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Team-Teaching and Familiarizing Pupils with English Sounds and Basic Expressions through Elementary School English Activities¹

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1. Introduction

In the current Japanese education system, team-teaching between a Japanese Teacher (hereafter, JT) and an Assistant Language Teacher (hereafter, ALT) is a quite common teaching format in the English classroom. It has been over thirty years since English-speaking assistant teachers were introduced to the daily English classroom in Japan. The number of ALTs has rapidly increased year by year, and students now have many opportunities to appreciate the presence of an ALT in the classroom.

To a certain degree, the presence of the ALT compensates for the deficiency of natural interaction with native speakers of English in a foreign language environment. The number of ALTs, including both those that do and those that do not belong to the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program, is now large enough to provide one stationary ALT per junior high school. Moreover, there are now ALTs periodically working in elementary schools, together with homeroom teachers, because ‘English Activities’² will be instituted as a requirement for the fifth and sixth

1 This study was supported by JSPS Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research Basic Research (C) #19520479 to the first author.

2 The non-specific term “Foreign Language” is used in the Course of Study, but MEXT suggests that English be prototypically used as the foreign language. For this reason, the terms “Foreign Language” and “English” are used interchangeably in the study.

grades under the new Course of Study (MEXT³ 2008a) from 2011, with the aim of encouraging the active involvement of native speakers of English in classroom activities. Thus, it is very important to develop efficiency and quality of team-teaching in the English classroom, not only in junior high school and high school, but also in elementary school.

The upcoming start of English Activities as a requirement has led us to consider many urgent problems, one of which is the development of communication between JTs and ALTs. In junior high schools, English is taught by teachers who are specialists in English, which means that there is not so much of a language barrier between junior high JTs and ALTs, the primary issue being how efficiently the ALTs' presence is *actually used* in classroom activities. In contrast, English Activities in elementary schools are carried out primarily by HRTs, the majority of whom are not specialized in English. For this reason, it is considered rather difficult for many JTs to satisfactorily communicate with their ALTs about the goals, plans, and strategies of daily team-teaching, and to share a common understanding about them.

As a way to contribute to the development of team-teaching in elementary school, this study investigates differences between JTs and ALTs with regard to their understanding of the overall objectives of English Activities as stated in the Course of Study. In particular, we focus on one of the three items that compose the objectives, which is stated as *familiarization of pupils with the sounds and basic expressions of English*. In the new Course of Study (MEXT 2008a), English Activities are introduced as a *foundation-setting* process for communication abilities and are intended to cohere with English education in junior high school and high school. Moreover, it is suggested that the content of instructions mainly concerning language

and culture be linked with that mainly concerning communication, in order that pupils understand language and culture *experientially*, and to avoid overly detailed explanations or engaging them in rote learning (MEXT 2009: 2). In building a foundation for communication ability, familiarizing pupils with the sounds and basic expressions of English is a very important but difficult task for us. Significantly, this task plays a fundamental role in deepening pupils' experiential understandings of the languages and cultures of foreign countries as well as Japan.

In what follows, we first outline the objectives of English Activities as stated in the new Course of Study (Section 2). Next, we report and discuss the results of a paper-and-pencil questionnaire survey that investigated as a preliminary step to our research project, differences in understanding of the meaning of *familiarization of pupils with the sounds and basic expressions of English* between JTs and ALTs (Section 3). Finally, we consider issues that need to be improved in order to achieve success in JT-ALT team-teaching, with the goals of development of English Activities and of coherence between English Activities and English education (Section 4).

2. Objectives of English Activities and Coherence between English Activities and English Education

The new Course of Study (MEXT 2008a) defines the objective of Foreign Language Activities as the setting of the foundation of pupils' communication abilities through foreign languages. The objective consists of the following three subcomponents:

- (1) a. To deepen pupils' understandings of language and culture through foreign

3 The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology.

- languages.
- b. To foster pupils' positive attitudes toward communication through foreign languages.
- c. To familiarize pupils with sounds and basic expressions of foreign languages.

These subcomponents are deeply interrelated, and it is inevitable that activities be exercised by integrating them with each other, not only to form the pupils' foundation of communication abilities, but also to create a solid grounding for the advancement to English education at junior high school and high school. As stated in Section 1, the focus of this study is to investigate whether or not there are any differences between JTs' and ALTs' understanding of (1c), in particular, and the questions used in the questionnaire survey reported in Section 3 are centered on this subcomponent. For efficient team-teaching in daily English Activities, concrete images of and ideas about the rather abstract term *to familiarize* must be shared by JTs and ALTs. Although the terms used in the description of the overall objectives of English Activities are all important, we notice that there might be differences between JTs and ALTs in terms of images of and ideas about the term, as evidenced by their teaching during the classes we observed. For this reason, as part of our research project on team-teaching, this study pursues this question.

In the new Course of Study (MEXT 2008a), the emphasis is placed not only upon the development of language skills but also upon the wider development of understanding of language and culture and of positive attitudes toward communication with others. Taking pupils' developmental stages into account, it is also emphasized that pupils' understandings of language and culture should be developed through experience. The coherence of English Activities with English education is to be

created in the following manner: *The foundation of communication abilities* formed at the elementary school level through English Activities is to be the core grounding for the advancement to the basic *communication abilities* expected to be developed at the junior high school level and for the *communication abilities* to be further enhanced at the high school level.

The new Course of Study (MEXT 2008a: 9) requires that instructions for Foreign Language Activities be given on the items stated in (2) to help pupils actively engage in communication in a foreign language, and on the items stated in (3) to deepen pupils' experiential understanding of the languages and cultures of both Japan and foreign countries:

- (2)
 - a. To experience the joy of communication in the foreign language.
 - b. To actively listen to and speak in the foreign language.
 - c. To learn the importance of verbal communication.
- (3)
 - a. To become familiar with the sounds and rhythms of the foreign language, to learn its differences from the Japanese language, and to be aware of the interesting aspects of language and its richness.
 - b. To learn the differences in ways of living, customs, and events between Japan and foreign countries and to be aware of various points of view and ways of living.
 - c. To experience communication with people of different cultures and to deepen understanding of culture.

