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## MULTIPLE DATA SOURCES: CONVERGING AND DIVERGING CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF LOTE TEACHING

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### ABSTRACT

*The study, uncovered Japanese Language Other Than English (LOTE) teachers' understandings of communicative language teaching (CLT). Using the idea of multiple data sources, the project relied on open-ended interviews, classroom observations, and LOTE teacher survey responses. The data provided answers to two research questions: 1) What are LOTE teachers' beliefs and knowledge about (communicative) language teaching? and 2) How do LOTE teachers implement CLT in their classrooms. The multiple data sources provided information that both converged and diverged, providing insights not only into communicative language teaching, but also teachers' views of language teaching in general. The various sources allowed a richer and deeper conceptualisation of LOTE teachers and captured nuances, subtlety, and complexity that these Japanese LOTE teachers dealt with in their daily professional lives. Such databases have much to offer researchers in dealing with understanding the many aspects of LOTE teacher education in particular and teacher education in general.*

### INTRODUCTION, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, OVERVIEW

*In our efforts to improve language teaching, we have overlooked the language teacher (Savignon, 1991, p.272)*

There are many theoretical developments of communicative language teaching (CLT) along with policy and curriculum initiatives to promote communicative language learning of Language Other Than English (LOTE) (e.g., Berns, 1990; Canale & Swain, 1980; LoBianco, 1987; Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, 1995; Littiewood, 1981; Savignon, 1983; 1997; Schulz & Bartz, 1975; Vale, Scarino & McKay, 1991).

Nonetheless, there is little known about what LOTE teachers actually understand by CLT and how they implement CLT in classrooms. As Kleinsasser and Savignon (1991) note, in the specific area of LOTE teacher education, there has been "little systematic inquiry conducted into language teacher perceptions and practices" (p. 291). Moreover, in the recent general teacher education research area, the question of how teachers learn to teach is more concerned with what teachers actually know and how that knowledge is acquired than what teachers need to know or how they can be trained (Carter, 1990; Richardson, 1994; Golombek, 1994). Current research on teaching practices should focus on teachers' knowledge and beliefs with relation to their practices rather than effective teaching behaviours (Richardson, 1994). Therefore, it would seem worthwhile investigating how LOTE teachers view CLT and how they actually teach in classrooms.

Most Australian LOTE teachers have either received training or inservices in communicative language teaching (CLT) during the last decade. National and state initiatives to develop students' communicative abilities in LOTE are abundant (see, for instance, Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, 1995; Clyne, Jenkins, Chen, Tsokalidou, & Wallner, 1995; Queensland Department of Education, 1989; Scarino, Vale, McKay, & Clark, 1988; Vale, Scarino, & McKay, 1991). Although problems have been identified with the teaching of LOTE in the Australian context such as articulation, low proficiency levels, lack of quality inservices, good materials, and school support (e.g., Koide, 1976; Kawagoe, 1989; Kleinsasser, forthcoming), a major issue still remains, there is little known from the teachers'

perspectives what they think CLT is or how they implement it. In essence, inservice LOTE teachers, those teaching in the schools, have not been studied in any great depth. How is CLT understood in light of the fact that national and state directives urge communicative LOTE abilities? What is happening with CLT in LOTE classrooms? This paper aims to uncover a subgroup of LOTE teachers' beliefs and knowledge about CLT in connection with their practices which have been overlooked by both researchers and policy-makers. The larger study (Sato, 1997) sought to answer four research questions seeking to find out information concerning LOTE teachers' beliefs and knowledge, how LOTE teachers implement CLT, how LOTE teachers acquire or develop CLT, and the implications for LOTE teacher development. In this paper, specifically two of the research questions are highlighted: (1) What are LOTE. (in this particular study, Japanese) teachers' beliefs and knowledge about (communicative) language teaching? and (2) How do they implement CLT in their classrooms?

This paper reveals Japanese LOTE teachers' beliefs and practices about language teaching and learning while also highlighting multiple data sources that provide information that converges and diverges, resulting in a more practical understanding of LOTE instruction. The application of multiple data sources to (LOTE) teacher education research is promising in providing clearer and more appropriate description of teachers and their understanding of LOTE teaching. Surprisingly, little has been discussed with regard to the mode of inquiry within such teacher education research focusing on teacher beliefs, perceptions, and thinking until more recently. Lee and Yarger (1996) claim that in order to make comprehensive investigations of teacher education acknowledging the complexities of context, studies should entail the use of multiple sources. Although the aspect of triangulation has been argued for in the wider

literature concerning education inquiry (e.g., Mathison, 1988), and, qualitative inquiry supports the use of various data sources (e.g., LeCompte, Millroy, & Preissle, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994a), in the area of teacher education, it is rarely discussed. In this paper, the importance of multiple data sources will be outlined along with a brief theoretical perspective sketching the relevance of studying teacher beliefs, perceptions, and practices. Then the participants and the various multiple data sources will be presented. Findings will then be offered from the various data sources to help begin answering the two research questions. Finally, a discussion concerning the use of multiple data sources and the findings conclude the article.

