

学習効果向上のための英語学習に関する学生の学習歴、 関心および意欲についての調査報告

Investigating Freshmen Background, Interests, and Learning Need of English for Effective Teaching

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本論文は、2006年度からの名古屋学芸大学における英語関連教科の選択化を機に、学生の英語学習経験、英語学習への関心や意欲について調査し、学習効果の向上をねらいとするものである。2005年度新入学生にアンケート、5学科536名にアンケートを依頼し回答を得た。90%の学生が高等学校においてオーラルコミュニケーションの授業経験を持ち、そのうちの60%の学生が授業の有効性を感じている。さらに80%の学生が大学での英語学習の継続を希望し、それを上回る93%の学生が将来のキャリアに向けての必要性を感じているという結果を得た。これは過去の調査に準ずる結果であった。

以下は、EFL指導者への助言を含めての形による、主に‘spoken English’クラスの人数とその授業内容を考慮した、学習効果向上のための議論である。

Motivated by a change in English education curriculum of Nagoya University of Arts and Sciences where spoken English is scheduled to be taught as an optional subject from the academic year 2006, this article is an attempt to investigate freshmen background, interests, and learning need of English; and examine how the findings can help EFL teachers teach prospective students effectively. For this purpose, a general survey was conducted, and the data of 536 freshmen from five departments was examined. Overall findings revealed that 90% students learned oral communication in high school, 60% of them felt that their classes were effective, 80% showed interest to continue learning English at university level, and 93% had the opinion that English skills will help them in their future career. The results were found in good agreement with the ones reported previously. The improvement

for the spoken English course, in the form of suggestions for EFL teachers were discussed as regards class size, instructional media, and contents.

Background of the Study

English teachers working in Japanese institutions should be fully aware of the fact that English is the only foreign language taught throughout junior and senior high schools in Japan (Miura 1997, Johnson 1995, O' Sullivan, 1994, and Wadden 1993). It is also the only language which has been widely taught in many Japanese universities as a required subject, and even in some of the elementary schools and kindergartens (*FD Forumu* 1999, and Wordell and Gorsuch 1992).

Recently, academic efforts and major changes for improving English education grew even larger and faster (Tanabe 2003, and Milan 2001) especially in universities since 'The percentages of students continuing on to universities and graduate schools are both increasing.' (Asahi Shinbun 2003, cited in Tanabe 2003:4), and particularly after the introduction of the 2003 Action Plan to Cultivate 'Japanese with English Abilities' by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), One of such major changes in the 2003 Action Plan under the 'Improvement in the evaluation system for selecting school and university applicants' is the widely known 'introduction of a listening test in the University Center Examination (targeted for implementation from 2006)' (Ministry 2003).

To this end, several contributions have been made towards promoting English education at Japanese universities through surveying non-English major students which closely relate to the present study. Burden (2002), in an effort to investigate what university students believe about learning English, surveyed students from 3 Japanese universities (prefectural, national, and private) majoring in Education, Law, Nursing, Japanese History, and reported the results of 1057 students (686 males, 371 females) including 37 Chinese, 5 South Koreans, 1 Russian, and 1 Malaysian. On the other hand, Burden (2000), Cullen and Morris (2002), and Burden and Stribling (2003) informed results of the use of Japanese language in university conversation classes. Long (1997), focusing on a particular English course at his university, investigated students' attitude towards the course, and based on the findings offered suggestions for its improvement.

Objectives of the Study

To make the curriculum and teaching materials relevant to the students, use need analysis techniques to find out about your students need, goals and interests, and build these into your curriculum as much as possible.

Dornyei (2001:140)

In light of the literature reviewed above, this article is motivated by a change in the writer's working environment and encouraged by a genuine need of the 'Promotion of practical research' (in the 2003 Action Plan) concerning 'English education at universities (Ministry 2003) in that English relating to the 'General Education' of Nagoya University of Arts and Sciences (NUAS) is scheduled to be taught as an optional subject from the academic year 2006. The NUAS currently offers required courses of spoken English (formally Eigo Communication-EC) for the year 1 students, and Written English (Sogo Eigo-SE) for the year 2 students from five departments (Nutritional Studies, Visual Media, Design, Creative Fashion Design, and Child Care). EC is scheduled to be optional from the academic year 2006, and SE from 2007 for all but the Child Care department. In this regard, for generating initial motivation Dornyei (2001:140) suggests that it is necessary to make the curriculum and teaching materials relevant to the students by using need analysis techniques to find out about your students need, goals and interests, and build these into your curriculum as much as possible.