Of the items stated in (2) and (3), those in (2a-b) and (3a) are of direct relevance to our current

topic. For this reason, some of the questions on the questionnaire specifically pertain to those items. Since other items are also important in pursuing the overall objectives outlined earlier, they are incorporated into the multiple-choice answers presented to informants together with the questions. Since the new Course of Study explicitly states that the items in (2) are to support pupils' active engagement in communication, and that those in (3) are to deepen their understanding of languages and cultures by means of experience, we consider it worthwhile to investigate whether or not there are any differences between JTs and ALTs in their understanding of these items as well.

3. Differences in Understanding between JTs and ALTs of the Stated Aim of Familiarizing Pupils with the Sounds and Basic Expressions of English

Method

To contribute to the development of team-teaching in elementary schools, a paper-and-pencil questionnaire survey was administered to investigate whether or not there are any differences between JTs and ALTs in terms of their understanding of the overall objectives of English Activities. As summarized in Section 2, the overall objectives of English Activities are composed of three subcomponents, and the survey was targeted at one of them: *familiarization of pupils with the sounds and basic expressions of English*, hereafter referred to as *the target subcomponent*.

Participants

In the survey, 55 JTs and 19 ALTs voluntarily participated as informants. They were all working for Ota City in Gunma Prefecture. There are 26 elementary schools in total in Ota City, and the JT

informants were collected from 24 of those 26 schools. The majority of ALTs in Ota City participated in the survey, the total number of ALTs there being 21. Of these 21, 16 were working for one junior high school plus one or more elementary schools, whereas the remaining five were working for a multiple number of elementary schools. Thus, the ALT informants were either working for only elementary school or for one junior high school plus one or more elementary schools.

Materials

The questionnaire used in the survey was created by the authors to elicit information about how informants understand and feel about the target subcomponent of the objectives. The questionnaire consisted of a total of 14 questions, including basic demographic questions and questions asking about the target subcomponent per se. Of the questionnaire, two versions, a Japanese version and an English version, were created for JTs and ALTs, respectively, to examine whether there would be any differences in response patterns between them. The content of the two versions were completely equivalent, the only difference being the language used. Each version was printed on A4 paper to make a 4-page booklet. The questionnaire was administered in August 2009 at the site of the 2nd Methodology Workshop at Ota City Educational Institute⁴. It took informants approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The purpose of the survey was written at the beginning of the questionnaire booklet and explained verbally by one of the authors.

Data scoring

The frequencies of chosen responses to each question on the questionnaire were tabulated so as

4 As part of the research project, which was supported by JSPS Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research Basic Research (C) #19520479, the first and second authors of this study constructed a model of communication between JTs and ALTs for success at team-teaching. They presented the model in various workshops and seminars for serving teachers of elementary schools and junior high schools, and the 2nd Methodology Workshop at Ota City Educational Institute was one of them.

to compare the answers of JTs with those of ALTs. Since there was a significant gap between the numbers of JT informants and ALT informants, comparisons were made using percentiles. The results are summarized and reported below.

Results and Discussion

The first question (Question 1) asked informants whether they were aware that one part

of the overall objective of Foreign Language Activities is *familiarizing pupils with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign languages*. As shown in Table 1 below, informants' awareness was very high, and it is impressive that all the ALT informants are aware of this part of the overall objective.

Question 1: According to the Course of Study, part of the overall objective of Japanese elementary school foreign language activities is *familiarizing pupils with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign languages*. Are you aware of this objective?

- a. yes
- b. no

Table 1. Awareness of Target Objective

<i>Informant</i>		JT	ALT
<i>Response</i>	Yes	87%	100%
	No	13%	0%

The next question (Question 2) asked informants about some of their basic principles in teaching Foreign Language Activities classes, allowing them to choose one or more out of the

following seven choices, and the outcome is summarized in Figure 1 on the next page, where the letters in parentheses on the horizontal axis correspond to those of the seven choices.

Question 2: What are some of your basic principles when you teach a Foreign Language Activities class? Please circle the appropriate letter(s).

- a. to develop pupils' enjoyment of English
- b. to give pupils as many opportunities as possible to communicate with teachers and classmates
- c. to give pupils as many opportunities as possible to speak and listen to English
- d. to awaken pupils' interests in foreign culture and in Japanese culture (by contrast)
- e. to develop pupils' confidence in using English
- f. none in particular
- g. other ()

Figure 1 on the following page reveals some interesting facts. First, there was an 8% difference between JTs and ALTs for (a) *developing pupils' enjoyment of English*, with the percentile of JTs who chose (a) as their basic principle a little higher

than that of ALTs. Second, the difference between the two groups for (b) *giving pupils as many opportunities as possible to communicate with teachers and classmates*, was 13%, the percentile of ALTs who chose (b) as their basic principle higher

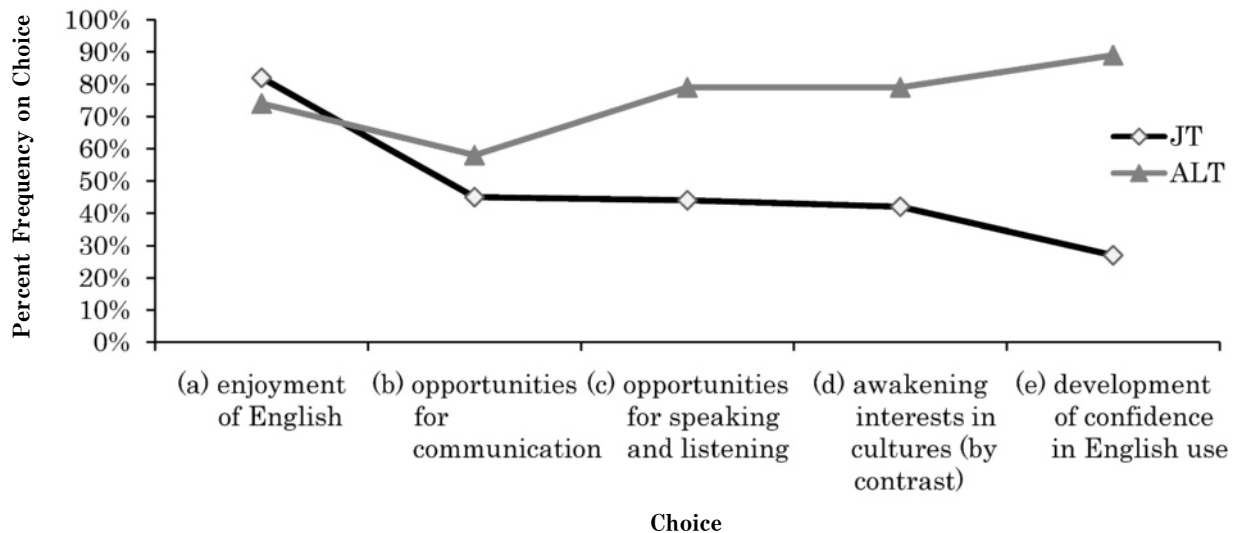


Figure 1. Comparison between JTs and ALTs on percentage frequency of choices for basic principle (s) in teaching Foreign Language Activities classes.