#### THE RELEVANCE OF MULTIPLE DATA SOURCES OR , TRIANGULATION AND THE STUDY OF TEACHER BELIEFS

Triangulation to some means the use of three or more differing collection strategies to affirm and articulate the validity of evidence each produces (e.g., Williamson, Karp, Dalphin, and Gray, 1982). In fact, Williamson et al., urge the use of multiple measures thereby making it possible to concentrate on the point at which a series of independent, indirect, and perhaps weak indicators converge to minimise their separate errors and maximise their overall validity (see p. 82). More recently Denzin and Lincoln (1994b), however, suggest that the use of multiple data sources (or triangulation) is an alternative to validation and not a tool or a strategy of validation. "However, the use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured" (p. 2). Moreover they contend that multiple data sources add "rigor, breadth, and depth" (p. 2) to studies. Mathison (1988) seems to concur with this perspective and argues that "the use of any single method, just like the view of any single individual, will necessarily be subjective and

therefore biased" (p. 14). Therefore she places value on triangulation where one constructs meaningful explanations of the results which may be inconsistent or contradictory rather than offering a single proposition.

Collecting data that tap teachers' perceptions of communicative language teaching and their behaviours in the classroom is not easy. Organisational theorists such as March and Simon (1958) suggest observing the behaviour of organisation members, interviewing members of the organisation, and examining documents that describe standard operating procedures as ways to determine the type of organizations and what people do in them. Another organisational theorist, Perrow (1986) concurs with these strategies but relays reservations about implementing them. For instance, he found observations took too much time and were costly and, in using interviews from industrial organisation workers, he questioned the extent to which the answers he received were accurate. More recently Kleinsasser (1993) investigated foreign language teachers' construction of their organisation's technical culture using data from interviews, observations, and surveys. He found participants in the study shared similar information across the three data sets while the data sets as a whole offered a more contextual understanding of foreign language teachers' workplaces. Regardless of time or energy involved, the quality of multiple data sets does offer a clearer and more detailed description of that being studied. As Pajares (1992) reminds researchers of the dimensions in studying beliefs: "it is also clear that, if reasonable inferences about beliefs require assessments of what individuals say, intend, and do, then teachers' verbal expressions, predispositions to action, and teaching behaviours must all be included in assessments of beliefs" (p. 327).

It is important to emphasise that studies on teacher beliefs have been scarce (Clark & Peterson, 1986;

Pajares, 1992) and have only gained prominence lately (Richardson, 1996). In an important review of an educational issue, Pajares synthesised research on beliefs and argued that "teachers' beliefs can and should become an important focus of education inquiry" (p. 307). Pajares addressed numerous assumptions when studying teachers' educational beliefs. Among them, he contended that beliefs help individuals define and understand the world and themselves, epistemological beliefs play a key role in knowledge interpretation and cognitive monitoring, and individuals' beliefs strongly affect their behaviour (see pp. 324-326). Moreover, Pajares argued that beliefs should be the focus of teacher development programs because beliefs drive actions and they influence how teachers learn to teach. Although Pajares readily admitted the distinction between beliefs and knowledge was not clear, he used Nespor's (1987) point "that beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organise and define tasks and problems and are stronger predictors of behaviour" (Pajares, 1992, p. 311). Pajares would contend that teachers' decision-making is based on their beliefs and aligns himself with Richardson's (1996) notion that "the teacher is seen as one who mediates ideas, and constructs meaning and knowledge and acts upon them" (p. 6). These views appear to contrast with traditional ideas that teachers can be trained (or told what to do) because teachers' decision-making supposedly is based on knowledge and skills (e.g., Shulman, 1986; 1987) instead of beliefs and perceptions. Or as Richardson argues, "Teachers make decisions on the basis of a personal sense of what works, but without examining the beliefs underlying a sense of 'working,' teachers may perpetuate practices based on questionable assumptions and beliefs" (p. 6).

In summary, Pajares (1992) avoids defining beliefs but discusses the nature of them, "Beliefs are

instrumental in defining tasks and selecting the cognitive tools with which to interpret, plan, and make decisions regarding such tasks, hence, they play a critical role in defining behaviour and organising knowledge and information" (p. 325). It becomes apparent that beliefs can only be inferred from what teachers say and do, but appear to be critical in both developing and improving teacher practices. And because beliefs need to be understood through what teachers say and do, it becomes even more salient to develop various sources that document teachers' speech and actions to better clarify and explain beliefs of teachers with regard to their teaching. It is suggested here that employing multiple data sources helps better examine and provide meaningful explanations of Japanese teachers' beliefs about communicative language teaching (CLT) while allowing for a more complex examination of the variables involved in understanding inservice teachers' knowledge and actions.

#### THE PARTICIPANTS

Ten state (public) school teachers of Japanese (including one native Japanese speaker) in ten different state high schools in a large Australian metropolitan area participated in the study. The teachers' Japanese language teaching experiences ranged from eight months to thirteen years: half of them had between 8 months and six years experience, the other half had six to thirteen years experience.

As for the participants' formal preparation, four (including the native Japanese speaker) completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (one year course) and one held a Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics. Three teachers holding the Postgraduate Diploma in Education degree majored in Japanese for their undergraduate studies, while the native Japanese speaker majored in French. The rest of the teachers started to teach Japanese without any academic preparation in formal

Japanese LOTE teaching. Their majors variously represented the disciplines of biology, commerce, economics, English, and music. Some of these finished short-term inservice programs concerning Japanese language and LOTE instruction while already teaching. Among the nine non-native Japanese speaking teachers, seven had lived in Japan between one and two years, one teacher stayed for six years, and one teacher made four trips to Japan, lasting two to three weeks per visit. Most of the teachers who did not receive formal academic preparation taught Japanese after experiences overseas in the target language culture. In addition, eight of the ten teachers taught other subjects such as English (three), mathematics (one), social sciences (one), history and social education (one), music (one), and sport (table tennis, one).