Therefore, for administrative purposes, and to make classroom teaching effective in the new curriculum, there seems to be an urgent need of a need analysis through a general survey. The present study will specifically focus on the following two research questions: (1) What are freshmen background, interests, and learning need of English?, and (2) How can the findings help EFL teachers teach prospective freshmen effectively? The report will first, describe the steps employed in designing a survey instrument; next, discuss the findings of the survey; and last, offer suggestions for EFL teachers to teach spoken English classes effectively.

Developing a Survey Instrument

According to Nunan (1992, cited in Griffiee 1997:19) the creation of valid and reliable questionnaires is a specialized business. A teacher cannot simply make a questionnaire, administer, and report the results. Before a questionnaire can be used

for research purposes, it must be reported how the questionnaire was constructed, how it was piloted, and what if any revisions were made on the pilot questionnaire results. Seliger and Shohamy (1995: 245) suggested that a detailed account of all the procedure involved is necessary for validating the result as 'it is of special significance in qualitative research since there are not set procedures for conducting such research.' Griffee (1997) offered suggestions for making a valid and reliable questionnaire instrument.

Employing the above guidelines and the ones by Brown (2001), the procedure of developing a survey instrument for this project, which is a product of the writer's several years of small research projects, is outlined below.

Preliminary Construct

The basic idea of survey questions was developed from the writer's freshmen classes of NUAS while discussing with them about their English study prior to this university, and their preferences of learning skills and activities in order to teach them spoken English according to their levels and interests. This, eliciting a set of appropriate questions and their expected responses, lead to a preliminary questionnaire which was used in subsequent classes at the beginning of semesters for the objectives mentioned above. Students were first asked to fill in the questionnaire, and then discuss with me in small groups which was done mainly in Japanese.

To design the preliminary survey instrument several responses were constructed. For instance, I was under the impression that students learn Oral Communication (OC) for one year and by foreign staff. I was also unaware that some students study more than once a week. Lesson time was assumed to be 50 minutes. However, I came to know that the students study for 1-3 years, by both Japanese and foreign teachers, and that lesson time vary from 30 through 90 minutes. Some new questions were also introduced such as 'Have you ever studied English abroad?' or 'Have you ever studied English outside junior or high schools?' . The initial question 'Did you learn more speaking or listening in your OC classes?' was changed to 'What skills did you learn in your OC classes?' since all students informed that they learned all skills besides grammar.

Piloting the Survey

The survey instrument was piloted at least in 2-4 classes for two years as a rou-

tine class activity at the beginning of a semester. The result of the survey was also informed from to time to colleagues to form them a general idea of new students. As an example, Table 1 reports the findings of a pilot study in which 48 freshmen from two NUAS classes (Visual Media and Creative Fashion Design) were surveyed in April, 2002.

Table 1: Findings of the pilot study

01	93 %	learned oral communication in high school
02	73%	learned for one year
	19	for two years
	8	for three years
03	43%	learned by Japanese teachers
	50	by both
	7	by foreign teachers
04	67%	had lessons once a week
	30	two times
	3	three times
05	59%	learned speaking (25%), and listening (34%)
	41	reading (18%), and writing (23%)
06	84%	liked OC classes (8%), a little (28%), responded ok (48%)
07	21%	traveled abroad for pleasure
08	5%	had a home stay mainly in English speaking counties
09	95%	interested to study speaking (52%) and listening (43%)
	5	reading and writing

The results of this first group of freshmen are purposely reported here to see if the general patterns in findings have been changed.

As the pilot study was done in my own classes, it was not essential to prepare a Japanese version since I could respond to students' inquiries during the class hours. However, I kept a record of the students' questions and response items for future use.

Revising the Instrument

The survey instrument was revised, and the following three new questions, spe-

cifically important for the present research, were added. (14) Are you interested to continue learning English?, (15) What skills are you most interested to learn?, and (16) Do you think English skills will help you in your future career? (see Appendix A)

The instrument was translated in Japanese by the writer's spouse who had a BA in British and American Studies, TOEFL 623, TOEIC 955, and has been an English teacher. The Japanese translation of certain questions and associated response items was difficult and time consuming as it was not possible to find equivalent appropriate words and/or phrases. Therefore, some questions and response items were first written in Japanese and then modified in English version. The instrument was reviewed by two Japanese professors of non-English majors, and a student of the same age as the actual participants. Lastly, the instrument was tested in different classes with some students to make sure that the contents are clearly understood. During testing the total time for administrating the survey instrument was found to be approximately 10 minutes.