than that of JTs. Surprisingly, there were even larger differences in (c) *giving pupils as many opportunities as possible to speak and listen to English* (35%), (d) *awakening pupils' interests in foreign culture and in Japanese culture (by contrast)* (37%), and (e) *developing pupils' confidence in using English* (62%). Here, the percentiles for the ALTs who chose (c), (d), and (e) were much higher than those for the JTs.

The above data pattern seems to indicate the following: Overall, JTEs tend to place priority on *enjoyment of English* as their basic principle, and not so much on other items. In contrast, although ALTs also consider *enjoyment of English* to be important, they place more priority on *the development of confidence in English use*, together with giving *opportunities for speaking and listening* and *awakening interests in cultures by contrast*. That is, JTs tend to consider enjoyment of English to be the most important principle when teaching English Activities, whereas ALTs tend to consider developing confidence in English use and awakening interest in cultures to be very important, and so strive to give pupils many opportunities for speaking and listening during English Activities.

Surprisingly, for both JTs and ALTs, giving pupils many opportunities for communication was not the most important basic principle. The new Course of Study (MEXT 2008a; 2008b) states that it is very important to have pupils actually experience enjoyment of communication for the development of positive attitudes toward communication. In the commentary (MEXT 2008b), it is thus noted that activities must be performed not to merely entertain pupils, but rather to have them experience enjoyment of communication with various people (i.e., teachers and peers) by using, to the full, as much English as they have at their disposal. In this sense, providing pupils with many opportunities for speaking and listening is indeed important, but creating situations in which they can communicate with others must be considered fundamental.

Another question (Question 3) on the questionnaire asked JTs and ALTs the meaning of *to be familiar with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign language* and asked to them choose as many options as they wanted, the options being as follows (Note that the dotted lines between the choices are for our discussion purposes.):

Question 3: What do you think it means to be “familiar” with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign language? Please circle the appropriate letter(s) below.

- a. knowing the existence of English
 - b. having some interest in English
 - c. liking English
 - d. wanting to study English more
 - e. being able to use English without hesitation
 - f. having a positive attitude toward using English
 - g. wanting to hear English sounds
 - h. having an interest in English sounds
-
- i. being able to find similarities and differences between English and Japanese
 - j. being able to pronounce English slightly by imitating
 - k. being able to pronounce English by imitating
 - l. being able to pronounce English well by imitating
-
- m. being able to read a few English letters
 - n. being able to read English letters
 - o. being able to read a lot of English letters
-
- p. knowing a few vocabulary units of English
 - q. knowing vocabulary units of English
 - r. knowing a lot of vocabulary units of English
-
- s. being able to use a few basic English expressions
 - t. being able to use a fair amount of basic English expressions
 - u. being able to use a lot of English expressions
-
- v. being able to hear a few basic English expressions
 - w. being able to hear a fair amount of basic English expressions
 - x. being able to hear a lot of basic English expressions
-
- y. other ()

As shown above, there were a total of 25 choices given, 24 specific items and one *other* in which informants could write something other than the items (a) to (x). The 24 choices were created by

considering the six categories given below. These six categories are demarcated above by dotted lines between the choices listed, for the reader’s convenience.

Items (a)–(h)	Interest and Attitude	} Skill
Items (i)–(l)	Sounds and Pronunciation	
Items (m)–(o)	Letters	
Items (p)–(r)	Vocabulary	
Items (s)–(u)	Speaking	
Items (v)–(x)	Listening	

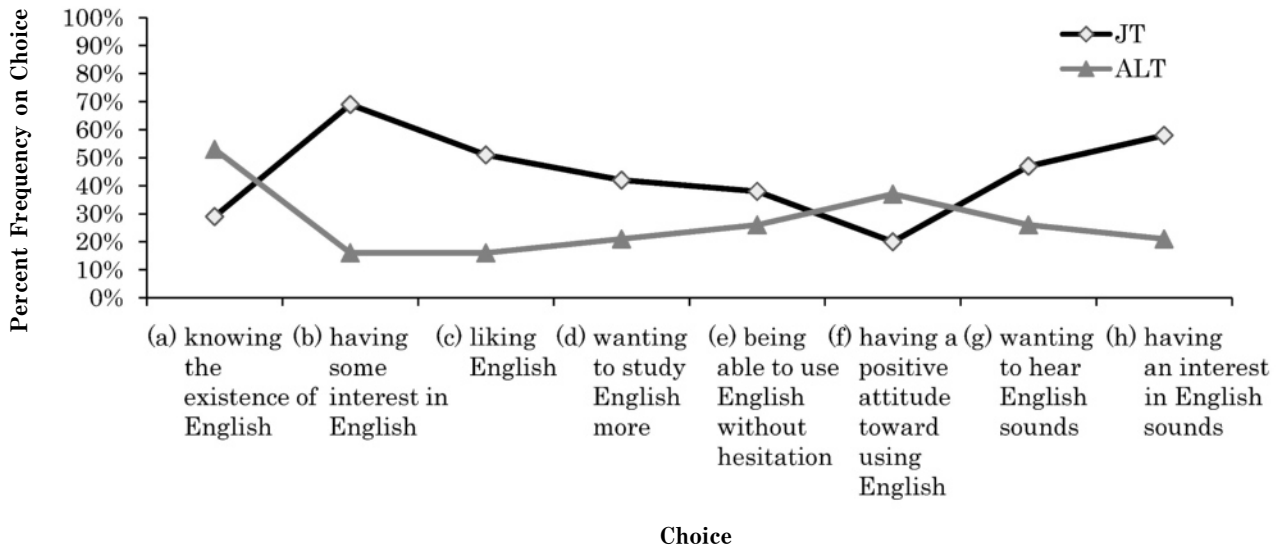


Figure 2. Comparison between JTs and ALTs by percentage frequency of choices for the meaning of “to be familiar with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign language” in the interest and attitude category.

