Designing Tasks for Listening and Speaking Skills

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0. Introduction

Recently authentic teaching material has been available, but the tasks for the commercial material are not always exploited. The aim of this paper is to evaluate ready-made material and to create appropriate tasks for a unit of work. The material to be evaluated in this paper is *Today's Japan (2)* video material taken from a TV news program (see Appendix 1).

1. Evaluation of the input

1.1 Advantages

The material is attractive in that topics are new information for students, as the title indicates. Students have a purpose to watch or listen to it. Since the topics are local, students are encouraged to match what they are watching with what they have already known, to predict the content by watching video and to insert unfamiliar points into their 'familiar structure' (Brown 1978: 277–278). Previous knowledge about topics is especially important for the learners of English as a second language to tune in to the information of input text. Topics are also important to give the learners motivation, though in language learning, the quality of tasks is more important and it is not sufficient to give interesting topics. That is, the tasks could be interesting and challenging even if the topics are not interesting, which will be mentioned later.

Moreover, the video used is suitable for presenting language in terms of the following reasons. Firstly, the picture and sound of the video is clear, so that

the teacher can stop the tape when students focus on particular language items. Secondly, the video can help the learners' comprehension by its visual support. In viewing, students cannot understand fully but can predict what is happening based on the visual images.

Further, the authenticity of input texts is considered as the most essential. This is because in real life situation, the listener is exposed to what is unknown and unpredicted and language is not simplified to take account of the linguistic abilities of the addressee (Morrow 1977: 26). That is, simplified syntax and vocabulary are not appropriate even if the listener's communicative ability is low. In this sense, TV news items are appropriate in that the language is authentic. Moreover, the situation where the learners watch video is realistic. We listen to the radio or watch TV in real world to get information.

1.2 Disadvantages

There are, however, several disadvantages to be considered. Firstly, the video material, by its nature, gives the learners input from two sources of information: visual and sound. This forces the learners to make a choice between visual information or language. Therefore it would be better to use video in silent viewing to motivate the learners at pre-listening stage or to use it at post-listening stage so that the learners can confirm their guess.

Secondly, the speech rate of this video material is not constant. It is largely dependent on the speakers. The inconsistency of the speech rate leads to difficulty for comprehension. Moreover, TV news uses authentic spoken language but the level of language does not necessarily meet the learner's level. One of the reasons is that the language is close in nature to written language: densely packed with information, longer and more specific words and sentences than spontaneous speech, formed in complete sentences, no

false starts and well-organised. As a solution, we can give the students an easy task in conjunction with viewing (Arcario 1992: 117). However, it is more reasonable to make material which is authentic in nature (Geddes and White 1978: 138). This is to be examined more in detail later.

2. Evaluation of tasks

Task types of practice materials are closely related with comprehensibility of the language. In each unit, there are while-listening tasks (true-false questions, multiple-choice questions about the content and gap-fill task) and post-listening tasks (translation and free discussion).

For while-viewing tasks, there are cases where amount of reading is excessive because of the length of the rubrics. Moreover, both true-false questions about the content and multiple-choice questions can be answered on the basis of the learners' knowledge or their memory rather than comprehension, in that they require fragmentary comprehension (Richards 1985: 203, Underwood 1989: 48–49). The gap-fill task (exercise 3) should help the learners to understand the content of the information, but the selected chunks do not necessarily carry the main ideas and does not lead to global comprehension. This is incompatible to the purpose of the task.

As post-listening task, translation from Japanese to English (exercise 4) is presented. Translation concentrates on the usage of correct sentence pattern. Composition based on cues written in Japanese requires accuracy and usage rather than fluency and use. These tasks are not challenging, so that the learners are not motivated. As for speaking, only tasks of free discussion are prepared.

To sum up, the lesson gives no aim for each task, no motivation and no help for comprehension from the teacher. Since tasks are not exploited and listening skill is not integrated into other skills, such as speaking or writing skills,

the learners cannot acquire the use of language. As Sheerin (1987: 126) observes, 'adequate preparation', 'adequate support', and 'the provision of appropriate tasks' are necessary for teaching effective listening.

