

Guidelines to Practical English Usage : A Series for Instructors and Students of English in Japan

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Footnotes

- 1 I will use masculine pronoun forms to refer generically to students or instructors, female or male.
- 2 On occasion, students also suffer from having been taught non-standard usage at another institution, or at least from the belief that Teacher X demanded usage which they are now learning is unacceptable.
- 3 As an instructor in the Sociology Department, I also feel it is my duty to select reading materials which combine the development of English skills with topics of interest to Sociology students and to augment and support these texts with my own materials.
- 4 Michael Swan, *Practical English Usage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 84.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Loreto Todd and Ian Hancock, *International English Usage* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 61.
- 7 Sylvia Chalker, *Current English Grammar* (London: Macmillan, 1984), p. 245.
- 8 Randolph Quirk, Geoffrey Leech and Jan Svartlik, *A Grammar of Contemporary English* (Essex: Longman, 1972), p. 752.
- 9 Randolph Quirk, et al, *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (New York: Longman, 1985), p. 1107.
- 10 A. J. Thomson and A. V. Martinet, *A Practical English Grammar*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 281.
- 11 Thomson and Martinet, p. 85.
- 12 Ibid.

maintain mental and physical activity.

Page 17 –

1. for writing
2. to make
3. for hitting; for catching
4. for sitting; for sleeping
5. to do

Page 19 –

1. Managers seek goverment subsidies (in order/so as) to prevent their companies from going bankrupt.
2. We bought a turkey because of its good taste.
We bought a turkey because of its tasting good.
(The first alternative is far superior. The second is very awkward sounding.)
3. She wore a long white dress because the dinner was formal.
4. I rode my bike today to save time.
5. My mother used to say, “The bathroom is for going to the toilet, not for reading.”
6. The student couldn’t finish the test because there were too many questions. So he gave up.
7. Since you’re not a bird, you can’t fly.
(It is evident to everyone that you are not a bird; therefore *since* is preferred.)
8. I was very careful in the china shop in order not to/so as not to break anything.

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- A. 1. so that/in order that
2. to/in order to/so as to
3. so as ... to/in order ... to
(*to* may not be used because the purpose is negative.)
4. so that/in order that
- B. 1. The instructor taught her how to wax her skis in order that/so that she could/would move down the hill faster.
2. I opened the door for the President so that/in order that he could/would enter first.
3. We give children candy so that/in order that they will/can be quiet.
4. This university provides a broad education so that/in order that students can/will achieve success.
5. I scrubbed his floors and washed his windows so that/in order that he would/could have a clean apartment.
Note: Generally *so that* is preferred over *in order that*.

- C. The following are possible completions. Students may have many other acceptable responses.
1. Many people jog in order to stay fit.
 2. I sent my son to a famous high school so that he would be able to enter a good university.
 3. Always type a formal report so as to make it legible.
 4. We practice English every day in order not to forget it.
 5. The elderly should take up gardening in order to

(Anyone can see the information on the label and these nutritional content campaigns have been well-publicized. The reason clause is probably not new information but a reminder.)

Page 10 -

1. because of
2. because
3. because of
4. because
5. because
6. because of

Page 12 -

1. Hiro was able to pass the test because of his knowledge of verb tenses.

Hiro was able to pass the test because he knew verb tenses well.

2. She asked her husband for a divorce because of his/their inability to communicate.

She asked her husband for a divorce because he/they couldn't communicate.

3. The teacher felt sorry for the student because of his incorrect response to her question.

The teacher felt sorry for the student because he responded incorrectly to her question.

8. I was very careful in the china shop because of not breaking anything.

Answers and notes to Exercises

Page 5 –

1. for what reason
2. for what purpose
3. for what reason
4. for what purpose

Page 9 –

1. Since you work in a hotel, it'll be easy for you to make them.
(Presumably Jane's workplace is already well-known to the members of the group with whom she's traveling.)
2. Mary is bored because she doesn't have anything to do.
(Mary isn't always idle. The reason why is probably new information.)
3. She's crying because her boyfriend left her.
(It probably isn't generally well-known that her boyfriend walked out, so the cause is new information.)
4. The government is in danger of collapse because it is under attack by radicals of the left and right.
This sentence sounds like it might come from a news report. I would assume that the cause of the danger to the government is news too.)
5. Since information on nutritional content is available now, a smart consumer should read labels.

class or four times the number of contact minutes per student. Expressing reason or purpose — answering the question “why?” is not the only skill in English our students desire to acquire. So the instructor shouldn’t get bogged down in too much detail. But since the question “why?” is so ubiquitous in North American culture (and I suspect in other English-speaking lands) and since the errors Japanese students make are equally ubiquitous, a basic outline of the options open to the student, such as this, will be of value. If the student has mastered this material to more than 90% correctness, then he can delve into the further mysteries of *in order to* versus *so as to* and other “whys” and “wherefores” of the subject if he is interested.