As shown on the preceding page, the 24 items are categorized into two broad areas: One is the *Interest-and-Attitude* oriented category, which includes Items (a) through (h), and the other is the *Skill* oriented category, which includes Items (i) through (x). The *Skill* oriented category is further divided into five subareas: *Sounds and Pronunciation, Letters, Vocabulary, Speaking, and Listening*. Analysis of the results shows some very interesting patterns. In what follows, the results are summarized and reported according to these categories. Also, note that Items (s) through (x) explicitly point to *basic English expressions*.

Interest and Attitude

As illustrated in Figure 2 at the top of this page, the JTs' response frequencies were higher than those of the ALTs for six items out of eight in the Interest-and-Attitude oriented category of items. Among those six items, JTs showed much more preference than ALTs for (b) having some interest in English, (h) having an interest in English sounds, and (c) liking English, the differences between JTs and ALTs being 53%, 37%, and 35%, respectively. These are followed by (g) wanting to hear English sounds, (d) wanting to study, and (e) being able to use English without hesitation, and the differences

in preference between JTs and ALTs were 21%, 21%, and 12%, respectively. ALTs showed more preference for the remaining two items, (a) knowing the existence of English and (f) having a positive attitude toward using English, and the differences for these items between ALTs and JTs were 24% and 17%, respectively. These data patterns seem to indicate the following: JTs tend more than ALTs to consider the meaning of *to be familiar with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign language* as having to do with pupils' interest and attitude, such as having an interest in English and English sounds, and liking English. On the other hand, ALTs tend to consider the meaning of *to be familiar with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign language* to be concerned with knowing the existence of English and/or having a positive attitude toward using English. The contrast illustrated in Figure 2 is itself interesting, but response patterns for the items in the *Skill* oriented category show more striking patterns.

Table 2 on the following page presents a summary of response frequencies in percentile per choice for Question 3, which asked JTs and ALTs about the meaning of *to be familiar with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign language*. Here,

Table 2. Summary of Response Frequencies in Skill Oriented Categories

<i>informant</i>		JT	ALT
<i>Choice for Interests and Attitudes</i>	(i) able to find similarities and differences between sounds of English and Japanese	20%	63%
	(j) able to pronounce English slightly by imitating	47%	58%
	(k) able to pronounce English by imitating	22%	74%
	(l) able to pronounce English well by imitating	5%	31%
	(m) able to read a few English letters	16%	47%
	(n) able to read English letters	0%	42%
	(o) able to read a lot of English letters	0%	11%
	(p) knowing a few vocabulary units of English	20%	58%
	(q) knowing vocabulary units of English	9%	42%
	(r) knowing a lot of vocabulary units of English	2%	5%
	(s) able to use a few basic English expressions	38%	74%
	(t) able to use a fair amount of basic English expressions	5%	26%
	(u) able to use a lot of English expressions	4%	16%
	(v) able to hear a few basic English expressions	29%	47%
	(w) able to hear a fair amount of basic English expressions	22%	37%
	(x) able to hear a lot of basic English expressions	4%	26%

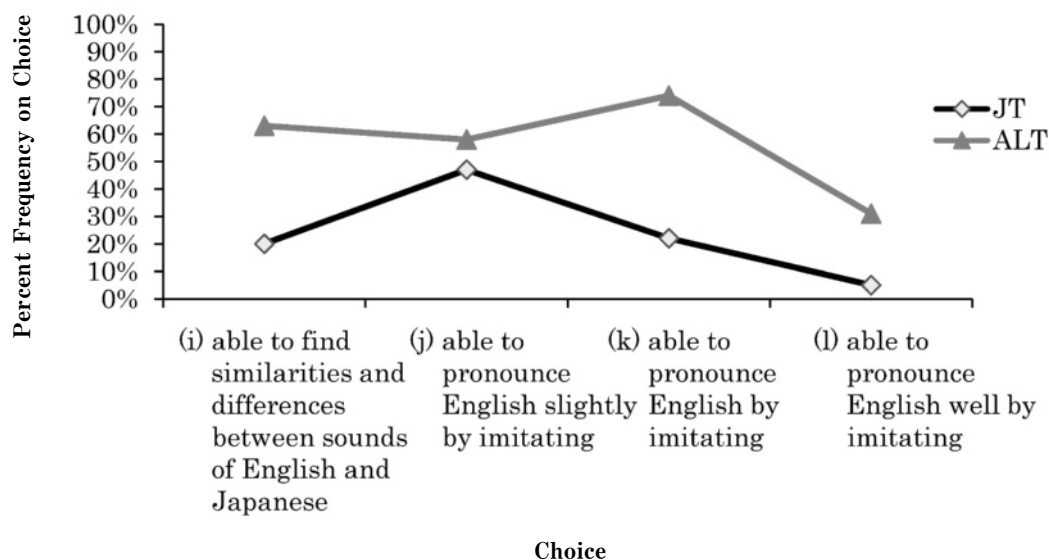


Figure 3. Comparison between JTs and ALTs on percentage frequency of choices for sounds and pronunciation.

for every single item, the ALTs' preference was much higher than that of the JTs. Recall that there were five subareas in the *Skill* oriented category, which are indicated by dotted lines in Table 2: *Sounds and Pronunciation, Letters, Vocabulary, Speaking, and Listening*. Let us now examine each subarea closely.

Sounds and Pronunciation

The results of responses for Items (i)-(l), which concern *Sounds and Pronunciation*, are

summarized in Figure 3 above.