3 Suggestion for teaching integrated skills — listening and speaking skills

Let us discuss how to adapt published material by making it more suitable for our students. What is important here is to make tasks as realistic as possible, to give the learners purpose and to elicit the learners' response or performance (Morrow 1982: 56–57, Underwood, 1989: 31). As mentioned, topics should also be taken into account so that they can predict the content to some extent using schemata or shared knowledge. If the topics are too difficult, they are discouraged from listening. To give them a feeling of success, it would be better to choose a topic which has local elements. In giving them a task, the teacher needs to say what they have to focus on while listening or speaking so that they can take part in the activity. Moreover, the teacher needs to give a chance for students to cooperate with each other in doing tasks, such as jigsaw listening. Thus, they can use their interlanguage and improve it in terms of fluency (Rixon 1986: 25). During the activity, the teacher should be tolerant to reasonable students' mistakes.

3.1 Listening

Let us now discuss each skill more in detail by starting with the input text of listening. As mentioned, it is obvious that the authentic material used is not appropriate especially in terms of the learners' level. To solve the problem, it is felt to be useful to follow what Geddes and White (1978) proposed, that is, 'semi-scripted simulated authentic speech'. This is devised for a pedagogical purpose, but exhibiting features which have a high probability of occurrence

in communication, such as hesitations, pauses, redundancies, etc. The semi-script can provide 'comprehensible input' which requires negotiation of meaning and which contains linguistic features a little beyond the learner's current level (Richards 1985: 203, Underwood 1989: 102). Owing to comprehensible input, the tasks do not have to be easy.

We now focus on the tasks for listening comprehension. It is important to give pre-listening statement to offer clues about the setting and set up the situation, such as what kind of discourse is to be heard, a recorded one or live one, a dialogue or monologue, etc. For example, if they know that they are going to hear monologue, they can concentrate on the transactional content and making notes. As while-listening tasks, the teacher can give two different types of listening experience: extensive listening and intensive listening: extensive listening is used to give the learners motivation and intensive listening is used to require students' challenge for the pedagogic value. All the tasks should encourage selective listening to create a note which is similar to the note of the teacher (Geddes and White 1978: 138). The note is called 'ideational framework' (Burgess 1994: 309). There are several advantages with this. Firstly, this enables the teacher to control and to help the learners' approach to tasks, since the learners are making a similar note to the teacher's. Secondly, the learners can be active in listening since they are actually writing to create an ideational framework. According to Geddes and White (1978:137), Spolsky (1969) mentions 'language is acquired by active listening (listening and doing) even better than listening and repeating'.

3.2 Speaking

The listening tasks should be integrated into speaking and writing tasks. For this purpose, controlled speaking using short-term memory is necessary. After the tasks of controlled speaking, communicative speaking

can be used.   Considering the level of the students, transactional language is more reasonable to teach than interactional language as Brown and Yule (1983:33) mentions.   The goal for learning is to develop what Canale and Swain (1980) identified: 'linguistic competence' (accuracy of grammar, vocabulary, etc.), 'sociolinguistic competence' (appropriacy of language), 'discourse competence' (the ability to organise ideas and to make a coherent output) and 'strategic competence' (effectiveness and clarity of message).   In order to acquire these four components of communicative competence, there needs to be 'task environment': a purpose to speak, a topic, an audience whom the learners are addressing; and the script, which establishes relevant organisational and stylistic conventions (Hayes and Flower 1980: 11–12).   Note that they identified this model for communicative writing: 'writer's motivation', 'a description of the topic', 'the intended audience' and 'the text produced so far'; this applies to speaking.)   The clearer model for teaching speaking skill is proposed by Nation (1989):

1. A role to play makes each learner know what to do.
2. Outcomes increase interest in the activity by making the learners see what work needs to be done.
3. Procedures divide the activity into steps, which increases the amount of speaking.
4. Split information gives each person a reason to participate and gives a strong feeling of group cohesiveness.
5. Challenge makes the activity difficult for the learners to achieve the outcome and interesting for them to do the activity.

To make classroom activities successful, these five features should be taken into account.