#### THE MULTIPLE DATA SOURCES

*Interview.* An open-ended interview protocol was developed by the researchers to get teachers to talk about their language teaching and communicative language teaching, in particular. After an initial pilot interview of the questions (using teachers not used in the study and graduate students in Applied Linguistic courses), modifications were required due to the number of questions asked, the lack of thorough responses to some of the questions, and some questions being unclear. Consequently, the researchers developed and refined 20 questions following Spradley's (1979) descriptive questions so that the respondent would display "perspectives and moral forms" (p. 107). A standardised protocol was established to focus on certain issues following Spradley's recommendations. Twelve major questions were agreed upon, and two more pilot interviews were conducted to test the type of data the questions produced. Then, with minor modifications of wording, the final interview protocol was completed. All ten interviews were transcribed and analysed. Each interview was conducted in English except with the one native Japanese speaking teacher, which was recorded and

transcribed in Japanese, and subsequently translated to English by one of the researchers.

*Observation.* Classroom observations were conducted after the interviews. The researcher was usually seated at the back of the classroom, occasionally moving around the class. Field notes documented the procedure of each lesson on the spot. Adhering to Silverman's (1993) warning to avoid early generalisations, focus was on what was observable: setting, participants, events, acts, and gestures (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). In addition, all notes were subsequently reviewed and expanded in detail on the same day following the observations to include further information (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Spradley, 1979). Observations of Japanese class lessons were completed two to three times in each of eight of the Japanese language teachers. Two teachers requested not to be observed. Moreover, two teachers wanted to use the native Japanese speaker researcher as a native informant so a typical class session was not observed. However, the interactions in these particular classes were recorded as participant observations where the others were as observer only. A total of twenty classroom observations offered evidence about Japanese language instruction.

*Questionnaire.* The Foreign Language Attitude Survey for Teachers (FLAST) located in Savignon (1983) was adapted to uncover individual differences and overall general attitude, which would give additional information that the other two data sources may have overlooked or ignored. FLAST contains 50 questions about language teaching and learning. A couple of questions were modified to adapt specifically to Japanese language teaching. FLAST uses a Likert-type scale, which ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Questionnaires returned by nine of the ten teachers were analysed using descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) from the personal computer program StatView (1993). Although

Savignon warned FLAST was not meant to be scored, she also proposed that "The answers teachers give will depend on their interpretation of the questions as well as on their second language learning and teaching, experiences. A comparison of responses, however, will reveal the differences in attitude among teachers working together, presumably toward similar goals" (p. 122). It was precisely these differences of interpretation and their comparison with interview and observation data that could further reveal and better delineate teachers' attitudes to communicative language teaching among a group of professional language teachers.

Naturally, there are disadvantages to each of the data sources. As mentioned previously, however, triangulation can be used to help alleviate some of them. Moreover, it is important to remember that with the interviews, the participants reacted to the questions at the time they were presented, they did not receive them prior to the interview. Here interest centred on how the teachers talked about the issues from their initial reactions. Also important to note is that the researchers in developing the research questions for this study did consider questions from a previous study concerning mathematics preservice teachers (Foss & Kleinsasser, 1996). The observations did have to consider the issue of "observer's paradox" (Stubbs, 1983), but it is important to remember that the observer probably did shape, in part, the particular lessons observed. 'Me lesson could have been shaped either negatively or positively and only a longitudinal study would help uncover the manner in which the observation leaned. Nonetheless, the teachers were anxious in being observed and it was through discussions that two or three visits were arranged with each of those who agreed to be observed. In research, it is important to take into consideration the participant's wishes. These wishes were followed. The questionnaire was used because

it already existed in the literature. Instead of developing and devising a new one, we selected one that had been available since, at least, 1983. We used the questionnaire for descriptive data to show how this group of teachers revealed their understandings about (communicative) language teaching. Finally, it is important to reiterate Denzin and Lincoln's (1994b) point made above that multiple data sources do not necessarily have to prove validation but that triangulation "reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured" (p. 2). The traditional notions of reliability and validity are not necessarily the final measures of all research efficacy. Discussion of this and other important issues within the qualitative and quantitative research debate can be found in Eisner and Peshkin (1990). As Eisner (1991) eloquently reminds:

*Indeed, I believe it is far more liberating to live in a world with many different paradigms and procedures than in one with a single official version of the truth or how to find it. Verificationists are right to worry about the validity of claims; they are wrong to claim that the road to truth is the sole property of their party. (p. 48)*

*Analysis.* In the main qualitative, inductive approaches were used to analyse the data (see Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Data were perused and trends, categories, and classifications were developed for each source using procedures suggested by Glaser and Strauss' (1967) constant comparative method and other similar procedure descriptions or analysis suggestions from more recent publications (e.g., Foss & Kleinsasser, 1996; Kleinsasser, 1993). Erickson (1977) suggested that, "Qualitative research seeks to tell us what the game is: what attributes of 'things' in the game are functionally relevant to playing the game, what appropriate relations among things there are in the game, and what the game related purposes of the

players are" (p. 59). The intent of this paper is to document the "things" in the game LOTE teachers think are "functionally relevant" concerning CLT using the various components of the multiple data sources to begin answering the two research questions given at the at the paper's beginning. Next, the three data sources, presented separately, offer functionally relevant things in understanding communicative LOTE teaching.