Administrating the Survey

A total 536 NUAS freshmen (386 females and 150 males) from five non-English major departments, that are Nutritional Studies, Visual Media, Design, Creative Fashion Design, and Child Care were surveyed (see Table 2).

Administration of the survey was carried out by five foreign English language instructors and a Japanese professor of the Child Care department besides the writer in July-August 2005. Copies of the Japanese version of the survey (Appendix B), consisting of two A4 sized pages (front and back), were given to the instructors in separate envelopes. Because of space limitations the Appendix B is reported here on a single page. The instructors collected the data in their regular classes, and returned the envelopes to the writer.

Table 2: Classification of subjects according to their Majors

Department	Subjects	Females	Males
Nutritional Studies	137	114	23
Visual Media	117	52	65
Design	77	50	27
Creative Fashion Design	48	35	13

Child Care	157	135	22
Total	536	386 [72%]	150 [28%]

Analyzing the Survey

The frequency of responses in each question is calculated by carefully counting, and checking whether the final result is correct. It was difficult to have the results checked by researchers other than the writer which is generally required to get a reliable data as suggested by Seliger and Shohamy (1995:205) mainly because no such persons were available. The raw score (i.e. frequency) was then used to estimate the mean (average) percentage.

It is to be noted that although 536 completed questionnaires were received, some of the entities in the questionnaires were unanswered. Therefore, responses to each question were counted separately. Furthermore, for the convenience of readers, all results in this study are presented in percentages and whole numbers by counting fractions of 0.45 and over as a whole number and disregarding the rest. However, the calculations obviously lead a total and/or mean result to 99-101%.

Results and Discussion

This paper began with two research questions. The first one, ‘What are freshmen background, interests and learning need of English?’ will be responded to below by answering to the questions (1)-(16) in the survey instrument. For clarity, the questions (1)-(16) are changed to Q1-Q12. Table 3-Table 11 show the percentages of responses as regards Freshmen Background of English in each of the five departments. Table 12-Table 13, and Table 14 comprise results of Freshmen Interests, and Freshmen Learning Need respectively.

Freshmen Background of English

Q1: Did you learn Oral Communication in high school? [Table 3]

Overall, a large number of students (89%) responded that they learned OC in high school, where as at the department level the overall pattern was similar. However, there was a slight variation in terms of percentages, in that Child Care students responded 3% higher, and responses from Media students were 6% lower.

Table 3: % of learning OC in high school

Item/Dept	Nutrition	Media	Design	Fashion	Child Care	Mean
Yes	90	85	90	90	92	89
No	10	15	10	10	8	11

Q2: *How long did you learn Oral Communication?* [Table 4]

Students' responses varied in number of years from 1/2 through 3 years with maximum of 56% for 1 year, minimum for 1/2 year; and 21% and 22% for 2 and 3 years respectively. At the department level, however, Nutrition and Child Care had a similar pattern. On the other hand, Media, Design and Fashion had similarities.

Table 4: % of length of OC classes

Item/Dept	Nutrition	Media	Design	Fashion	Child Care	Mean
1/2 year	0	0	0	7	1	1
1 year	63	52	51	52	60	56
2 years	22	19	22	19	22	21
3 years	15	29	27	21	18	22

Q3: *How often did you learn Oral Communication?* [Table 5]

Students' responses varied in frequency from once (52%), 2 times (36%), and 3 times (12%). As regards departments, the pattern was similar with the exception of Design where students had more lessons 2 times a week as compared with the ones in other departments.

Table 5: % of frequency of OC classes

Item/Dept	Nutrition	Media	Design	Fashion	Child Care	Mean
Once a week	50	54	43	61	53	52
2 times a week	31	32	47	31	36	36
3 times a week	19	14	10	8	11	12

Q4: *How long were your Oral Communication lessons?* [Table 6]

Overall length varied from 45-minute through 65-minute with a majority of 79% who had lessons of 50-minute; and at the department level the order was Media (87%), Design (85%), Nutrition (85%), Child Care (78%), and Fashion (64%).