A glance at the figure tells us that the ALTs seemed more than the JTs to consider the four items as representing the meaning of *to be familiar with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign language*, and that there was not a large difference between the JTs and ALTs for (j) *being able to pronounce English slightly by imitating*. Note, however, that Item (i) differs from Items (j)-(l) in what it refers to: While (i) concerns the ability to

find similarities and differences between English sounds and Japanese sounds, (j)-(l) concern the ability to pronounce English, differing from each other only in their description of the degree of said ability. So, let us examine Item (i) first. The response pattern for (i) shows a clear contrast between the JTs and ALTs: JTs tended not to include *the ability to find similarities and differences between English sounds and Japanese sounds* in the meaning of *to be familiar with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign language*, whereas ALTs did. Interestingly, the response patterns for (j)-(l) tell us that, for JTs, (j) being able to pronounce English slightly by imitating seems to be the most important among the Sounds and Pronunciation items. For ALTs, in contrast, slightly does not seem to be enough. One possibility for this contrast is differences in interpretation of the following item from the new Course of Study (MEXT, 2008a), which was reviewed as (3a) in Section 2 and is now repeated as (4) below:

- (4) To become familiar with the sounds and

rhythms of the foreign language, to learn its differences from the Japanese language, and to be aware of the interesting aspects of language and its richness.

Although it is quite reasonable to consider that (4) expresses three items, it is necessary to give many opportunities to listen to and imitate English sounds, together with ALTs.

To further investigate current conditions under which pupils are being familiarized with English sounds, five questions, Questions 4 to 8, were asked in the questionnaire. Summaries of the outcomes are presented in what follows. Question 4 asked how often the teachers practice pronunciation with their pupils. A summary of results is shown in Table 3 below. It is good that the majority of ALTs (89%) and JTs (77%) always or almost always practice pronunciation with their pupils, but it is rather surprising that there were some ALTs (10%) and JTs (14%) that only occasionally or never practice pronunciation with their pupils.

Question 4: Do you practice pronunciation with pupils?

- a. always
- b. almost always
- c. sometimes
- d. almost never
- e. depends on occasion
- f. never

Table 3. Pronunciation Practice with Pupils

<i>Informant</i>		JT	ALT
<i>Response</i>	Always	53%	47%
	Almost always	24%	42%
	Sometimes	9%	5%
	Almost never	5%	5%
	Depends on occasions	5%	0%
	Never	2%	0%

Question 5 asked about the necessity of pronunciation practice for pupils. As summarized

in Table 4 below, 95% of ALTs considered that it is (very) necessary for pupils to practice

pronunciation. Compared to this result, fewer JTs (79%) considered it (very) necessary. Although there was no one that considered pronunciation practice not to be necessary, it should in particular be noted that 25% of JTs consider pronunciation practice to be only a little necessary.

Question 5: What do you think about pronunciation practice for pupils?

- a. very necessary
- b. necessary
- c. not so necessary
- d. unnecessary

Table 4. Necessity of Pronunciation Practice

<i>Informant</i>		JT	ALT
<i>Response</i>	Very necessary	44%	42%
	Necessary	35%	53%
	A little necessary	25%	5%
	Unnecessary	0%	0%
	No answer	4%	0%

Question 6 asked about the number of repetitions needed during practicing pronunciation for pupils to become confident, and the results are summarized in Table 5 on the following page: While 4-5 times was the typical response from JTs, ALTs responses were almost equally split between 3, 4-5, and 6-7 times. Also, 21% of ALTs and 17% of JTs consider 10 or more times to be appropriate. Notably, 20% of JTs did not know how many times pupils need to repeat when practicing pronunciation in order to become confident. The new Course of Study (MEXT 2008a: 8) explicitly states that

instructions heavily inclining to the mere acquisition of skills (i. e., too detailed explanations or rote-learning types of training, such as mechanical pattern practice and recitation of dialogues) must be avoided because they are not consistent with the objectives of Foreign Language Activities. Question 6 was intended to ask not about how much instructions are inclined toward the mere acquisition of skills, but to ask how much pronunciation practice is necessary to help pupils form the foundation of communication ability.

Question 6: To build pupils' confidence toward using English in an upcoming activity, how many times do you think is appropriate for them to repeat each word or phrase to be used in the activity? Please circle the appropriate letter(s).

- a. 1 time
- b. 2 times
- c. 3 times
- d. 4 or 5 times
- e. 6 or 7 times
- f. 8 or 9 times
- g. 10 times
- h. more than 10 times (times)
- i. I do not know

Table 5. Appropriate Number of Times to Repeat for Confidence

<i>Informant</i>		JT	ALT
<i>Response</i>	1	0%	0%
	2	2%	0%
	3	9%	26%
	4 ~ 5	40%	26%
	6 ~ 7	9%	21%
	8 ~ 9	2%	0%
	10	11%	11%
	More than 11	6%	11%
	I do not know	20%	5%

Question 7 asked informants whether they had ever been concerned about their own confidence and ability to lead pupils in practicing pronunciation. As shown in Table 6 below, there was a clear

contrast between JTs and ALTs: 68% of ALTs reported that they had never experienced such concerns, while 58% of JTs reported that they had.

Question 7: Have you ever been concerned about your own confidence and ability to lead pupils in practicing pronunciation?

- a. yes b. no

Table 6. Concern about Own Confidence/Ability to Lead Pronunciation Practice

<i>Informant</i>		JT	ALT
<i>Response</i>	Yes	58%	32%
	No	24%	68%
	No answer	18%	0%

Related to Questions 5 through 7, Question 8 examined whether informants had ever been confused about how much pronunciation practice is necessary or appropriate for pupils. To this

question, 62% of JTs answered that they had, whereas the ALTs responses were split almost 50-50 between “Yes” and “No”.

Question 8: Have you ever been confused about how much pronunciation practice is necessary or appropriate for pupils?

