

Students' Motivation & Communicative Competence

Noriyoshi MIYAMOTO

Background

There was a big controversy in the early seventies that divided English teachers in Japan into two camps. It was between Mr. Wataru Hiraizumi, the former Director-General for the Science and Technology Agency, and Professor Shoichi Watanabe of Sophia University. Both of them had the experience of studying in Europe and are regarded as experts of foreign languages.

Mr. Hiraizumi asserted that, at the level of high school in which the ratio of students who go to tertiary education is 90%, English should be an elective and avoided on the entrance examination of universities; he said this, believing that the present translation-grammar method influenced by the entrance examination and caused by the large-class-little-time situation has been quite ineffective and accordingly most students lack motivation. He said that 5% of the university graduates proficient in English would be enough for Japan. Professor Watanabe, on the other hand, claimed that the traditional English education as such is very important and essential to the entrance examination from the standpoint that reading foreign languages serves as intelligence training. Verbal fluency can be easily obtained overseas, he said, if the foundation of reading is firmly established at school. The controversy was repeated in a series of articles and finally compiled into a book titled "Big Debates on English Education" (Bungei Shunju, 1975). This book has been reprinted again and again, but the situation has not basically changed.

The following article, which was contributed by Mr. Shumon Miura, a famous author and once the Minister of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, appeared in the Tokyo Shim-bun. It put a stress on reading instead of the communicative approach in foreign language teaching. He said, "It might be better for you to be able to travel using English, tell someone the way to get somewhere in English or explain something about a building in front of a shrine or a temple in English than no communication at all, but those kinds of conversations don't seem to be very meaningful. Anybody who has studied for an entrance examination of a college here could do it if he is trained for a month or so. What is more important is to read newspapers, magazines and books published in English-speaking countries and know what they think about the world and, within their frame of reference, what kind of place they want to give to Japan, for example."

This represents the thought of some intellectuals including English teachers here on teaching English and shows that the above-mentioned controversy between Mr. Hiraizumi and Professor Watanabe has not been solved at all. Of course those who support pro-

fessor Watanabe and Mr. Miura would agree that it would be better if you could do both, speaking and reading. However, if you have to choose one, they would recommend without hesitation that you choose reading instead of speaking.

This reading-centered thinking is deeply rooted here. It is historical. We can't explain this phenomenon satisfactorily without referring to the teaching of kanji (Chinese Characters) and kanbun (Chinese Classics). Until very recently, the saying that if you read anything a hundred times you will be able to grasp the meaning has been current. Each Chinese character has its own meaning, so even if you can't grasp the meaning of the whole sentence at first sight, strenuous repeated reading will finally lead to clear meaning, it is said. This has the connotation of spiritualism which was prevalent in prewar days and was regarded as the basic attitude towards language education here. You can sense a flavor related to this mentality in the above-mentioned Professor Watanabe's opinion.

Another point is the characteristic of the Japanese society, homogeneity. It is comparatively easy for them to understand feelings of each other without recourse to verbal communication. It has been made light of among themselves, and those who are talkative are even despised. Eloquence is not essential or can be harmful sometimes even to politicians. On the other hand, those who read well are respected. This is the undercurrent of Japanese thinking on foreign language education.

Thus one of the most serious problems in English teaching at college level here in Japan is that English teachers are at a loss how to break away from the grammar-translation method. English is compulsory disregarding students' specialities, and accordingly classes are usually large. Therefore, many students are unmotivated and there is no other way but to resort to the traditional grammar-translation method, which, they assert, is the only practical approach under these circumstances.

However, is it right for teachers of universities to be convinced that the majority of students are unmotivated and passive in learning English? What if many of them have intrinsic or extrinsic motivation at heart and are just unsatisfied with the way of teaching by teachers? Thus I first tried to check their motivation about English learning as well as their hidden wishes about teaching, and wanted to change my syllabuses of over the short term and long term to accommodate to students' demands, if any.

Review of Literature

About motivation for learning, William Littlewood says in his ⁽¹⁾'Foreign and Second Language Learning' (Cambridge University Press, 1984), "Motivation is the crucial force which determines whether a learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he perseveres." As he asserts, it is a complex phenomenon and includes many components such as the individual's drive, need for achievement and success, and curiosity. The primary motive for learning English is of course that it provides a means of communication. Although as an island country Japan still lacks enough oppor-

tunities to communicate with foreigners through English compared with most of the world, you'd be surprised to find that there are so many foreigners here. They are not necessarily native speakers of English but English can well be a lingua franca. What's more, the prospect of going abroad yourself will ever increase. Thus, communicative need can be a good motivation for the students.

The effect of attitudes on motivation and proficiency has been investigated in a large number of studies. Those by ⁽²⁾Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert (1972) who have studied mainly English-speaking learners of French in areas of North America are most famous. These are distinguished as follows: a learner with integrative motivation has a genuine interest in the second language community. He wants to learn their language in order to communicate with them more satisfactorily and to gain closer contact with them and their culture. On the other hand, a learner with instrumental motivation is more interested in how the second language can be a useful instrument towards furthering other goals, such as gaining a necessary qualification or improving employment prospects. If you replace "second language" in the above-mentioned with "foreign language," basically the same thing can be said. The distinction is similar to that made between 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' motivation in general learning theory. It is clear that the two kinds of motivation do not exclude each other: most learners are motivated by a mixture of integrative and instrumental reasons, W. Littlewood says in the same book.