### **JAPANESE LOTE TEACHERS' INTERVIEW RESPONSES**

A general tendency within the interview data among all participants was the fact that CLT seemed to be an evolving "work in progress" and such a stance foreshadowed the incomplete understandings of what CLT was or could be by the teachers in this study. One teacher eloquently summarised the notion that CLT was not yet established, giving valuable insight into how many of the teachers felt about CLT in general when asked, "How do you define CLT?"

*It's a difficult question. Well, I suppose the definition of CLT method has not been established yet. There are some varieties such as task based ... some rigid scholars suggest not using English in class. So, I am at a loss what CLT is. I think language teaching should be related to students' experiences and interests, which create natural situations for them to speak. I suppose it is important, but I don't know whether it is communicative or not. (Teacher J)*

Although individuals held varying ideas of CLT, they had difficulty in giving clear definitions or examples of CLT, and as a group held fragmented, if not vague and unclear, perceptions. Nonetheless the interview data suggested four main ideas that defined these participants' conceptions about CLT. (1) CLT is learning to communicate in the target language (L2); (2) CLT uses mainly speaking and listening; (3) CLT involves little grammar instruction; (4) CLT uses (time-consuming)

activities. Overall, these four main ideas were developed through these Japanese LOTE teachers' voices.

Almost all teachers globally defined CLT as learning to communicate with other people using the target language. A few of them specifically added using it for real purposes. In general, teachers relayed their sentiments as Teachers H and F did:

Students can communicate, if you encourage them to communicate. (Teacher H)

*I would hope that I could teach students how to communicate both orally and in a written form so that I would expect them to hold a conversation at the best of their ability. (Teacher- F)*

Some teachers in their responses particularly focused on the "realness" of communication.

*The main thing for us, that is, it's teaching and learning real language for real purposes, so as opposed to, maybe, learning all of the conjugations of the verb or something. Rather, you actually learn real language that you can actually use. (Teacher C)*

*It's teaching language that can be used by students in real life, in real life-like situations. It's used for real purposes. There must be some need to communicate in order to be able to challenge the students to use language communicatively. (Teacher D)*

A second trend from the data revealed that several teachers held a view that CLT relied extensively on the skills of speaking and listening. The following quotes represented the general view:

*The goal of the teaching is that at the end of learning the language, people can actually talk in the language with the native speaker's understand[ing] what they're saying and be[ing] able to communicate their ideas rather than just being able to read and write. (Teacher. B)*

*My understanding of CLT is that ,you teach so that students hear it and so that they speak it. I would try it, where it's possible to teach something new by actually speaking. Now that's very, very easy in year eight and nine and even year ten, but sometimes in year eleven and twelve. I don't think that is always possible. But as far as possible, I teach it communicatively. (Teacher E)*

Quite a few teachers understood CLT as not involving grammar, or any type of language structure. Although some teachers did not directly mention grammar usage, many alluded to the problem of how, if at all, to include grammar:

*Another issue in LOTE learning and teaching is that "Is communicative teaching good? " Because people have taken it so far to the point of the banning of grammar teaching or of the banning of drilling, of the banning of all little parts. You have to do at some points, to learn Hiragana [Japanese syllabary], you have to write out over and over after practice. But in communicative language, you think, "I can't do it. It's not communicative. " So that's the burden. So when I was first teaching grammar, it had very little, very little place. We did lots of talking, lots of reading and writing and listening, but not so much grammar Which is the mistake of, I think, part of the flow in communicative teaching. I almost expected that students would pick it up. They would somehow work it out without me saying "wo' is the object..." " It would work if you guess. Sometimes I still do that. (Teacher C).*

*I think that [the] writing test is the main worry. It is the big worry, because it takes us a lot of time. Actually, this is the big problem with CLT because our tests have to be communicative, too. So we can't have a grammar test. We can't have a test where you have to do multiple choice. No, we can't. We can't do that at all So what we have to do is trying authentic materials for students to read. (Teacher F).*



The final notion evidenced in the interview data was that CLT used activities that must be fun, and almost all teachers admitted that preparing such entertaining activities was time intensive. Teacher C commented that teachers felt they were failing if the class did not include fun elements:

*It's from CLT or I'm not sure where it comes from. But there is an understanding that as LOTE teachers we must have our classes, must be fun, they must be entertaining, and so [we] play lots of games and kill ourselves trying to entertain our students. If they are not, if it is not entertaining, we feel like we're failing. And students also [say], "That's boring, Miss. " And you think., of course, everything has some boring, bad, some not interesting parts, right? So that's another part. (Teacher C)*

Although Teacher A initially used CLT activities when he started teaching, he gave up using (hem because it was time-consuming..