FINAL PRACTICE FOR STUDENTS

Correct or improve these sentences, making as few changes as possible.

1. Managers seek government subsidies for preventing their companies from going bankrupt.
2. We bought a turkey because of tasting good. (2 ways)
3. She wore a long white dress because of the dinner was formal.
4. I rode my bike today for saving time.
5. My mother used to say, “The bathroom is to go to the toilet, not to read.”
6. The student couldn’t finish the test. Because there were too many questions. So he gave up.
7. Because you’re not a bird, you can’t fly.

Causes/reasons can be stated as clauses (*because, since, as*+subject+verb) or prepositional phrases (*because of*+noun/pronoun). Care should be taken to ensure that Verb-*ing* following *because of* is preceded by a possessive adjective (because of *his* studying) or is replaced by a noun where possible (because of his homework) to ensure clarity.

Results/purposes are usually expressed with the infinitive (*to*+verb). In some cases, *in order to* or *so as to* must be inserted instead. When the subject of the main clause and the performer of the action in the result/purpose are different, then a subordinate clause must be created, introduced by *so that* or *in order that*, again for clarity's sake.

For can be used to indicate either cause or purpose. Its application in expressing cause is narrow and need not be overemphasized. We use *for* to introduce purpose and can follow it with a noun (He went downtown for an interview.) or Verb+*ing*. In the latter case, however, *for* may introduce only the general purpose of a thing. (Books are for reading.)

There are other ways to indicate cause/reason or result/purpose in English, for example, *due to, lest, for fear that, reason why ... is that, so, in consideration of*, among others. Including all of these would have expanded the scope and length of this article to the point of unmanageability and impracticability of use with our students, whom we, after all, see only once a week for 90 minutes 25 times a year. Foreign language teachers at American universities have about twice the contact hours per year with half the number of students in a

If the student talks about a specific instance, then *for+Verb -ing* is to be avoided and the infinitive with *to* should be used.

Compare:

We use knives and forks for eating. (That's their general purpose)

but

He used a fork to spear the single pea on his plate.

The following exercise will give the student practice in choosing *for+Verb -ing* or *to+infinitive*.

In each sentence choose the correct phrase from the pair given in parentheses.

1. What kind of brush is ——— Chinese characters? (to write /for writing)
2. How many eggs will you use ——— the cake? (to made/for making)
3. In baseball a bat is ——— the ball and a mitt is ——— it. (to hit/for hitting; to catch/for catching)
4. Chairs are used ——— and beds ———. (to sit/for sitting; to sleep/for sleeping)
5. In my office, we use computers ——— most of the paper-work. (to do/for doing)

Summary

We have seen that a *why*-question can demand two kinds of answers: causes/reasons or results/purposes. Each type is introduced with different vocabulary and requires different syntax.

1. Many people jog _____.
2. I sent my son to a famous high school _____.
3. Always type a formal report _____.
4. We practice English every day _____.
5. The elderly should take up gardening _____.

Group III: For

For can be used to indicate both cause and purpose. The sentences in 5a above (... for it began to rain; ... for leaving for home ...) are both non-standard, but for different reasons. In the former, the student has attempted to use *for* as a conjunction to introduce a cause, that is, as a substitute for *because*. But *for* does not ordinarily introduce a clause explaining the direct cause of an action or condition. Instead it “merely presents a piece of additional information which helps to explain it.”¹¹

The days were short for it was now December 12.
(The days are short, in fact, not because of the arbitrary date on the man-made calendar but because of the position of the earth in relation to the sun.) But in our sentence 5a, the rain *was* the direct cause of the end of the picnic.

This nuance is not easy to explain to students. Since the error does not occur so frequently in their speaking and writing, I would not dwell on it at length, particularly since the second sentence in 5a illustrates a much more prevalent and serious error.