- a. yes b. no

Table 7. Confusion about Amount of Pronunciation Practice

<i>Informant</i>		JT	ALT
<i>Response</i>	Yes	62%	47%
	No	25%	47%
	No answer	13%	5%

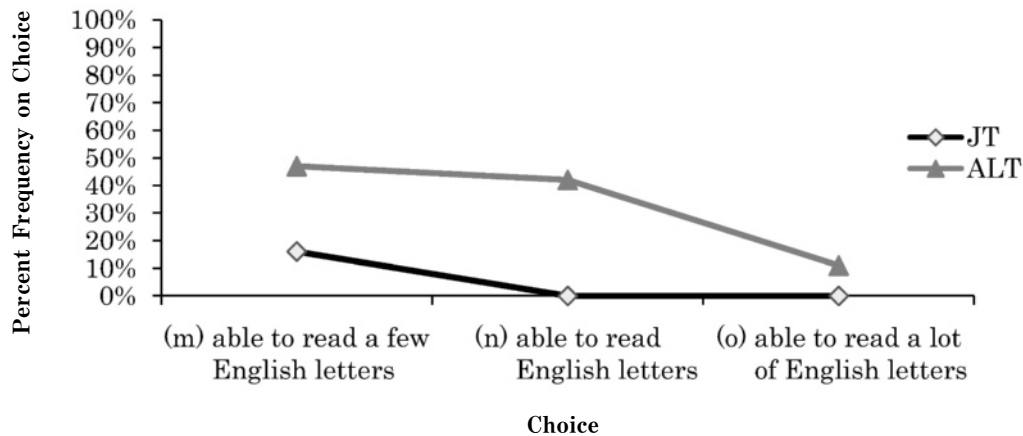


Figure 4. Comparison between JTs and ALTs by percentage frequency of choices

The response patterns for Questions 5 through 8 taken together, ALTs tend not to have concern about their own confidence and ability to lead pronunciation practice, while many JTs do have such concern. More detailed research is required, but one possible speculation about the response pattern presented in Table 7 on the preceding page is the following: JTs tended to have been confused in the past about the amount of pronunciation practice needed because they did not have confidence, and were unable to lead pronunciation practice; meanwhile, ALTs tended to have been confused in the past because they were uncertain about how much they should have led the practice, even though they were confident and able to lead such practice. This may lead us to consider how to develop communication between JTs and ALTs. In addition, 18% and 13% of JTs offered no answer to Questions 7 and 8, respectively. The reason for these outcomes is not clear, but it might be related to what is speculated above and to the response pattern in which 20% of JTs declared that they did not know how much repetition of each word or phrase was needed to build pupils' confidence.

Letters

Recall now that Question 3 asked JTs and ALTs the meaning of *to be familiar with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign language*, and that the question was accompanied by 24 choices, which

were designed to be divided into two major groups: the *Interest-and-Attitude* oriented category and the *Skill* oriented category. While the former is not divided into smaller subareas, the latter is further divided into five subareas: *Sounds and Pronunciation, Letters, Vocabulary, Speaking, and Listening*. So far, the results for the *Interest-and-Attitude* oriented category and the *Sounds and Pronunciation subarea of the Skill* oriented category have been reported and discussed. This section reports the results of the *Letters* subarea, followed by reports of the subareas of *Vocabulary, Speaking, and Listening*.

The responses from the JTs and ALTs for Items (m)-(o), which concern the *Letters* subarea, are summarized in Figure 4 above, and the three items differ from each other in their descriptions of the expected degree of pupils' ability to read English letters. Here, many fewer JTs and ALTs chose these items as the meaning of *to be familiar with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign language*. These results are quite reasonable because the new Course of Study (2008a: 19; 2009: 2) makes a clear statement on this matter, as shown in (5):

- (5) When giving pupils opportunities to experience communication in the foreign language, teachers should focus on the

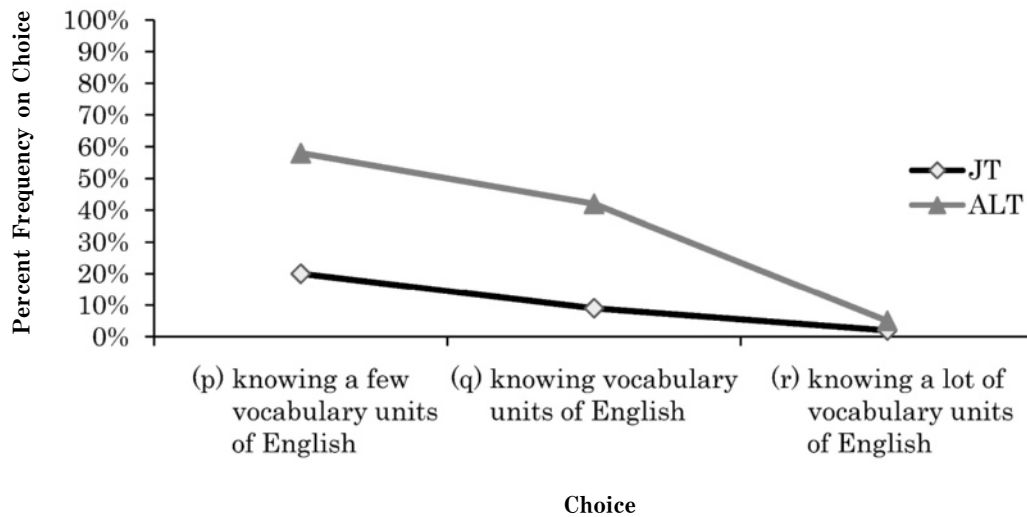


Figure 5. Comparison between JTs and ALTs by percentage frequency of choices

foreign language sounds and use letters of the alphabet and words as supplementary tools for oral communication, in effort not to give much burden to pupils.

What we see in Figure 4 on the preceding page, however, is that there is a very clear contrast in the response patterns of the JTs and ALTs: Only 16% of JTs considered (m) the ability to read just a few letters to be included in the meaning of *to be familiar with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign language*, and no one considered the ability to read any more English letters than that to be included in said meaning. On the other hand, approximately 47% of ALTs chose (m) a few letters, and 42% chose (n) the middle degree, and 11% chose (o) a lot of letters. That is, to build familiarity with the sounds and basic expressions of English, ALTs tend to expect pupils' to be able to read more letters than JTs do.