*My understanding of communicative teaching is, I suppose, teaching in a way rather than just learn grammar or translate from one language to another. It involves using learning activities where the students are actually engaged in communicating with other people, of course, usually within class group ... In that way, I suppose, they are supposed to learn how to use the language more easily than just to try grammatical translation to learning... But I have not really used them very much. Well, it's time consuming. Of course, it's so much easier. to use [a] textbook. It would be nicer if it was a textbook with a lot of communicative learning activities in it. To be always making every, week for every lesson to make activities in it, it's very time consuming and just wonder I don't have that much time to spend on it. Because I have other subjects and another class to teach, too. (Teacher A)*

The interviews revealed in broad strokes what CLT meant to these ten Japanese teachers. Although

individuals held varying conceptions of CLT, as a group, they had difficulty giving definitions of CLT and held four main conceptions. Moreover, their conceptions of CLT appeared to be related in many cases to their personal teaching experiences. In the next section just how they used these conceptions and experiences in their own classrooms is reviewed.

### **JAPANESE LOTE TEACHER'S PRACTICE THROUGH OBSERVATIONS**

Regardless of theoretical leaning, pedagogical content knowledge, or practical insight, the Japanese LOTE teachers in this investigation continued to teach no matter what challenges or difficulties they had to face. Just how did they actually teach in classrooms? How did they actually use communicative activities? How did these teachers' classrooms reflect CLT?

Surprisingly there were few interactions among students seen in the observed classrooms. Many observation findings contradicted the information given by the teachers during the interviews. For example, although most teachers acknowledged using role-play, games, survey, group-work, simulations, and so on, classes observed for this study were heavily teacher- fronted, grammar was presented without any context clues, and few students interacted with each other. Most Japanese teachers used English extensively to explain grammatical points and give instructions. They readily allowed students to answer in English, only a few teachers trying to integrate culture into their lessons. In short, most teachers displayed traditional practice tendencies, while a very small minority used innovative practices. The following selected examples typically portray what was seen in the Japanese language classrooms.

Traditional practice. For instance, teacher I started her lesson for year 12 with a Kanji (Chinese characters) quiz:

*At the beginning, she handed out quiz sheets to everyone. She gave students ten minutes to complete the quiz. While students were working on the quiz, she wrote grammatical points on the board. After the quiz, she started to explain the grammar (passive form) by using English sentences as examples. Then, she explained it with Japanese sentences. While she explained verb conjunctions, students wrote them down in their notebooks. After that, she showed verb cards and made students say passive forms. It was like drills.*

*Then, she asked students to open the textbooks, and they did exercises which transformed active sentences into passive ones. She called on each student individually and let them answer. Finally, she asked students to create their own sentences by using passive form. After a few minutes, the bell rang. (Teacher I)*

This was her lesson. There was little interaction between the teacher and the students, not to mention among the students. Grammar points were explained deductively without any context clues, followed by mechanical exercises in textbooks.

Teacher B completed a lesson with year 10. Although she attempted to use role-play, it turned out to be a dialogue memorisation task in reality. Overall, she relied extensively on traditional practice:

*Students came in the classroom in a line. First, she reviewed the grammar structure (potential form) on the blackboard. She asked a yes/no question to individual students. Then, she introduced Kanji using cards. Students read several cards, each time the teacher showed it to them several times. After that, she told the students to open the textbook. They did translation exercises. She asked individual students to answer them. Then, she asked two students to read the short model conversation. She asked another pair to read it. She gave the student five minutes to practice the skit in pairs. After that,*

*she asked for volunteers. Students were shy. So she asked two pairs to perform the skit without looking at the textbook. The rest of the class helped the performers when they got stuck. The bell rang, and she told the students that they would practice the skit more next time. (Teacher B)*

Teacher B mentioned in her interview that she had difficulty with how to motivate junior students and manage classroom discipline. Although she acknowledged that "in year 10 and 11 and 12 by the students who have chosen to do the subject, my teaching method is totally different. I do lots of questionnaires, lots of games, and lot of more discussion, role-play"...-she relied here on traditional practices. Teacher D completed a lesson for grade eight consisting of 27 students. This instructor was the only one who used computers during observed lessons of the eight teachers. She also used picture cards to learn vocabulary. Unfortunately, there were few, if any, interactions between students seen in her classroom.

*Students came into the class in a line. First, the teacher showed picture cards. Students responded to them with Japanese words. She showed about ten cards. These words (places) were used in the next exercise. After she introduced the sentence pattern (time and places) on the blackboard, students were told to make ten sentences to describe their Sunday activities from morning to evening. The teacher walked around while the students worked on it. Then, she asked several students individually to tell what they wrote. Those who did well were allowed to use the computers to learn Japanese syllabary and basic grammar. There were a total of five computers in the classroom (each computer allowed for two students to use it together). She checked the rest of the students' work individually. When there were no more computers available, she gave the students small picture cards for vocabulary learning. (Teacher D)*

*Innovative practice.* In contrast to the traditional practices mentioned, two teachers used student-student interactions and made students use the language for real purposes. They also attempted to use Japanese as much as possible. Teacher E's lesson with year nine gave insight into this practice:

*First, she reviewed some Kanji. They were numbers. She held cards and asked each student to read it. The student picked up the card. She told the student in Japanese to show the card to everyone. Others repeated the number She tried several cards,. All these words were related to the topic restaurant. Their, she showed a Japanese teacup, a sake cup, and other things asking questions in Japanese. Students answered in Japanese. She checked the homework. Those who did not do the homework stood up, and they were told to come back to the classroom during the lunchtime to show the homework. Then, they did translation exercises from the textbook. After giving instruction for the next homework, she gave students 10 minutes to prepare for the role play (at the Japanese restaurant) in groups of 3 to 4. One is a waiter/waitress, and the others are customers. She walked around the class and sometimes answered students questions. Their, four groups performed in front of the class. Three groups mainly followed model dialogue, but the last group was interesting because they did not follow the model dialogue. They made the class laugh. She gave some comments on their performance - " Well done " and a little tip about how to order at a Japanese restaurant. (Teacher E)*

Although she used role-play, it was used to practice grammatical patterns, and there were little opportunities for genuine communication except in the last group's unexpected ones.