When *for* is used to denote purpose, it is (as a preposition) followed by a noun or the *-ing* form of the verb. But it should be used with the *-ing* form only to denote the general purpose of something.

nature to him.

I offer three kinds of exercises, which become progressively more open-ended.

A. Fill in either *to*, *in order to*, *so as to*, or *so that*, *in order that*.

1. The instructor explained the requirements of the course _____ the students would understand what she expected.
2. They turned off the lights _____ create an eerie atmosphere.
3. The video terminal operators worked in 2-hour shifts _____ not _____ strain their eyes too much.
4. An investigation into the Challenger disaster has been ordered, _____ future astronauts can be sure of flight safety.

B. Each of the following sentences is unclear because the subject of the action in the result/purpose is not stated. Use the word in parentheses as the subject of the result/purpose and rewrite, making any other necessary changes.

1. The instructor taught her how to wax her skis in order to move down the hill faster. (she)
2. I opened the door for the President so as to enter first. (he)
3. We give children candy in order to be quiet. (they)
4. This university provides a broad education to achieve success. (the students)
5. I scrubbed his floors and washed his windows to have a clean apartment. (he)

C. Complete the following sentences with a result or purpose. Make some of your results/purposes negative.

(They didn't want me to forget it.)

When stating a result/purpose in a clause, begin the clause with the conjunction *so that* or *in order that*. Follow the conjunction with the new subject and the verb *would* or *could* if the verb of the main clause is in a past tense and *will* or *can* if the main clause verb is in the present, present perfect or future tense¹⁰.

The industrialized countries must commit more funds to foreign aid, so that developing nations can raise the living standards of their people.

The industrialized countries committed more funds to foreign aid, so that developing nations could raise the living standards of their people.

I am going to buy grandfather an electric blanket so that he will be warm at night.

I had already bought my grandfather an electric blanket so that he would be warm at night.

If the result/purpose is negative, negate the auxiliary verb: *will*, *would*, *can*, *could*.

I bought my grandfather an electric blanket so that he wouldn't freeze at night.

NB. *May* and *might* can replace *will* and *would*, but these are considered very formal.

Once again, at this point it would be wise to stop and give the student a chance to practice. If the student is going to use the target language fluidly (if not fluently), he cannot spend all day rehashing the grammatical theory in his mind before making an utterance or writing a sentence. The pattern must become second-

Compare:

He's looking forward to eating meat again.

He stopped eating meat to reduce the cholesterol in his bloodstream.

The particle *to* may be expanded in purpose phrases to *in order to* or *so as to*. This is usually optional but must be done when a negative purpose is indicated.

We entered the bedroom quietly so as not to disturb the sleeping baby.

I wrote their number down in order not to forget it.

The infinitive is the most concise way to express purpose/result and its use should therefore be encouraged. It enables the writer to avoid creating a complex sentence (one with a subordinate clause) and is particularly helpful if the sentence is already complex, through the use of relative clauses, for instance.

But sometimes a student will want or need to express the result or purpose of an action by means of a clause rather than a phrase. This is unavoidable when stating the subject of the verb in the result/purpose is required, as when it is different from the subject of the main clause. Compare:

I cooked some chicken soup for him so as to feel better.

(Unclear. Who is supposed to feel better? I or he?)

I cooked some chicken soup for him so that he would feel better.

They wrote their number down so as not to forget it.

(They didn't want to forget it themselves.)

They wrote their number down so that I wouldn't forget it.

The house was cold because of our failure to turn up the heat.

The house was cold because we failed to turn up the heat.

Here is an exercise for student practice on this point. In each case, the student should correct the sentence in two ways: 1) use *because of* but replace the *-ing* form, and 2) replace *because of* with *because*.

1. Hiro was able to pass the test because of knowing verb tenses well.
2. She asked her husband for a divorce because of not being able to communicate.
3. The teacher felt sorry for the student because of responding incorrectly to her question.

Group II: Result/Purpose

The student is also answering “why?” when he wants to express the result or purpose of an action. The student will perhaps find results/purposes relatively easy if causes/reasons have already been mastered.

The most concise method for expressing purpose is with the infinitive (*to*+verb). Sentence 2a above (*...to leaving for home*) illustrates the mistake frequently made by students, combining the particle *to* with the *-ing* form. The error is easily corrected. Change *to leaving* to *to leave*. Students should recognize that *to* has many uses. When it is part of a two-part verb (*look forward to*, *get used to*, for example), its function is that of a preposition and it is therefore followed by Verb+*ing*. In purpose phrases, it is a meaningless particle that signals the infinitive.

be grammatically correct, since the *-ing* form of the verb is often used as a noun after prepositions.