Vocabulary

Figure 5 above presents a summary of response outcomes for the *Vocabulary* subarea, which consisted of Items (p)-(r). These items differ from each other only in the degree of knowledge of *English vocabulary units* they describe. Of the ALT informants, 58%, 42%, and 5% chose (p)

knowing a few vocabulary units, (q) knowing vocabulary units, and (r) knowing a lot of vocabulary units, respectively. Of the JT informants, on the other hand, 20%, 9%, and 2% chose (p), (q), and (r), respectively. Here again, more ALTs than JTs consider knowing vocabulary units to be part of the meaning of *to be familiar with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign language*. However, relative to what we saw for Items (m)-(o), regarding the degree of ability to read letters in Figure 4, 11% more ALTs chose the item which described the lowest amount with regards to knowing vocabulary. This pattern contrasts with what we see in the JTs' choices: While only 4% more of JTs chose the item which mentions the lowest amount of vocabulary, 9% more chose the middle amount.

Listening and Speaking

As stated earlier, among the 24 response choices for Question 3, which asked informants the meaning of our target objective, *to be familiar with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign language*, Items (s)-(x) directly referred to *basic English expressions*. Of these items, Items (s)-(u) concerned their use in *Speaking*, while Items (v)-(x) concerned *Listening*. Since the two item groups are deeply related to each other, they are

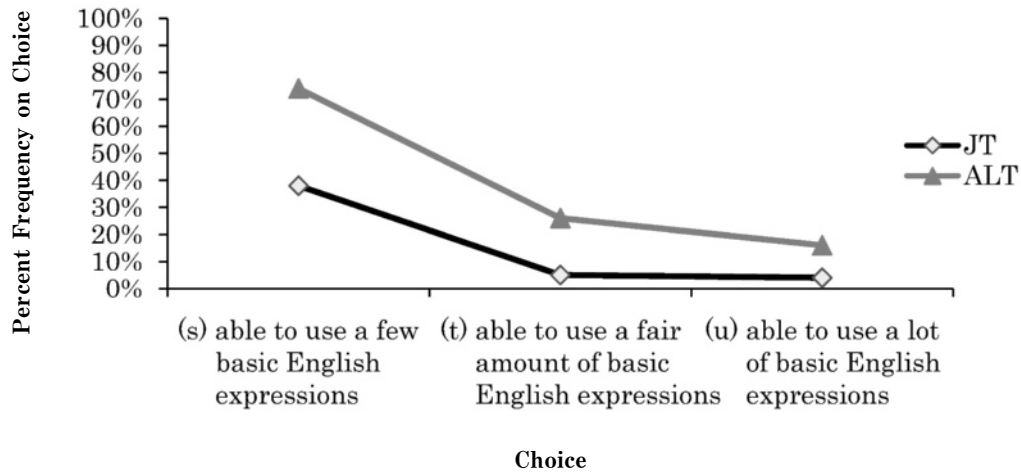


Figure 6. Comparison between JTs and ALTs by percentage frequency of choices for speaking.

reported and discussed here together.

First, Figure 6 above summarizes the results for Items (s)-(u), which varied, in the amount of basic English expressions they described pupils as potentially able to use, in three ways: (s) a few, (t) a fair amount, and (u) a lot. As illustrated in Figure 6, ALTs tended more than JTs to consider the meaning of our target objective to include the ability to use basic English expressions, in any of the three degrees: Of the ALT informants, 74%, 26%, and 16% chose (s) a few, (t) a fair amount, and (u) a lot, respectively, whereas of the JT informants, 38%, 5%, and 4% chose (s), (t), and (u), respectively. However, in both informant groups, (s) ability to use a few basic English expressions was chosen by the most people.

Figure 7 on the following page summarizes the results of Items (v)-(x), from the *Listening* group of items. Again, the three items differ from each other in the amount of basic English expressions they describe the pupils as potentially able to hear: (v) a few, (w) a fair amount, and (x) a lot. As shown in Table 7, fewer informants, among both ALTs and JTs, chose these items as part of the meaning of the target objective. The response outcomes for the ALTs were 47% for (v) able to hear a few basic English expressions, 37% for (w) a fair amount, and 26% for (x) a lot; and those for

the JTs were (v) 29%, (w) 22%, and (x) 4%. More ALTs than JTs chose each of (v)-(x), indicating that more ALTs than JTs consider that *familiarity* with basic English expressions presupposes being able to hear them. It is interesting that the ALTs' choices for the three items did not differ so greatly as the differences between their choices in the other subareas we see above. In other words, the majority of ALTs consider being able to hear basic English expressions to be a quite important factor in building familiarity.

The outcome patterns observed in Figure 6 and Figure 7 together may indicate some relevance to what we saw earlier in Figure 1, which is repeated as Figure 8 on the following page, for the reader's convenience. In Figure 8, we see that the dramatic contrast between the ALTs and JTs in response to Question 2, which asked about some of their basic principles, seems to indicate a large and clear difference in focus when interpreting instructions during English Activities classes, between ALTs and JTs. That is, for ALTs, developing pupils' confidence and awakening an interest in cultures by contrast are very important. They aim to do this through providing pupils with many opportunities to actively speak and listen in an enjoyable way. For JTs, on the other hand, having pupils enjoy English