Teacher H attempted to involve students in free conversation. This was her year eleven lesson.

*First, the teacher checked the homework and reviewed the key expressions that were related to the topic "illness. " One key expression was reviewed briefly on the blackboard. Then, she introduced Kanji for some key words such as medicine, hospital, and illness by using mnemonics. Next, she added some other expressions that patients would often use by using handouts with pictures on them. She asked students, "How would you say, when.... ? " Students answered in Japanese chorally and individually, picking up appropriate new expressions. After that, she gave students ten minutes to prepare for the role-play between a doctor and a patient. There were no model skits. She went around the class to help some students. But most students seemed comfortable and worked on their original skits. Mow it was time for acting out the skit. The students did not hesitate to be involved as they all seemed to be used to role play. Each of the five pairs performed in front of the class. They really enjoyed it. Finally, the teacher gave some feedback about useful words and expressions to supplement the lesson. (Teacher H)*

### **Summary of Japanese LOTE teacher practices.**

The observation data showed reluctance on the part of most teachers to promote CLT activities. Although many teachers reported using communicative activities such as role-play, games, survey, etc., they were rarely observed. Also, there were few observed student-student interactions in most of the classrooms. Only two teacher., actually used role-play, of any type, while most relied on traditional practices: teacher-fronted, repetition, translation, explicit grammar presentation, practice from the textbook, and little or no L2 use or culture integration. It appeared as though these eight particular Japanese LOTE teachers as a group preferred organised, structured, traditional classrooms instead of negotiated, involved, communicative, learning and acquisition-enriched environments.

## **QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES**

Teachers' general attitudes toward language teaching and learning were further uncovered through the use of a questionnaire. The analysis, surprisingly, showed a tendency toward communication skills alongside traditional issues. The data analysis from the questionnaire further compounded the interview and observation data revealing teachers had some sense of CLT-, but such views were rarely prevalent in the interview data and conspicuously absent, on the whole, in the observation data. Nonetheless, the questionnaire database perhaps provided information concerning teachers' passive knowledge of CLT, highlighting some evidence concerning their knowledge about CLT. Responses from teachers concerning the various items gave an additional perspective to the total data set, further expanding understanding with regard to beliefs, knowledge, and practice. In the next paragraphs, those items that teachers agreed with (mean 3.6 or above), disagreed with (mean 2.4 or below), and declared uncertainty with (mean between 2.4 and 3.6) revealed another part of these participants' understandings and offered additional "game pieces" to better develop practical understandings of teachers' CLT. Table 1 lists those items on the questionnaire that teachers agreed with, Table 2 lists those items that teachers disagreed with, and Table 3 lists those uncertain items. All three tables give a mean score and a standard deviation for each item.

The results can be interpreted as follows. The teachers' surveys emphasised communication skills over linguistic accuracy: they agreed that grammar translation was inappropriate in developing communication skills (1), linguistic accuracy did not need to necessarily be present when one exchanged ideas spontaneously in a second/foreign language (49), and disagreed that students needed to answer in complete sentences (42), that primary importance was placed on the linguistic accuracy of students' responses in the second/foreign language

(12), and that mastering grammar of the second/foreign language was a prerequisite to developing oral communication skills (2). In particular, they reported putting more importance on oral communication skills: participants agreed that students unable to read well still could be successful in learning to communicate (35), that teaching listening and speaking preceded reading and writing (24), that most language classes did not provide enough opportunity for the development of conversation skills (50), and second language acquisition was successful when based on an oral approach (11); they disagreed that the study of literature and the refinement of written grammar and translation skills be concentrated in the upper-level sequences of second level language instruction (13). They strongly agreed that errors should be accepted as a natural part of language acquisition (46). They preferred integrating culture and language (19), emphasising that gestures and kinetics should be taught and evaluated as a part of second language acquisition (5), while the Japanese LOTE teachers disagreed that cultural contrasts and language skills be taught and tested separately (29). They thought simulation should be used to teach conversation skills (item 36) and language learning should be fun (item 48). They disagreed, as a group, that most proficiency goals set for high school students were unrealistic.