Very few students reported that they had 30 or 90 minutes lessons. The 30-minute lessons were not included in the data, where as those of 90-minute were counted as two lessons of 45 minutes

Table 6: % of length of OC lessons per week

Item/Dept	Nutrition	Media	Design	Fashion	Child Care	Mean
45 Minutes	8	7	6	17	6	9
50 Minutes	83	87	85	64	76	79
55 Minutes	1	0	2	2	2	1
60 Minutes	1	3	4	7	9	5
65 Minutes	8	3	3	10	7	6

Q5: Who taught the Oral Communication classes? [Table 7]

Japanese staff was responded as the main teachers (47%) to teach OC classes, followed by both foreign and Japanese staff (39%). Classes taught by foreign staff were responded as minimum (14%). Almost a similar pattern was found at the department level with a slight difference with Design students where classes by Japanese and both staff were the same.

Table 7: % of teaching staff of OC classes

Item/Dept	Nutrition	Media	Design	Fashion	Child Care	Mean
Foreign Staff	18	15	7	22	10	14
Japanese Staff	44	45	46	54	46	47
Both	38	40	47	24	44	39

Q6: What Oral Communication skills did you learn? [Table 8]

In OC classes, students learned more written (52%) than spoken English (48%). However, listening was the main learning skill (25%) followed by speaking (23%). As for the written language, the order was writing and grammar (19%), and reading (14%). At the department level, the students from Fashion, Nutrition, and Child Care had an approximate balance of spoken and written English, while those from Media and Design had more lessons (about 5%) of written English.

Table 8: % of learning skills in OC classes

Item/Dept	Nutrition	Media	Design	Fashion	Child Care	Mean
Speaking	25	20	21	24	23	23
Listening	24	26	24	28	25	25
Reading	11	16	15	15	12	14
Writing	18	19	25	14	21	19
Grammar	21	19	15	19	19	19

Q7: Do you think your Oral Communication lessons were effective? [Table 9]

Overall 58% students think that their OC lessons were effective. At the department level, the pattern was slightly different with the responses from highest to the lowest as Child Care (71%), Nutrition (64%), Design (55%), Fashion (52%), and Media (48%).

Table 9: % of effectiveness of OC classes

Item/Dept	Nutrition	Media	Design	Fashion	Child Care	Mean
Yes	64	48	55	52	71	58
No	36	52	45	48	29	42

Q8: Have you ever studied English abroad or had a home stay? [Table 10]

Although a small number of students (8%) responded that they visited abroad, almost all had a home stay. At the department level, students from Fashion and Media had comparatively higher percentages respectively 15% and 9%. Of 33 students, 6 had a home stay for about 4 weeks, 12 for 2-3 weeks, 14 for 1 week or less, and one student for 3 months. The student with 3 months' home stay also stayed abroad for 2 years and a half.

As regards visiting countries, the order from most to least was Australia, USA, UK, New Zealand, Canada, Germany, Malaysia, Korea, Mexico, and Tonga. In Burden's study (2002), 3% students learned English for a month or more in an English speaking country. This may mean that there has been an increase of Japanese university students' study abroad and home stay programs, and mainly in English speaking countries. The tendency can also be seen in the pilot study (Table 1:08).

Table 10: % of study abroad or home stay

Item/Dept	Nutrition	Media	Design	Fashion	Child Care	Mean
Yes	5	9	7	15	6	8
No	95	91	93	85	94	92

Q9: Have you ever studied English outside of schools? [Table 11]

Again overall a small number of students (17%) responded that they learned English at language schools. At the department level, students from Design and Child Care learned more during elementary and junior high schools; Nutrition and Fashion did more during junior and high schools; while Media students studied from elementary through high schools. Exceptionally few students (from Nutrition, Child Care, and Media) responded Others (See Appendix A). It may include their learning during study abroad. Surprisingly, most of these students studied English for 3 years in junior and 3 years in high schools besides their regular school study.

Table 11: % of learning English at language schools

Item/Dept	Nutrition	Media	Design	Fashion	Child Care	Mean
Yes	15	19	17	18	14	17
No	85	81	83	82	86	83

Freshmen Interests of English

Q10: Are you interested to continue learning English? [Table 12]

Overall a large number of students (81%) responded that they are interested to continue learning English at university level. The pattern was the same at the department level, however, in the order of Fashion (97%), Nutrition (85%), Child Care (82), Media (77%), and Design (65%).