4. Improved teaching materials and the justification for the designing of the new teaching plan

4.1 The teaching material

A possible teaching material is suggested on the basis of the previous discussion. The target is Japanese learners of English at intermediate level. There are two lessons which represent about two hours of student work. The information is taken from published material *Today's Japan (2)* UNIT 15 but the presentation is revised and exploited. Materials used during the lessons are: four worksheets (see Appendix 2), two cassette tapes: one tape for each group during jigsaw listening (see Appendix 3) and the commercial video. The objectives are:

1. to make the learners aware of text type through an ideational framework
2. to develop the ability to listen selectively
3. to recognise repetition and rephrasing
4. to make predictions and modify predictions
5. to enable the learners to organise their opinion by speaking and writing
6. to build up vocabulary
7. to improve pronunciation

4.2 Rationale for teaching

The improved teaching plan is designed to strengthen further the advantages of the original materials and overcome its disadvantages discussed in section three. The specific justification for the design of the new plan is explained in the following.

(a) Topics

In Japan, it appears to be more reasonable for the learners to know the way of explaining local elements to foreign people living in Japan than to become acquainted with British or American cultural knowledge. This is because

Japan is an EFL situation. Therefore the topic selected is: "New Types of *Tatami*". The familiarity with ordinary *tatami* enables them to use their knowledge of the world and facilitates the difficulty of comprehension by limiting the range of possible utterances. This topic is also useful for discussion like the future of *tatami*, or even further the future of Japanese culture.

(b) Information

As information, three different talks are used on the same topic. Each talk is kept short, so that the learners can concentrate on the message of information. The talk by the teacher is authentic in nature, that is 'semi-scripted simulated authentic speech'. The semi-script enables the teacher to make spontaneous speech with interactional features, such as "Right?" The talks from tapes are authentic in origin since the information was actually broadcast. In this way, we can introduce variety of voice or accent. The language is monologue, so that students can concentrate on the form of language and the message.

(c) Prediction

Prediction is an important process in understanding spoken language (Sheerin 1987: 126). Before using semi-script, the teacher raises the learners' awareness of the text type (description) and the setting (the teacher's talk is monologue and the learners are the audience) by saying "I'm going to give you a talk about new types of *tatami*." Thus, the learners can prepare themselves for listening and focus on the message. This reduces the learners' memory load.

(d) Teaching not testing

The learners should be given many chances to listen to information, since teaching is different from testing. This enables the learners to comprehend the message well and at the same time increases their exposure to English. The talk by the teacher in lesson 1 is repeated at least five times in

different ways. Likewise, split listening in lesson 2 makes it possible for the learners to listen as often as they like. This facilitates the difficulty of listening to 'authentic' text. What we should bear in mind here is that a clear purpose for listening is provided each time (Underwood 1989: 32).

(e) Listening tasks using ideational frameworks

In this plan, listening skill is especially focused on. While listening, the learners are required to make a model that replicates the teacher's note. (The teacher's note is a little richer in information than students' one.) The talks from the tapes also require the learners to make an ideational framework. While the learners are listening, the teacher limits what the students are required to write. Thus, the teacher can control the class and support the learners' selective listening by giving them a purpose for listening. The ideational framework also helps the learners' memory load in that it does not require them to remember all the information received.

(f) Building up learners' vocabulary

The tasks for listening comprehension also require the learners to match the unknown words with the meaning through context. The learners have to discover the meaning by themselves with the help of visual support. Thus, the learners are encouraged to be independent of the teacher.

(g) Visual support

As Sheerin (1987: 127) states, visual support, in the form of pictures, etc., is vitally important in a listening course where the learners are derived of the visual element normally present in any spoken interaction. The visual from pictures for lesson 1 and from video for lesson 2 helps the learners confirm the meaning of new words and demonstrate their understanding to themselves and the teacher. This immediate feedback can give the learners the feeling of success and increase the learners' confidence. Visual is also used as stimulus for speaking tasks, such as problem-solving or discussion.

(h) Top-down processing and bottom-up processing

As Richards (1990: 52) mentions, bottom-up processing alone often gives an insufficient basis for comprehension. On the other hand, top-down processing alone is not sufficient. Top-down processing should be accompanied by analysis from the bottom-up. In the lessons, the learners mainly listen for content (top-down processing) but there are also times when the learners listen to prepare for speaking, focusing their attention on how the teacher says the words or sentences to imitate it (bottom-up processing).