Table 1 No.	Agreed Upon Items (mean 3.6 or above) Item	Mean	SD
46	When a student makes syntactical errors, this should be accepted by the teacher as a natural and inevitable part of language acquisition	4.6	0.53
19	One cannot teach language without teaching the culture.	4.5	1.07
23	Learning a second language requires much self-discipline.	4.4	0.53
1	The grammar- translation approach to second language learning is not effective in developing oral communication skills.	4.4	1.13
48	Language learning should be fun.	4.2	0.44
35	Students who do not read well can still be successful in learning to communicate in a second language.	4.2	0.67
36	Simulated real-life situations should be used to teach conversation skills.	4.2	0.67
4	Generally the student's motivation to continue language study is directly related to his or her success in actually learning to speak the language.	4.0	0.87
49	One can exchange ideas spontaneously in a foreign language without having linguistic accuracy.	4.0	0.71
3	When a foreign language structure differs from a native language, sometimes extensive repetitions, simple and varied, are needed to form the new habit.	3.9	0.60
38	If language teachers used all the audiovisual equipment, materials, and techniques the experts say they should, there would be not time for eating and sleeping, much less teaching.	3.9	0.99
47	If L I teachers taught grammar as they should, it would be easier for us to teach a second language.	3.8	0.67
25	Pattern practice can provide meaningful context for learning to use the target language.	3.8	0.97
39	All students, regardless of previous academic success and preparation, should be encouraged, and given the opportunity, to study a foreign language.	3.7	1.66
24	The teaching of listening and speaking skills should precede reading and writing.	3.7	1.41
50	Most language classes do not provide enough opportunity for the development of conversation skills.	3.7	1.23
5	Gestures and other kinetics should be taught and evaluated as an integral part of language acquisition.	3.7	0.71
43	Pattern practice is an effective learning technique.	3.6	1.19
45	The establishment of new language habits requires extensive, well-planned practice on a limited body of vocabulary and sentence patterns.	3.6	1.24
11	Second language acquisition is most successful when based on an oral approach.	3.6	0.88
32	Cultural information should be given in the target language as much as possible.	3.6	1.13
17	Dialogue memorisation is an effective technique in the process of learning a second language.	3.6	1.13

Table 2 Disagreed Upon Items (mean 2.4 or below) Item Mean and SD  
No.

10	Most proficiency goals set for high school students are unrealistic.	2.4, 0.88
9	German and French are harder to learn than Spanish.	2.4, 1.13
27	The language lab is more beneficial for beginning language students than for students at advanced levels.	2.4, 0.74
18	One problem with emphasising oral competence is that there is no objective means of testing such competence.	2.2, 0.97
6	A good foreign-language teacher does not need audiovisuals to build an effective program.	2.2, 0.83
2	Mastering the grammar of a second language is a prerequisite to developing oral communication skills.	2.1, 1.05
12	It is of primary importance that student responses in the target language be linguistically accurate.	1.9, 1.05
34	Second language acquisition is not and probably never will be relevant to the average Australian student.	1.9, 1.36
29	Cultural contrasts and language skills are best taught and tested separately.	1.9, 0.93
13	Upper-level sequences of secondary school language instruction should concentrate on the study of literature and the refinement of written grammar and translation skills.	1.8, 0.97
42	Students should answer a question posed in the foreign language with a complete sentence.	1.7, 0.50
16	Ideally, the study of Latin should precede the study of a modern foreign language.	1.3, 0.46

Table No.	Uncertain Items (Mean Between 2.4 and 3.6) Item	Mean, SD
40	Foreign- language teachers need not be fluent themselves to begin to teach	3.4, 0.88
7	Individualizing instruction is really not feasible in foreign language classes.	3.4, 1.19
15	Taped lessons generally lose student interest.	3.3, 0.71
20	The teaching of cultural material in a second language course does not necessarily increase student motivation to learn to speak the language.	3.2, 1.39
21	An effective technique for teaching sound discrimination of a second language is to contrast minimal pairs.	3.1, 0.60
41	One of our problems in teaching a second language is that we try to make learning "fun" and "a game."	3.1, 1.05
37	To learn a second language, one must begin at an early age.	3.1, 1.05
26	The culture content of a language course should be geared to contrasting contemporary lifestyles and ways of doing things.	3.0, 0.82
8	It is important for students to learn rules of grammar.	3.0, 1.12
30	The ability to speak a language is innate; therefore, everyone capable of speaking a first language should be capable of speaking a second.	3.0, 1.50
33	The language laboratory is an invaluable aid for teaching and learning a second language.	3.0, 1.00
22	The language lab is most effective if used every day.	2.9, 0.84
31	Students should master dialogues orally before reading them.	2.9, 0.99
28	want to work.	2.8, 1.09
14	The sound system of the foreign language should be taught separately and at the beginning of the first sequence of instruction	2.7, 1.66
44	Students who have problems with English should not take foreign language classes.	2.7, 1.66

In general, the tendencies realised in the questionnaire indicated a more favourable attitude (if not more complete understanding) toward CLT ideals, particularly those found in the scholarly literature. In fact, about half the items that were clearly agreed and disagreed with indicated favouritism emphasising communication skills or CLT tendencies, with about one third leaning toward traditional practices, and the rest concerning general items such as motivation, discipline, and teacher preparation time. Furthermore, out of thirteen items more strongly agreed and disagreed with (above 4.0 and below 2.0), the majority of the items showed tendencies supporting CLT issues (e.g., items 1, 13, 12, 19, 29, 34, 35, 36, 42, 46, 48). Nonetheless, it is interesting to note, when it came to specific teaching strategies, these Japanese teachers still favoured repetition, pattern practices, and dialogue memorisation (items 3, 25, 43, 45, 17). Such results portrayed these current teachers as

still relying on mechanical exercises. In addition, other items indicated that teachers were busy (38), had difficulties in teaching grammar because L1 teachers did not teach grammar as they should (47), and considered students' self-discipline and motivation as crucial to their learning success (items 23, 4).