I'm afraid of losing my investment.

By speaking forcefully, she was able to persuade the undecided members.

Never cross the street without looking both ways.

Students should be discouraged from using Verb+*ing* after *because of*, however. Not only does it almost always sound awkward, but it opens the door to another error which occurs in sentence 6a. There is no clear reference as to who or what is beginning to rain. Is the picnic beginning to rain? That can't be what the writer or speaker meant. With the verb *rain* the impersonal *it* is usually the subject. We need then to add *its* before *beginning*. (… its beginning to rain.) This only sounds more awkward, though the reference is now clear.

Further examples:

Yoshi couldn't visit Yumiko because of studying English. (Who was studying?)

Yoshi couldn't Yumiko because of his studying English. (clear, but awkward)

The house was cold because of failing to turn up the heat.

(Who didn't turn up the heat? The house?)

The house was cold because of our failing to turn up the heat. (clear, but awkward)

Far preferable are these alternatives:

Yoshi couldn't visit Yumiko because of his English homework.

Yoshi couldn't visit Yumiko because he was studying English.

door?)

While *since* can also have a temporal meaning, it indicates some action or state which started in the past and continues into the present and in that usage, affects verb tense.

Since her boyfriend is leaving, she is crying. (cause)

She has been crying since her boyfriend left. (time)

I suggest that students generally choose *since* over *as* unless *since* has already been used frequently and the student wants to use *as* for a change.

The last of the options for giving a reason is *because of*. *Because of* is easy enough to explain and easy to practice. *Because of* is a preposition, not a conjunction, and must be followed by a noun or pronoun. Answer 1a above (“... because of it began to rain.”) is not acceptable because the preposition is followed by a clause.

Here is a cloze exercise which can be lengthened if more practice is necessary. In each case the student adds *because* or *because of*.

1. _____ a serious misunderstanding between the superpowers, the world was pushed to the brink of war.
2. The world was pushed to the brink of war _____ a serious misunderstanding occurred.
3. I can't go to the party _____ my sick mother.
4. I can't go to the party _____ my mother is sick.
5. The students had trouble writing their papers _____ the reading assignment confused them.
6. Confusion reigned at the end of the Japanese baseball season _____ a tie in the first game of the Japan Series.

Sentence 6a (“... because of beginning to rain.”) would seem to

be told to combine the two sentences in parentheses into one using either *since* or *because*, as appropriate.

1. Jane, would you make the airline reservations for our group?
(You work in a hotel. It'll be easy for you to make them.)
2. (Mary is bored. She doesn't have anything to do.)
3. (She's crying. Her boyfriend left her.)
4. (The government is in danger of collapse. It is under attack by radicals of the left and right.)
5. (A smart consumer should read labels. Information on nutritional content is available now.)

Let's consider *as* now. In our sentence 4a (... as it began to rain.), there was nothing grammatically incorrect about this answer to the "picnic" question. But I find that Japanese students use the *as*-construction far more frequently than native speakers. *As* can be used much in the same way as *since*. I disagree with Swan when he says that *since* is more formal⁵. My feeling is that in American English, native speakers would consider *as* to be the more formal choice. No mention of such a distinction is made by Todd and Hancock⁶, Chalker⁷, or Quirk, Leech and Svartlik⁸ and in fact, Quirk, et al in their *Comprehensive Grammar of English* actually show *since* to be more frequent than *as* in frequency count⁹, indicating perhaps that *since* is less formal.

There is also the potential for confusion with *as*, since it has a temporal meaning, indicating two simultaneous actions.

She is crying as her boyfriend is leaving.

(Is she crying because he's leaving or while he's walking out the

The Indians were driven off their land, because the white man wanted to settle there. Trade between ...

Bringing this small point to the attention of students again and again, if necessary, will give them an appreciation of the power of punctuation and call their attention to the connection between the written and spoken word. These bonuses are in addition to making their writing clearer when stating reasons/causes.

Since the τ -form of Japanese verbs and the particle *から* can be translated as *because*, *since*, and *as*, the latter two conjunctions also turn up introducing fragmentary sentences but not as frequently as *because*. More often the problem with *since* and *as* is the frequency of their use. *Since* is shunned and *as* is used all too often.