Table 12: % of current interest in learning English

Item/Dept	Nutrition	Media	Design	Fashion	Child Care	Mean
Yes	85	77	65	97	82	81
No	15	23	35	3	18	19

Q11: What skills are you most interested to learn? [Table 13]

73% students showed interest in spoken while 27% preferred to learn written

English. Overall the students were most interested to learn speaking (46%) followed by listening (27%). The least interested skills were responded as writing (8%) and grammar (8%). These patterns were also the same at the department level with the exception of Fashion students who showed more interest in learning grammar (10%) than writing (5%). It is worth to mention here that students in each department preferred to learn speaking (43-49%) and listening (25-28%) with almost similar rate of percentages.

Table 13: % of preferred learning skills

Item/Dept	Nutrition	Media	Design	Fashion	Child Care	Mean
Speaking	43	44	44	49	49	46
Listening	28	28	28	28	25	27
Reading	13	12	12	8	11	11
Writing	10	8	8	5	8	8
Grammar	6	8	8	10	7	8

Freshmen Need of Learning English

Q12: Do you think English skills will help you in your future career? [Table 14]

Students' responses to this important question seem encouraging as regards their motivation and expectations. If the responses are viewed in terms of positive (strongly agree and agree) and negative (disagree and strongly disagree), 93% students think that English skills will help them in their future career.

However, at the department level the positive response pattern slightly differed where as the order was Fashion (100%), Design (96%), Media (95%), Nutrition (91%), and Child Care (83%) which may have implications for language teaching in general and English teaching in particular.

Table 14: % of the need of learning English

Item/Dept	Nutrition	Media	Design	Fashion	Child Care	Mean
Strongly agree	36	51	46	56	31	44
Agree	55	44	50	44	52	49
Disagree	9	5	4	0	11	6
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	6	1

Suggestions for EFL Teachers

The section will respond to the second research question ‘(2) How can the findings help EFL teachers teach prospective freshmen effectively?’ For the convenience of readers a summary of findings is reported in Table 15 along with the results reported previously. The first column represents the questions addressed in the preceding section.

Class Size

In view of the major findings of this study, in a class originally comprising 20 students, 16 students (81%) may like to continue learning English (Table 15:10) with 12 (73%) in spoken and 4 (27%) in a written class (Table 15:11). Likewise, if a class consists of 15 students, 12 would like to study English with 9 as spoken and 3 as written. This indicates that in the new curriculum an optional class of spoken English is likely to have 9-12 students, and that of written English 3-4 students depending on the department. However, the tentative estimates, which merely provide us a general idea of the class size in the new curriculum, may vary as the semester proceeds. It is highly probable that the size will depend on how the students were taught in the preceding semester, and the extent to which they were satisfied with the class contents. The discussion below may offer a rationale for the approximate figures as regards the class size by looking at other findings and the information available in prevailing studies.

Table 15: Summarized Findings of the Present Study

01	89%	learned OC in high school
02	56%	learned for 1 year
	21	for 2 years
	22	for 3 years
03	52%	learned once a week
	36	2 times a week
	12	3 times a week
04	79%	had a 50-minute lesson
	21	others
05	14%	learned by foreign teachers
	47	by Japanese teachers

	39	by both
06	48%	learned speaking (23%), and listening (25%)
	52	reading (14%), writing (19%), grammar (19%)
07	58%	think OC lessons were effective
08	8%	studied English abroad or had a home stay*
09	17%	studied English at language schools
10	81%	are interested to continue learning English
11	73%	prefer to learn speaking (46%), and listening (27%)
	27	reading (11%), writing (8%), and grammar (8%)
12	93%	think that English skills will help them in their future career*

*Burden (2002)

In the present study, 93% students think that English skills will help them in their future career (Table 15:12). The finding confirms the result in Burden's study (2002) where 94% students responded that 'If I learn English very well, it will help me get a good job'. This means that a majority of Japanese students have expectations toward English skills in that they will help them in their future jobs. Probably because of this strong motivation and positive learning experience of OC in high school (Table 1:06, Table 15:07) a large number of students (81%) showed willingness to continue learning English at university level (Table 15:10). 73% of such students showed interest to learn spoken English (Table 15:11). A similar tendency was found in the pilot study (Table 1:09), and the one reported by the writer, as predicted by Richards (1974: 177), where students in their writings commented on their OC classes in high school as 'I enjoyed listening class, so we can watch English drama on TV. I think I will learn English for communication.' (Farooq 1999).