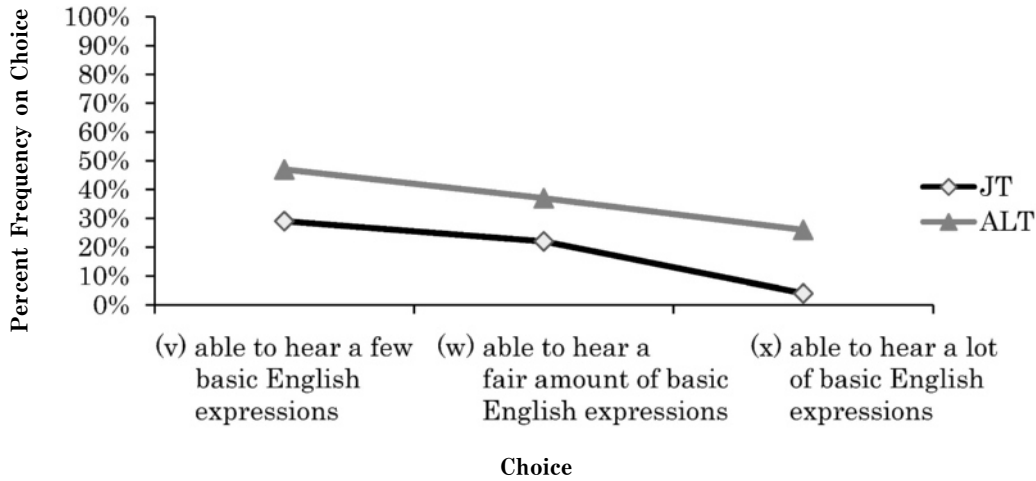


Figure 7. Comparison between JTs and ALTs by percentage frequency of choices

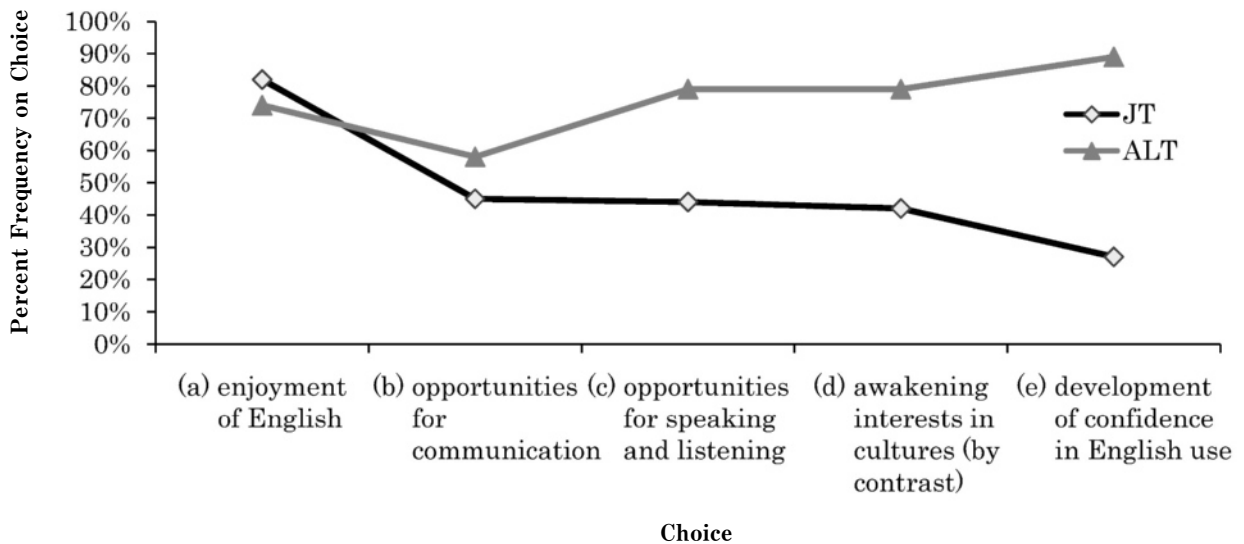


Figure 8. Comparison between JTs and ALTs by percentage frequency of choices for basic principle(s) in teaching Foreign Language Activities classes.

is the main priority, and this is to be achieved by giving them opportunities for communication and speaking/listening, and for awakening an interest in cultures by contrast. It might be the case that such a contrast in basic principles is reflected in the response patterns we have examined so far for the questions we asked regarding the meaning of our target objective. Further research is necessary to investigate whether or not this is an appropriate interpretation, why these kinds of contrast occur, and how such a contrast can be compensated for. As a summary of the study, we briefly discuss in the

next section the importance of communication between JTs and ALTs, as a consideration related to these issues, and one which would surely be a valuable object for future research.

4. Issues Necessary to Improve for Success at Team-Teaching, for the Development of English Activities, and for Coherence between English Activities and English Education

Part of our larger-scale research project, this study examined differences between JTs and ALTs in understanding the overall objectives of English Activities, focusing on the meaning of *being familiar with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign language*. A small-scale paper-and-pencil questionnaire survey⁵ was administered to elicit responses from JTs and ALTs. Results showed that there are clear differences between the JTs' and ALTs' ideas: JTs considered such familiarity to be an issue primarily concerning interests and attitudes, whereas ALTs considered it to be an issue concerning skills that are necessary or helpful to communicating with others. However, building pupils' confidence was considered very important as a principle basic to the instructions for ALTs, but it did not emerge as so important for JTs. Overall, the ALTs chose many more items in a wider range pronunciation and sounds, letters, knowledge of vocabulary, and using and hearing basic expressions of English as included in the meaning of familiarity than did the JTs.

The above contrasts might be problematic, but they are not necessarily so. That is, if we re-consider mutually understood functions associated with the JT and ALT sufficiently well, those contrasts can be advantages rather than problems. For example, we consider the major functions of JTs and ALTs to be as follows:

- (6) a. Initiator and administrator of lesson
- b. Keeper of order in the classroom
- c. Model for encouraging intercultural communication and foreign language learning

- (7) a. Target for intercultural communication
- b. Model of English use
- c. Information source for understanding of different cultures and human beings

Provided that the above functions are recognized and exercised by the JT and ALT, another vital task for them is to develop an awareness of being in a team as well as an efficiency of mutual communication (see e.g., Hoogenboom & Uehara 2006a, b).

The new Course of Study (MEXT 2008a) suggests that the JT actively involve native speakers of foreign languages in the classroom. Needless to say, the most typical use of native speakers in the classroom is within a team-teaching format. Since the objective of Foreign Language Activities is not the development of language skills per se, native speakers must not be taken merely to be persons who produce foreign sounds and words (MEXT 2008c), but rather as the target of communication, and as a person in the classroom with whom pupils attempt to achieve mutual understanding. In this sense, the ALTs' ideas about familiarity uncovered in this study naturally fall onto the same lines as the JTs' ideas of placing focus on interests and attitudes — fostering the development of pupils' experiential understandings through daily English Activities, coherently linked

5 There were many limitations in this preliminary survey, some of which are as follows: First, there was a large difference in the number of JTs and ALTs because these two groups are necessarily very different in numbers — ALTs are usually assigned to a few numbers of schools. Second, some questions in the questionnaire were rather too rough to find detailed information on factors reflected in results patterns. Third, other research methods, such as interview, discussion, and/or class observation might have been more appropriate, depending on the question. Our currently on-going research (e.g., Hoogenboom & Uehara, in preparation; Uehara & Hoogenboom, in preparation) has been taking these limitations into consideration together with other ideas.

as the foundation of communication ability with the further advancement of English education in junior high school and high school.

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