Essentially, *since* means the same as *because*, but *since*-clauses tend to be placed at the beginning of the sentence. Often the *since*-clause contains information already stated or generally well-known⁴.

Small Boy: No, I won't eat my spinach.

Mother: Well, since you don't want any spinach,
you won't get any dessert either.

or

Since the Democrats regained control of the Senate,
Ronald Reagan is expected to compromise more.

The choice between *since* and *because* is rather subtle and developing an exercise to practice it is difficult. The choice can be a subjective matter, since "information generally well-known" is a very vague criterion to use.

Nonetheless, here is a sentence-combining exercise in which the student can choose between *since* and *because*. The student should

because:

*The Indians were driven off their land. Because the white man wanted to settle there.

An instructor can best illustrate the confusion caused by such writing by reading the two "sentences" and emphasizing the intonation:

① The Indians were driven off their land. ② * Because the white man wanted to settle there. (And now imagine a third sentence) ③ Trade between the Eastern and Western parts of the U. S. was booming.

The period at the end of the first sentence indicates a break between it and the second sentence and hence pitch drops. There is a pause between sentences. In short, all the vocal cues indicate a lack of logical connection between the two sentences. But ① and ② are supposed to be logically connected: the white man's settlement caused the Indians to move. The confusion becomes worse in "sentence" ②. Since a *because*-clause is *always* subordinate and since here it begins a sentence, the reader expects a comma at the end of the clause connecting it to a main clause (③). So the reader raises pitch at the end of the *because*-clause in anticipation of continuing the sentence, only to hit a stone wall at the period following *there*. Desperately trying to find the main clause to which the *because*-clause is connected, the reader reads sentence ③ and finds it has no logical connection to ②. The reader must now begin the paragraph again, and piece the connections together on his own.

What a waste of time when the solution is so simple: Replace the period between ① and ② with a comma and write *because* with a small *b*. Now our intonation scan looks like this:

warm)

3. Why are you eating only a salad? (be/on/diet)
4. Why are you eating three pieces of pie? (gain/weight)

After presenting such pairs of questions, one asking for a reason, one for a purpose, the instructor should have 4 to 8 more questions and dehydrated responses in a random order available for students to identify. Then the instructor should remind students that we often volunteer reasons or results of actions without being asked a *why*-question, presumably to justify or explain an action before the question is asked. Once it is clear that the students have mastered the distinction between reason and purpose, it's time to move on to the distinctions within each group.

Group I: Reason/Cause

Since, *because* and *as* are all subordinating conjunctions, and, as such, must introduce a clause containing a subject and a verb. Sentence 3a shows an instance in which a student has followed *because* with an infinitive (*to leave*). To correct the expression, insert a subject and an appropriate auxiliary verb.

It ended early because we wanted to leave ...

because we had to leave ...

because we were leaving ...

Typically, *because*-clauses come at the end of the sentence and except in conversation, in direct response to a *why*-question, should never stand alone. One of the most frequent errors of Japanese students is to leave subordinate clauses standing alone as sentence fragments, and this most often occurs with clauses introduced by

when choosing the type of response to a *why*-question. Sometimes one or the other will be determined by the phrasing of the question or the context. More often, the type of response can be tailored to fit the information the speaker or writer wants to reveal or the grammar he feels most comfortable with. Most of the time we volunteer the information which would be elicited by a *why*-question without ever having been asked, perhaps in anticipation of what the listener or reader is thinking.

A student who harbors the misconception that *because*, (*in order*) *to*, *since*, *as*, *because of*, *for*, and *so/in order that* can be used indiscriminately should be instructed that we can divide these expressions into three groups.

- I. Words to indicate cause or reason for an action: *because*, *since*, *as*, *because of*
- II. Words to indicate result or purpose of an action:
(*in order/so as*) *to*, *so/in order that*
- III. A word which can show cause or purpose: *for*

In order to be sure that the student can distinguish between cause/reason and result/purpose, it would be appropriate to give the student a number of *why*-questions with answers in so-called “dehydrated” form and ask him to explain the meaning of *why* in each question: “for what reason” or “for what purpose”. The following could serve as the opening series in such an exercise. (Answers to all exercises can be found at the end of the article.)