On the other hand, a lack of interest towards learning written English at university level (Table 1: 09, Table 15:11) could be a reflection of high schools methodologies, described by Thompson (1995:223) as 'The traditional Japanese regard for authority and formality is in tune with teacher-dominated lessons where much heed is paid to the 'correct' answer, learning of grammar rules and item-by-item (rather than contextualised) vocabulary.' More recent studies have reported that 'English language instruction in high schools in Japan has largely been and still

is dominated by yakudouku, a non-oral approach to foreign language instruction thought to be related to grammar/translation' (Gorsuch 1998:7); and 'rote learning and memorization in Japanese schools.' (Susser 1998: 55). The situation can also be seen in terms of students' comments in their writings as 'When I learned English in high school, I learned only grammar. Japanese teacher taught me a lot of grammar. I was getting hate English at that time. I thought Japanese students worry about grammar.' (Farooq 1999).

The preceding arguments suggest that in order to maintain a class size in the new curriculum, it seems essential for a teacher to design a class syllabus and associated activities according to students' need and interests, and outline them in the syllabus in a way compressible by the low proficiency students.

Instructional Media

The survey results suggest that there are students who have more experience of learning OC than others especially at the department level. On the other hand, there are students whose OC lessons had more focus on written than spoken English (Table 8). If there are students who learned OC 2-3 times a week for 2-3 years (Table 15: 03), they can be regarded as able students. However, the survey does not tell how often a class in a year or term is taught by Japanese or a foreign teacher. If the term 'Both' is taken as half and half, then an average student can be assumed to have an experience of meeting 34% by foreign teachers and 66% by Japanese teachers provided the frequency of lessons is the same (Table 15:05). To sum up, this implies that if these students are taught together by a foreign teacher alone, there would be a considerable number of students who had (1) no experience of learning OC by a foreign teacher, (2) no exposure of spoken English at all, and (3) less OC experience than others in their pre-university classes. If this were the case, then it is highly probable that such students would find difficulties to follow an English-only lesson.

Therefore, the suggestions are that to have a spoken English lesson understood by most of the students, instructors should manage to use Japanese or look for an alternative. This view is supported by the research carried out by Cullen and Morris (2002) in that they found that 98% low proficiency level Japanese students want that their teachers should know Japanese. The finding is also confirmed by Burden (2000) where 89% had such opinion. In fact, these works also found that 72%

(Cullen and Morris), and 83% (Burden) students want their teachers to use Japanese in class (also see Farooq 1993: 87-89).

Class Contents

A large number of students preferred speaking (approximately 20%) than listening (Table 15:11). It is interesting to see that students from all of the five departments preferred speaking over listening, and with similar percentages (Table 13). A similar tendency is observed in the pilot study (Table 1:09). This strong interests toward speaking could be a result of more focus on listening than speaking in students' high school OC classes (Table 1:05, Table 15: 06). The expectations are that the prospective students will have even more experience of learning listening because of the introduction of a listening test in the University Center Examination (targeted for implementation from 2006)' (see Ministry 2003). This will certainly require serious efforts on the part of teachers to induce the learners to speak out partly because of their low proficiency levels and partly because of their silent nature as reported by Susser (1998: 59), Korst (1997: 280-281), Helgesen (1993: 37), and O' Sullivan (1994: 90, 108).

Therefore, suggestions for teachers are to design activities that essentially provide more chances for speaking than listening where as the language practice should be done in teacher-learner interaction, preferably in the form of teacher's questions since studies relating to ESL teaching have pointed out the need for teachers' questioning. 'In second language classrooms, where learners often do not have a great number of tools . . . , your questions provide necessary stepping stones to communication' (Brown 1994:165, also see Nunan 1991: 192). In this regard, the writer reported a model for motivating Japanese EFL learners employing the concepts of (1) reduced forms, (ii) variations in speech, (iii) modified interaction, and (iv) referential questioning strategies, common in natural spoken discourse analysis. The testing of the model in university classrooms of various proficiency levels from beginners through advanced Japanese learners showed remarkable results (see Farooq 2004). Non-verbal activities or the ones that make students silent (e.g. reading, writing or grammatical exercises) need to be avoided or minimized. Furthermore, the concept of negotiation or modification of meaning between interlocutors (Chaudron 1993:130-131) or modified interaction that are widely known as comprehension check, clarification request, and confirmation check should be formally