(i) The tasks for listening and speaking: jigsaw listening

The talks from tapes are suitable for jigsaw listening in that each person is using a new type of *tatami* in a different way for a different purpose. Jigsaw listening elicits natural communication between the learners, which includes Nation's five features. The learners are given their roles. There are two steps (speaking to get their own information and exchanging the information with each other), which increases the amount of speaking. Split information gives each person a reason to participate and gives a strong feeling of group cohesiveness. The learners can experience challenge under time pressure since they can not show their worksheet to each other.

(j) The tasks for speaking

Problem-solving task, which follows listening tasks, encourage the learners to interact and to organise their ideas. The learners can get an outcome by choosing the best product and making a list of reasons for it. On the other hand, discussion does not include a clear outcome but helps the learners acquire 'discourse competence' and 'strategic competence' which Canale and Swain (1980) identified. The learners need the ability to organise ideas and to make a coherent output. They also need the ability for effective communication since they need to agree and reach the same opinion.

(k) The practice of pronunciation

Knowledge of the spelling conventions of English makes the learners feel secure and plays an active role in oral use (Kenworthy 1987: 97). Therefore, at the beginning of the lesson, the learners are presented with the spelling and sound of important words and given opportunities to pronounce the words. During the lessons, the practice of pronunciation is integrated in the practice of listening or speaking skills, but pronunciation is sometimes isolated for the practice of specific problems. Thus, the learners are provided opportunities to know the spelling convention and to improve their pronunciation.

(1) The integration of tasks

The practice of listening skills is integrated into the practice of speaking and writing skills through the talk delivered by the teacher using notes or the talks from tapes. Since worksheets are used, the practice of reading skills is also included. It is noted that drills play an important role in the transition from the practice of listening skills to the practice of speaking skills. The tasks are meaningful in that it is necessary for the learners to produce sentences depending upon their memory. In other words, both communicative work, such as the practice of listening or speaking skills, and uncommunicative work, such as the practice of pronunciation or drills, are used for a different purpose: the former activates students' skills which are necessary in real communication and the latter reinforces the students' knowledge of language.

Lesson 1

Preparation
1. The words which needs the learners' attention are written on the blackboard:
    A. sensor
    B. fold

      C. rectangular

      D. square

      E. border

The teacher pronounces the words and makes the learners choose the one they hear.

2.   The learners are asked to pronounce the words.

3.   The teacher gives an instruction as follows:

      pre-listening statement

      "Well, today I'm going to give you a talk about new types of *tatami*.   You might think *tatami* is kind of for the older generation, but it's not true.   There are new attractive ones.   Find out how many differences there are between traditional *tatami* and new ones.   Say 'Stop' when you find how many."

While-listening

4.   The teacher starts talking.   There is a note in front of the teacher:

who	verb	what	when, how
tatami mats	have covered	the floors of Japanese houses	for centuries
the way of living	changed		into European style
the demand for tatami	dropped		
tatami makers	developed	new ways to use tatami	

tatami	shape	colour	border
ordinary	rectangular	natural	has border
new tatami	any	any	no border

new *tatami*	advantages
piano	produces sound
lighting	turns on lights (with sensor)
colourful	fits Western-style rooms /not fade,
a *tatami* box	used for cabinet or chair
folding	folds up

5. A student says "Stop. Three". The teacher asks about the difference and writes a grid on the blackboard:

tatami	shape	colour	border
ordinary			
new tatami			

6. The teacher asks them "Can you tell me the difference between ordinary *tatami* and new ones to fill in the blanks?" If they say "No", the teacher tells them to find them out and the teacher starts talking.

7. The teacher asks them about the difference. A possible answer is:

tatami	shape	colour	border
ordinary	rectangular	natural	has border
new tatami	any	any	no border

8. The teacher asks them to say sentences. (e.g. "Ordinary *tatami* is rectangular. The colour is natural. It has a border.")