Uncertainty prevailed in sixteen of the items with these Japanese LOTE teachers. Teachers appeared to be unsure about elements in both traditional and communicative language instruction. With traditional notions they were not certain whether students should master dialogues orally before reading them (31), if the sound system should be taught separately and at the beginning of instruction (14), and whether or not to contrast minimal pairs (21). With communicative language teaching notions, the teachers were not sure of at least four things: if second language teachers needed to be fluent themselves to begin teaching for

communication (40), that one of their problems in second language teaching was to make learning "fun" and "a game" (4 1), if culture content should include contemporary lifestyles and ways of doing things (26), and the relationship between the teaching of cultural material and student motivation to learn to speak a second language (20). More globally, the LOTE teachers sampled here neither agreed nor disagreed that today's students would take second languages because they do not want to work (28). that students who had problems with

English should not take a second language (44), and individualising second language instruction was not feasible (7). Teachers were not sure if the ability to speak a language was innate (30) or if one had to begin learning a second language at an early age (37). Unsurprisingly, and in agreement with interview and observation data, the Japanese teachers in this sample were not sure if it was important for students to learn rules of grammar (8).

In summary, teachers' overall attitude from the survey data provided additional and confounding evidence with interview and observation data, which only further highlighted the difficulties and issues that these teachers faced in their efforts to understand and implement CLT.

## **DISCUSSION**

Clearly, each data set taken individually gives only a partial understanding of Japanese LOTE teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practice. Taken together, the data sets illuminate the complexity of how ten Japanese LOTE teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practice interact. Multiple data sources give divergent and convergent information about teachers' communicative language instruction. Moreover, it is interesting to note how the survey results give some evidence of teachers' knowledge of the literature, but interview and observation data belie any such thorough understanding or action., regarding CLT. Likewise, it is important to

consider to what extent, if any, the national and state support for CLT is actually manifested in teacher talk, knowledge, and action.

Multiple meanings from multiple data sources truly begin unravelling the nuance and subtlety of how CLT manifests itself in realities. The converging data seems to support the notion that CLT is difficult and that there are individual conceptions that relay many personal understandings. Nonetheless, these participants seem to be dealing with the ideas of CLT from various perspectives and making do with what they perceive can be accomplished. There seems to be agreement that CLT is time-consuming and, particularly from the observation data, that order, silence, and getting things done supersede any other type of instructional manoeuvres. The interview and questionnaire data do agree that there should be less emphasis on grammar, per se, while the interview and observation data highlight reliance on traditional practices because of the perceived time-consuming nature of CLT activities. Thus, it is clear that there are points of agreement.

The diverging data certainly point to tensions within these teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices of CLT. Teachers have few definite ideas and appear to be even more frightened about attempting communicative language instruction. The interview and observation evidence show little regard for CLT, while the questionnaire data give some attention to it. Nonetheless, the confounding elements found in this research suggest that these inservice teachers have to further develop their ideas about communicative language teaching and perhaps even about language teaching.

Moreover, it would appear the teachers in this sample have trouble matching their words (beliefs) with action. If they believe CLT to be too time consuming, why would they give credibility to it through agreeing or disagreeing appropriately with the items on the survey? If they believe what they



marked on the survey, why wasn't adherence to those ideas manifested in the classroom? And if they did believe they truly understood CLT, why did they not reference any literature concerning what it was, what it meant, and whose idea(s) they followed? Moreover, if government policy supported CLT, what did that mean to the teachers? (It is interesting to note there was little, if any, reference to government policy in their interviews.)

One could easily consider comparing and contrasting the teachers' understandings with the scholarly literature and finding little in common. One could also analyse the observations using the government guidelines, and there too find little in common. Yet, by doing this, attention is paid to the literature and government as being somehow more relevant than teachers' practice. What about considering that the literature and government initiatives have little in common with actual practice, and that it is the scholars and policymakers who seem to be out of step? (Where are the reports asking for such a perspective?) Regardless of perspective, it is important to note how multiple data sources have allowed for such questions to be asked.

Multiple data analysis insists on noting the discrepancies while accepting the confounding variables and not removing them for better equations (statistical analysis/purity). It is the multiplicity of the data in this project that highlights the difficulty in understanding teachers and their beliefs, practice, theory, and knowledge (in its various forms). It also clearly indicates what these ten Japanese LOTE teachers experience and believe CLT to be while also giving some baseline data about where they are at the present time. Such practical insight is rare within the second language teaching community, yet it allows for discussion and debate regarding teacher education and how to develop teachers with CLT notions. It appears there is a long way to go to see if CLT has any viability

in real classrooms. Projects such as this help to better uncover teachers' understandings within their environments. If any type of inservice is to occur, such information is needed to promote and influence second language teaching practice. Moreover, such data is needed to combat the overreliance on theory and policy and to begin codifying teachers' practice while documenting their beliefs and knowledge. Regardless of discipline or the macro or micro-level of study, multiple data sources hold significant potential in understanding the complexity in which teacher educators and teachers find themselves.

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