introduced and heavily practiced in spoken English classrooms as they form an essential part of natural communication (Francis and Hunston 1995) and are considered 'successful classroom second language acquisition' (Nunan 1989: 47). The examples of commonly employed prompts are Sorry?, Did you say absent?, and What do you mean?. Middleton (2005:56), based on the findings of his experiment concerning the use of negotiation strategies in English in Japanese junior and high school classrooms, suggested that 'students at a more advanced level can benefit from study of these strategies'. The strategies can also serve as an alternative of using Japanese if things are not understood or misunderstood.

The suggestions above are especially important for two reasons: firstly, since in the new curriculum the class size is likely to get smaller as mentioned above, and secondly, the development of the speaking skills seems to relate to Japanese learners' motivation according to Burden's findings (2002). In his study, 93% subjects commented 'If I get to speak English well, I can have many chances to use it in the future', and 81% had the opinion 'I would like to learn English so I can get to know its speakers better.'

Recommendations for Further Study

The current study focused mainly on spoken English course of the university, however, the analyzed data of written English (reading and writing) remained untouched since the optional course is scheduled to begin in the academic year 2007. Moreover, because of time and space constraints, it was not possible to comment on the qualitative data from the students' in response to the statement 'Write down below if you have any comments about your OC classes' (Appendix A). The data is intended to be utilized in future studies.

Another important area to examine is to look at the gender differences concerning teachers' attention and learning preferences through the use of theoretical models as the research in this area at university level is limited (see Farooq 2000). Lastly, it is highly recommended to conduct a general survey from two different groups of students, one with English and the other with non-English major, and examine if the students with English major responded differently which could have implications for EFL teachers as regards Japanese students' motivation and expectations towards learning English. If carefully planned, these projects can lead to a postgraduate research and are particularly suitable for a master's dissertation.

Conclusion

In order to improve the quality of overall English education at Nagoya University of Arts and Sciences where English is scheduled to be taught as an optional subject from the academic year 2006, this article was an attempt to investigate freshmen background, interests, and learning need of English through a general survey.

The data of 536 freshmen from five departments provided practical information in that 90% students responded to have experience of learning spoken English in high school, and 60% of such students felt that their classes were effective as well. Probably because of this positive learning experience, 80% showed willingness towards learning English at university level which in turn seemed to be the result of their motivation and expectations where 93% students agreed that English skills will help them in their future career. As an outcome of the study for improving the new classes, the suggestions for EFL teachers are as follows: Firstly, an optional class of spoken English is likely to have 8-12 students, and that of written English 3-4 students. To maintain the class size in each semester, teachers are suggested to update their class syllabuses and associated activities, and outline them in the syllabuses in ways compressible by the low proficiency students. Secondly, in order to have a spoken English lesson understood by most of the students, teachers should manage to use Japanese or look for an alternative. Lastly, to respond to students' expectations and motivation, teachers are strongly suggested to focus mainly on speaking activities along with verbal communication with individual students. This is especially important since, in the new curriculum, the class size is likely to become smaller.

EFL and ESL teachers as well may have a tendency to teach according to their own 'beliefs in language learning and teaching' as pointed out by Holland and Shortall (1997), however, the learners can be benefited much more and motivated as such if their lessons are carefully planned and taught by taking into considerations their background, interests, and learning need of English.

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Appendix A

As a personal research project, this questionnaire is designed to improve the effectiveness and qualities of our English education at this university. Please answer the questions by making a circle and/or filling in spaces. M. Farooq

Sex: Male Female
Department: Nutrition Media Design Fashion Child Care

(I) About high school Oral Communication classes.

(1) Did you learn Oral Communication in high school?

Yes No

If you circle 'Yes' in (1), answer the following questions. If you circle 'No', go to (II).

(2) I Attended _____ Minutes lesson _____ Times a week for _____ Years.

(3) Who taught the Oral Communication classes?

Foreign Staff Japanese Staff Both

(4) What Oral Communication skills did you learn?

Speaking Listening Reading Writing Grammar Others

(5) Do you think your Oral Communication lessons were effective?