9. The teacher says "Now I want you to find out how many types of new *tatami* there are. Listen." The teacher talks.

10. The teacher asks the learners the number of *tatami*. Here a learner would say "There are 5."

11. The teacher says, "Now listen again. This time, find the names of *tatami*." and starts talking.

12. The learners would answer the names such as piano *tatami*. The teacher writes the names down on the blackboard:

new *tatami*
piano
lighting
colourful
a *tatami* box
folding

Here students are asked to say "There are five new *tatami*. They are called piano *tatami*, lighting *tatami*, colourful *tatami*, a *tatami* box and folding *tatami*."

13. The teacher tells the learners to listen carefully about the characteristics of new *tatami*. Now the blackboard is as follows:

new *tatami*	advantages
piano	
lighting	
colourful	
a *tatami* box	
folding	

The teacher starts talking. This time the text is simpler than the previous one.

14. The teacher asks the learners to say the characteristics of new tatami.

new tatami	advantages
piano	produces sound
lighting	turns on lights (with sensor)
colourful	fits Western-style rooms /not fade,
a tatami box	used for cabinet or chair
folding	folds up

15. The teacher nominates a student and says "Tell me one sentence."
16. The teacher asks the learners to tell her/him about every new *tatami*. Now the blackboard is:

tatami	shape	colour	border
ordinary	rectangular	natural	has border
new tatami	any	any	no border

new *tatami*	advantages
piano	produces sound
lighting	turns on lights (with sensor)
colourful	not fading, fit Western-style rooms
a *tatami* box	used for cabinet or chair
folding	folds up

17. The teacher erases the blackboard, leaving the initial letter of each word. The teacher asks the learners fill in the blanks and make sentences.

    e.g.. A learner says "Piano tatami produces sound."

18. The teacher makes the learners pay attention to sentence stress through the drills. If necessary, the teacher demonstrates. The learners are asked to highlight the important information; to make pause at the end of a tone group.

Post-listening

19. The teacher gives the learners **worksheet 1**.

20. The teacher says "Use the picture to write about each *tatami*."

Lesson 2

Speaking: problem-solving

1. The teacher says, "You are going to be salespersons. You have to sell one of these products today. Think about which is the most appealing."

2. Students are asked to work in pair and are given **worksheet 2**.

3. This time, students work in groups of six. They need to reach an agreement.

4. The teacher asks the result of each group. S/he asks the class which group is the best.

Speaking: role-play

5. Students work in groups of four (two pairs). One pair is salespersons and the other is a young couple. The teacher checks to see if each student understands their role before presentation.

6. Students play each role.

7. The teacher nominates two pairs. Students make presentation.

Listening

8. The teacher divides the learners into two groups. One group listens to what Kunihiro Wada says; and the other listens to what Papillon Lee says.

pre-listening statement

"You are going to listen to different people talking about *tatami*. Fill in worksheet 3."

9. The learners read **worksheet 3** and listen.

The tasks are:

1) Group 1, who is listening to what Kunihiro Wada says, fills in the blanks of Mr. Wada.

2) Group 2, who is listening to what Papillon Lee says, fills in the blanks of Mr. Lee.

10. The learners fill in the blanks in their worksheet. The learners can listen as many times as they want.

11. Students are asked to work in pairs: a student in group 1 and a student in group 2. The teacher tells the learners to compare their answers to find out the differences. They cannot show their worksheet to each other. The learners are asked to write to fill in the blanks while talking to each other.

12. The teacher writes a table on the blackboard and asks the learners questions orally: (e.g. "Where is Mr. Wada living?") Even simple answers are acceptable.

	Mr. Wada	Mr. Lee
Where?		
What?		
Why?		

A possible answers are:

	Mr. Wada	Mr. Lee
Where?	Japan (or Tokyo)	Japan
What?	9 square tatami mats, no border	blackish-purple tatami mats
Why?	To make a place to relax	To have total interior balance

13. The teacher erases.

14. The teacher nominates some students to make sentences.

15. The teacher prompts the learners to make sentences using *whereas, but.* The learners are supposed to use utterance stress properly with the help of the teacher. (e.g. "Mr. Wada bought nine square *tatami* mats with no border, whereas Mr. Lee ordered blackish-purple *tatami* mats.")

Post-listening: watch the video

16. The teacher tells the learners to match the message that they have got with the visual. The teacher asks them to say "Stop" when they find whose room is appearing and explain the room.

