of settings.

Conclusions: promoting strategy use

In university and language school settings, learners reported that the Strategy Tree was useful in aiding their self-reflection, and in developing their awareness beyond the four skills. Some university students expressed in their feedback that it was valuable for promoting the affective and sociocultural/interactive dimensions of learning English. As a result, they developed an interest in finding strategies in different dimensions. However, although we provided some direct strategy instruction in our classrooms, as Oxford suggests, it was not sufficient (2011, p. 174). The instructor could not ensure the learners became aware of, discovered or recycled any strategies in the limited time frame of the school settings. The same pattern emerged in the language school. We feel that a concerted effort is needed by the teacher over time to introduce and implement strategies at each phase of learning. use. We feel that this will be far more effective than one-off activities. However, we are also aware that in many teaching settings, teachers do not have the authority or individual time with the learners to accomplish this.

Another option to encourage strategy use, which we discussed with visitors to our presentation, is to revisit the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), a 50-point questionnaire produced by Oxford (1990). Introducing parts of the SILL, a few points at a time in line with learner needs revealed by the Strategy Tree, might encourage awareness about learning strategies and develop greater range in our students’ approaches to

learning. In asking our learners to draw their Trees for the first time, we found all of our learners used language learning strategies, though many of them were unaware they were doing so.

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Fig. 1: Template

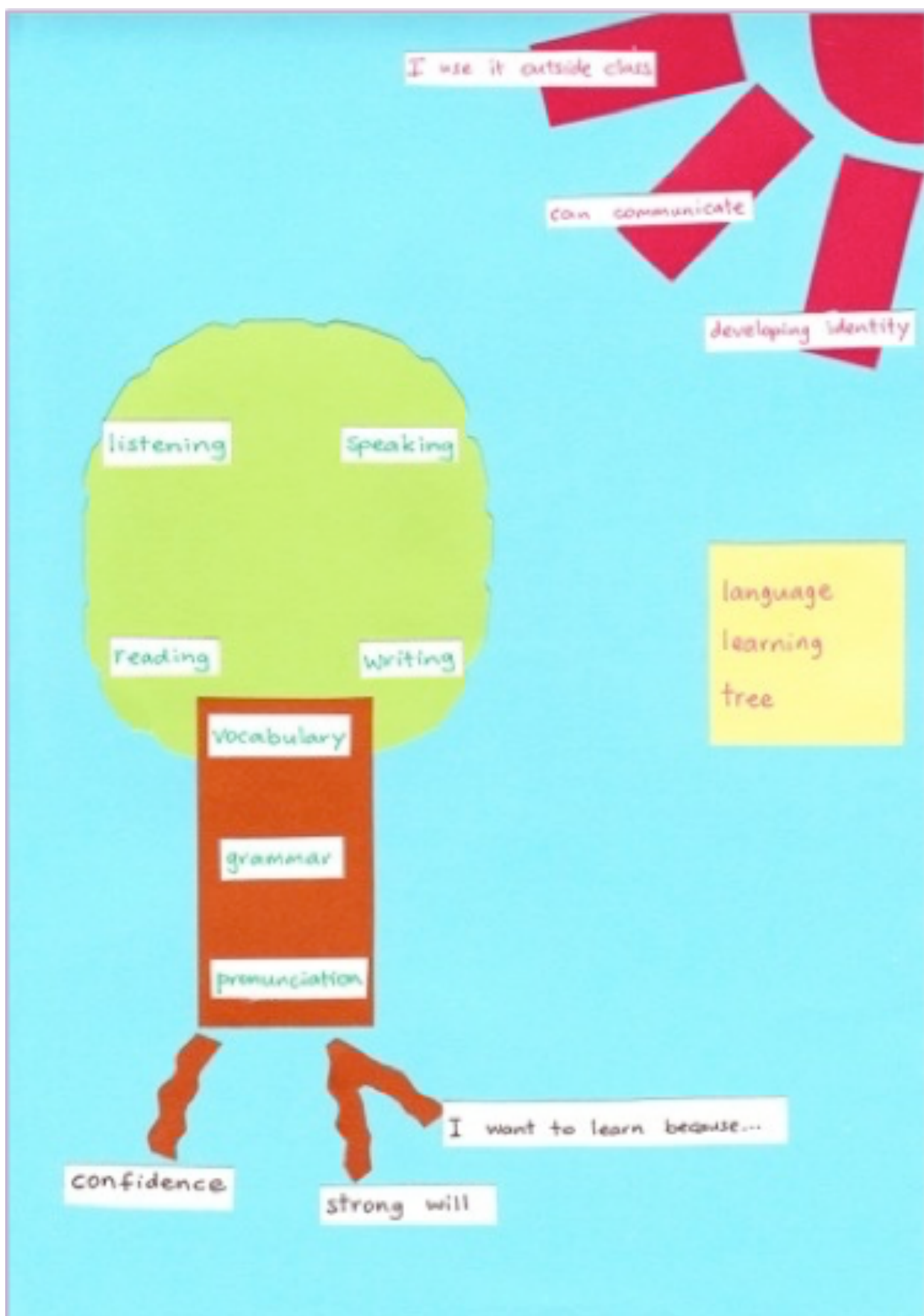


Fig. 2: Teacher's example

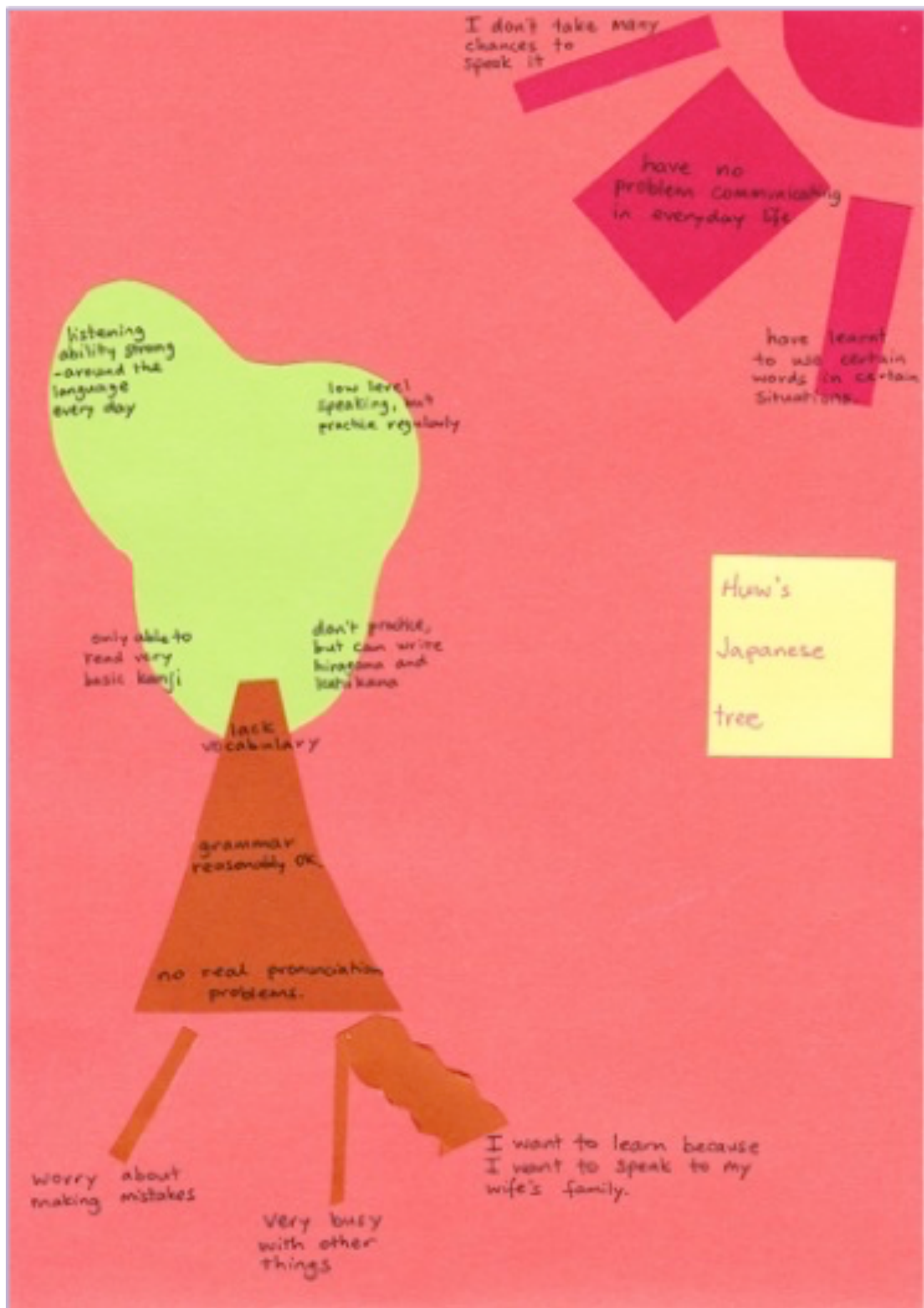


Fig. 3: Shigeru's tree