1. Why are the children wearing scarves?
(cold/today)
2. Why are the children wearing gloves? (keep/hands/

answering the question in English (perhaps reflecting the culture's penchant for asking the question), most of which the student is unable to distinguish.

Let's enumerate some of those options by way of some typical errors the instructor can be on the lookout for in response to a question like:

Why did the picnic end early?

- 1 a . * It ended early because of it began to rain.
- 2 a . * It ended early to leaving for home before the rush hour.
- 3 a . * It ended early because to leave for the concert at 6 P. M.
- 4 a . It ended early as it began to rain.
- 5 a . It ended early for it began to rain. / * It ended early for leaving for home before the rush hour.
- 6 a . * It ended early because of beginning to rain.

Now to make these responses correct:

- 1 b . It ended early because it began to rain. / Since it began to rain, the picnic ended early.
- 2 b . It ended early so that we could leave for home before the rush hour.
- 3 b . It ended early because we wanted / had to leave for the concert at 6 PM.
- 4 b . Same as 1b.
- 5 b . Same as 1b and 2b, respectively.
- 6 b . It ended early because of the rain.

Both meaning and grammar must be taken into consideration

they recognize that English is a medium for communication that even two Japanese people can use, and not some exotic esoterica put on display by a teacher at school. Therefore, the explanations herein are primarily for the instructor, who should present them as succinctly as possible, if necessary in Japanese, and then move immediately to examples and exercises. Using this approach, I hope this series of articles will be of some practical use in improving the active use of English by Japanese students.

The Whys and Wherefores

The first subject I would like to confront in this series is the matter of answering the question “why?” To an American, at least, this question is the most significant of those we commonly teach reporters to ask — who, what, when, where, why, how — when gathering information for a story. We encourage children to ask “why” about everything, even though coming up with the answer to a persistent “Why is the sky blue?” in response to a six-year old is a daunting task for any parent. (At any rate it’s still easier for most parents to answer than the inevitable “Where do babies come from?”) While cramming 13- to 18-year old heads full of facts in junior and senior high schools we squeeze the “whys” out of our students, only to try to pour them back into their brains when they reach college, so that they can become responsible, inquisitive citizens when they enter the “real world”.

So it’s hard enough to get a freshman English class which has forgotten how to ask “why?” to face the question at all. Then the instructor and student are confronted with the myriad of options for

the curriculum of his course. The student has a textbook or other written materials and is supposed to be at a level where he can grasp the main points these materials present. (If the average student in the class cannot do this on his own, then the text is too difficult and the instructor has over-estimated the students' ability.)

If this is true, why do we need instructors at all? In the case of foreign language instruction at Japanese universities, the instructor serves several purposes: to motivate students to learn a foreign language as something more than a dry academic subject (even "dead" languages should not be taught that way), to teach students *how* to study a foreign language efficaciously, to check on the weekly progress of the class with the materials and, where that progress is wanting, to *explain, illustrate, and practice those points which prevented students from performing up to expectations*⁸.

This series of articles will attempt to identify some basic but thorny problems which plague the writing and speaking of Japanese students in English and provide explanations which the instructor can use, along with numerous examples and ideas for exercises to ensure the students' mastery of the subject. The exercises are also intended to develop the student's confidence in his newly-acquired ability in using the target language actively. I would urge instructors to expand these exercises and invent their own using vocabulary from the textbooks they have chosen for each class. There is no substitute for student practice. The practice should be done both orally and on paper, so that all four skills (reading, writing, speaking and hearing) improve simultaneously. Students should be encouraged to work in pairs and small groups and test each other, so that

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by Loring Ivanick

1. A Pocketful of Whys

As a native-speaker English instructor in Japan, I find that wherever I have taught (private language schools, special seminars or Hosei University), whatever kind of student I encounter (housewives, engineers, college students), certain errors in English expression recur among Japanese native speakers. This is not surprising, since in some points the differences between Japanese and English grammar are either minor or at least consistent, and on other points the differences are major (verb tense system) or involve a very complicated set of patterns and exceptions in the target language, English (articles). In the former cases, students can become familiar with the pattern or memorize forms and, with some practice, can perform adequately in the target language. In the latter cases, the usual amount of effort is nowhere nearly sufficient for the student to fathom the intricacies of the problem and so the student falls back on word-for-word translation from his¹ native language, resulting in significant interference from Japanese and the reoccurrence of the same errors².

I am one who believes the student should teach himself as much as possible or work with other students to learn the basic points in