17. The teacher plays the video without sound.

18. A student says "Stop." The teacher asks him/her to explain it.

19. The teacher plays the video again to show Mr. Lee's room. This time students do not have to say "Stop" but explain it after watching.

20. A student explains his room.

Speaking and writing: discussion

21. The teacher asks the learners "Do you think that tatami will disappear from Japanese culture in the future? If so why? If not, why?" The teacher says "You have to reach an agreement by discussing and then write your opinions." The teacher gives them **worksheet 4**.

22. Students talk and write their opinions.

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Appendix 1

<Exercises>

1.   Watch the video and mark T for true and F for false.

   1. Tatami mats were also used in the Heian period.

   2. With the introduction of a more Western style of living in Japan, carpets began to be better accepted.

   3. Tatami must always be rectangular because this is the only shape that fits into Japanese houses.

2.   Watch the video again and choose the best answer.

   1. Tatami is

      a) cool in the summer but cold in the winter.

      b) cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

      c) cool in all seasons.

      d) cool in the spring and warm in the fall.

   2. As compared to 20 years ago, the demand for tatami has decreased by

      a) 15%.   b) 25%.   c) 50%.   d) 75%.

   3. The new forms of tatami introduced in this news segment do not include

      a) scented tatami.   b) folding tatami.   c) lighting tatami.   d) tatami which produces sound.

   4. The tatami box is useful not only as a cabinet, but also as

      a) a safe.   b) a cooler.   c) a chair.   d) a garbage bin.

3.   Listen to the tape and fill the blanks with the appropriate words.

   Piano tatami, which produces sound and lighting tatami with lights which are 1_____ by a sensor - these are 2_____ in tatami mats.

   Tatami makers have a history going back 1,300 years.   Tatami figured in 3_____ and in scroll paintings.   Like the Imperial Palace in Kyoto, tatami can also 4_____ in the old buildings that the nobility used in the Heian period, between the 5_____ and the 12th century.

   Rush or *igusa* in Japanese is used to make the outside of a tatami mat.   *Igusa* has a thin stem and 6_____ and also grows as tall as a man.   *Igusa* are first dried and then 7

using a machine.   Tatami seems to be <u> 8   </u> to Japanese-style homes.   It's cool in the summer and warm in the winter because a tatami mat has <u>9   </u> in it.

Until about 30 years ago, all the rooms in Japanese homes were almost all <u>10   </u> tatami mats.   The family would sit on tatami and relax and chat.   The increase of condominiums signaled a move to a more Western style of living and wooden living room floors or carpets began to become more popular.   Tatami rooms are becoming increasingly rare, and the demand for tatami has dropped by half from 20 years ago.....

Until recently a tatami mat was always rectangular and the natural colour of *igusa*.   Recently, though, the tatami industry has developed a way to dye *igusa* in colors to prevent them from fading and has produced colorful tatami mats to fit Western-style rooms.   The industry is also experimenting with tatami in new forms.   New products include a tatami box, which can be used not only as a cabinet but also as a tatami chair.   There is also tatami which folds up.

Kunihiro Wada is living in a condominium in Tokyo.   He frequently travels abroad looking for antiques.   He's trying to think of new ways to use tatami in his living room.   He's arranged nine square tatami mats without their usual border to make a place to relax....

[answers]

1. turned on   2. the latest   3. ancient literature   4. be seen   5. late 8th century   6. no leaves   7. woven one by one   8. well-matched   9. a lot of air   10. covered with

4. Fill in the blanks using appropriate words from the list given below each sentence.   There is one extra word in each list.

1. 日本人の生活のしかたが変わり，畳の需要は落ち込んでいます。

As <u>a)   </u> <u>b)   </u> <u>c)   </u> of <u>d)   </u> is <u>e)   </u>, the <u>f)   </u>
<u>g)   </u> <u>h)   </u> is <u>i)   </u> .

[for / demand / tatami / Japanese / the / increasing / way / falling / changing / living]

2.   畳業者は，畳を使う新しい方法を開発して，巻き返しをはかっています。

<u>a)   </u> <u>b)   </u> are <u>c)   </u> <u>d)   </u> by <u>e)   </u> <u>f)   </u>
<u>g)   </u> <u>h)   </u> <u>i)   </u> .