Yes No

Write down below if you have any comments about your OC classes.

_____.

(II) About study and traveling abroad

(6) Have you ever studied English abroad?

Yes No

If you circle 'Yes' in (6), answer the following questions. If you circle 'No', go to (9).

(7) Country / Countries _____.

(8) How long did you stay?

I stayed _____ Years, _____ Months, _____ Days

(9) Did you have a home stay abroad?

If you circle 'Yes' in (9), answer the following questions. If you circle 'No', go to (III).

(10) Country / Countries:

(11) How long did you have the home stay?

I stayed _____ Years, _____ Months, _____ Days.

(III) About learning English at language schools.

(12) Have you ever studied English outsidess of schools?

Yes No

(13) If you circle 'Yes' in (12), fill in the blanks below. If applicable, please fill in all the blanks.

A: In elementary school

B: In junior high school: _____ Years, _____ Months

C: In high school: _____Years,_____Months

D: Others: _____Years,_____Months

(IV) About your current interest in English.

(14) Are you interested to continue learning English?

Yes No

(15) If you circle 'Yes' in (14), answer the following question.

What skills are you most interested to learn?

Speaking Listening Reading Writing Grammar Others_____

(16) Do you think English skills will help you in your future career?

- I Strongly agree
- I Agree
- I Disagree
- I Strongly disagree

Thank you for your time.

Appendix B

新入生の英語に関する学習経験等についての調査

このアンケートは、英語の授業および学習効果の向上を目的とする研究のためのもので、できる限り正確に記入していただきますよう、ご協力をお願いいたします。指示の無いかぎり、該当する項目を○で囲んでください。

M. ファルク

性別： 男 女

学科： 管理栄養 映像メディア デザイン ファッション造形 子どもケア

I 高等学校におけるオーラルコミュニケーションの授業について

(1) 高校でオーラルコミュニケーションの授業を受けましたか？

はい いいえ

以下は、(1)で「はい」と答えた方のみお答えください。「いいえ」と答えた方は、IIへ進んでください。

(2) 頻度について下線部に数字でお答えください。

1回 _____ 分の授業を、週 _____ 回、 _____ 年間受けました。

(3) オーラルコミュニケーションの指導をしたのは、誰でしたか？

外国人教師 日本人教師 その両方

(4) 高校でのオーラルコミュニケーションの授業では、何を中心に学習していたと思いますか？（複数回答可）

スピーキング リスニング リーディング ライティング 文法
その他 _____

(5) 高校でのオーラルコミュニケーションの授業を有意義であったと思いますか？

はい いいえ

高校でのオーラルコミュニケーションの授業についての感想があれば下に記入下さい。

II 留学他、海外滞在経験について

(6) 英語学習を目的とした留学の経験はありますか？

はい いいえ

以下は、(6)で「はい」と答えた方のみお答えください。「いいえ」と答えた方は、(9)へ進んでください。

(7) それは、どの国でしたか？

国名 _____

(8) 滞在期間は、どれ程でしたか？下線部に数字でお答えください。

____年____ヶ月____日

(9) 海外でのホームステイの経験がありますか？

はい いいえ

以下は、(9)で「はい」と答えた方のみお答えください。「いいえ」と答えた方は、IIIへ進んでください。

(10) それは、どの国でしたか？

国名 _____

(11) 滞在期間は、どれ程でしたか？下線部に数字でお答えください。

____年____ヶ月____日

III 国内における語学学校での学習について

(12) 語学学校で英語を学習したことがありますか？

はい いいえ

(13) (12)で「はい」と答えた方のみお答えください。

それは、いつごろ、どれ程の期間でしたか？（必要な人は全て記入してください。）

イ 小学校卒業前

ロ 中学校時代 _____年____ヶ月

ハ 高校時代 _____年____ヶ月

ニ その他 _____年____ヶ月

IV 今後の英語学習について

(14) 今後も英語の学習を継続して行きたいと思いますか はい いいえ

(15) (14)で「はい」と答えた方のみお答えください。

以下で興味のある英語学習の分野はどれですか？（複数解答可）

スピーキング リスニング リーディング ライティング 文法

その他 _____

(16) 英語の能力は、あなたの将来の役に立つと思いますか？

強くそう思う。

そう思う。

そうは思わない。

全くそう思わない。

以上です。ご協力ありがとうございました。