[up / tatami / developing / fighting / tatami / new / makers / ways / use / back]

3.   私は外国に長く住んでいましたが，畳に座ったり横になったりしていると，いつ

そうゆったりした気分になります。

a) _____ I have b) _____ in a c) _____ d) _____ e) _____ f) _____ g) _____

h) _____ , I i) _____ more j) _____ when I k) _____ l) _____ , m) _____ on tatami.

[time / lived / country / long / feel / for / relaxed / sit / a / or / foreign / lie / relaxing / although]

4. 私達の生活のしかたがさらに西洋化するにつれて，新製品を開発するのは自然なことです。

As our way of a) _____ b) _____ c) _____ d) _____ , it's e) _____ f) _____

g) _____ for h) _____ to i) _____ j) _____ k) _____ .

[Western / a / new / natural / becomes / thing / products / develop / us / more / living / westernize]
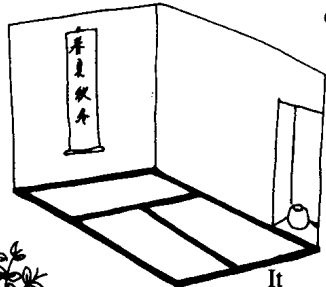
<Discussion Questions>

1. Which do you prefer, tatami or carpets?　Why?

2. Do you think that the new products will sell well?　If so, which ones?　If not, why?

3. Do you think that tatami will disappear from Japanese culture in the future?　Why or why not?

Appendix 2

Worksheet 1

Ⓐ

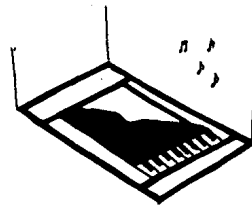ordinary tatami

Ⓑ

It
The colour
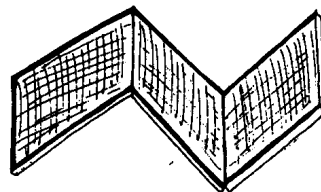It has

name :
It
It

Ⓒ

name :
It

Ⓓ

name :

It

Ⓔ

name :

It   and

Ⓕ

name :

It

Worksheet 2

You are salespersons. You have to sell one of these products today. The house you are going to is small and Western-type. In the house a young couple who are keen on music is living. You can go and sell together. Decide which of the new products you will recommend. Think the way of convincing the person so that s/he will buy it. Think more than two reasons why you think the product fits the house.

new *tatami*	advantages
piano	produces sound
lighting	turns on lights (with sensor)
colourful	not fading, fit Western-style rooms
box	used for cabinet or chair
folding	folds up

The product you chose:

Reasons:

1.

2.

3.

Worksheet 3

	Mr. Wada	Mr. Lee
Is he living in a foreign country ?		
Is he living in Japan?		
Is the tatami he is using different from ordinary tatami?		
What's different? (size? colour? shape?)		
Why does he use the tatami?		

Worksheet 4

1) We think that tatami will disappear from Japanese culture in the future because

2) We do not think that tatami will disappear from Japanese culture in the future because

Appendix 3

Talks from the tape

(Text for group 1)

Kunihiro Wada is living in a condominium in Tokyo. He frequently travels abroad looking for antiques. He's trying to think of new ways to use tatami in his living room. He's arranged nine square tatami mats without their usual border to make a place to relax.

"When I saw this tatami at a craft shop in a department store, I thought maybe I could do something with it." Although I have lived in a foreign country for a long time, I feel relaxed when I sit or lie on tatami, I guess, because I'm Japanese."

(Text for group 2)

Papillon Lee, who lives in Japan, is an actor in movies made in Hong Kong. Six years ago he placed a special order for blackish-purple tatami mats. Lee has experience in interior design, so he did his own work to remodel his home.

"The reason I dyed it black, because I wanted, I want the whole thing to fit into the entire interior, have the total balance. The younger Japanese, they think the tatami, it's kind of for the older generation, but I'm trying to tell them, if we dye the colour and change the size, the shape will also fit well into the Western interior, also."