On the other hand, Rod Ellis says in ⁽³⁾'Understanding Second Language Acquisition' (Oxford University Press, 1986), "Precisely how motivation affects learning is not clear. One of the problems of the correlational studies, which constitute the bulk of the available research, is that it is only possible to show a relationship, not the direction of this relationship. We do not know whether it is motivation that produces successful learning, or successful learning that enhances motivation."

Research Findings

I first showed a video to my students which was a part of a Japanese omnibus movie titled "Damn it!" released in Tokyo last year. "Why are we Japanese forced to study English?" is the part of the film which sarcastically describes how funny the Japanese look when forced to study English and how arrogant the Americans here seem when they encounter the locals studying English.

The hero of this film is a middle-aged employee of a big company who is to be dispatched to Chicago soon to be a manager. He has not studied English since his graduation from university. He enters a language school together with young people, and sometimes is taken to a night club for practicing English where many English speaking hostesses are present. He even tries to force his family not to use Japanese at home to cooperate with him. The more diligently he tries to study, the more blunders he makes, which gives the Japanese viewers a heart-rending feeling. Finally, he flies into a rage, caused by his frustration and anger. The targets are not only some Americans around

him but also his company which forces him to study English. He exclaims, "Those foreigners who are here or employed overseas by Japanese companies should study Japanese instead of Japanese studying English. I don't want to go overseas, leaving old friends and acquaintances behind. Damn my company which tries to change my way of life!"

This movie caricaturises what we call "English conversation fever" accompanied by the "internationalization" of Japan. The last part of the film gives vent to a vague dissatisfaction of some people who have to study English whether they like it or not. This may be mingled with a kind of nationalism.

The reason I showed this video to my students was to find out their motivation, if any, about learning English, by provoking them to reveal what they really thought about English teaching. The level of the students at Bunkyo is just average. The subjects of the research are 35 freshmen, 46 sophomores and 29 Juniors, all of whom belong to the School of Information & Communication. The questionnaire for them are as follows.

(1) It is those foreigners who are in Japan or employed overseas by Japanese companies that should study a foreign language (Japanese). Yes, they should do. No, we should learn English. Both should try.

(2) Some assert that if English is claimed to be a world language it should be a real lingua franca not modeled in detail after languages of particular countries such as U.S. or U.K. In other words, we have not to study slang or colloquial expressions and sub-standard English should be given a proper place. Yes or No.

(3) Put down the order of priority in learning English under the present circumstances; listening, speaking, reading and writing.

(4) It is quite natural that learning foreign languages requires a lot of hardships. Yes or No.

(5) English conversation just for sight-seeing or something can be learned rather quickly when necessary in future. At college level, English teaching should be reading-centered. Yes or No.

(6) As learning English is ineffective, time should be spent to other studies instead. When you need to communicate with foreigners, you can use interpreters or translators, or machines in future. Yes or No.

Answers to the Questionnaire

- (1) Yes. a. (freshmen) 11% b. (sophomores) 20% c. (juniors) 3%
No. a. 43% b. 50% c. 38%
Both. a. 46% b. 30% c. 56%
- (2) Yes. a. 34% b. 46% c. 52%
No. a. 57% b. 46% c. 31%
Can't say which. a. 9% b. 8% c. 17%
- (3) Hearing, speaking, reading, writing a. 49% b. 39% c. 62%

- Speaking, hearing, reading, writing a. 34% b. 28% c. 21%
 Speaking, hearing, writing, reading a. 9% b. 7% c. 7%
 Hearing, speaking, writing, reading a. 0% b. 15% c. 0%
 Others a. 8% b. 11% c. 10%
- (4) Yes. a. 40% b. 28% c. 38%
 No. a. 57% b. 70% c. 59%
 Can't say which. a. 3% b. 2% c. 3%
- (5) Yes. a. 11% b. 15% c. 34%
 No. a. 86% b. 85% c. 59%
 Can't say which. a. 3% b. 0% c. 7%
- (6) Yes. a. 9% b. 15% c. 24%
 No. a. 83% b. 83% c. 76%
 Can't say which. a. 8% b. 2% c. 0%

Analysis

About their reaction to the first question, a small number of students gave an affirmative answer, which means that they were rather calm without being provoked by the video and the question. I had asked them whether they liked English or not, to which most of them admitted they didn't like it. However, this time, the majority confirmed the necessity of studying English. In what way they want to use their English in concrete terms is not quite clear, but it is apparent that they have motivation in learning and developing English.

About the second question, nearly half of them recognize the importance of learning standard English. By standard I mean British or American English. As the area where English is spoken is expanding worldwide, the assertion that 'New English' including Asian, Oceanian, African and Caribbean Englishes should be taken into consideration and those vernacular expressions such as American slang should be avoided as much as possible when English is taught has been gaining support. But many of my students are rather conservative in this respect.

Concerning the third question, they overwhelmingly believe what Harold Palmer calls the primary speech (hearing, speaking) should come first rather than the secondary speech (reading, writing). This means they are quite unsatisfied with the present teaching method of English which is contradictory to their wishes.

What would Stephen Krashen say about their response to the fourth question? Many of them are ready to accept the high 'affective filter' to improve their English. Krashen says in his ⁽⁴⁾'Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition' (Prentice-Hall International, 1987), "Low anxiety appears to be conducive to second language acquisition, whether measured as personal or classroom anxiety... the effective language teacher is someone who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low filter situation." ⁽⁵⁾Earl Stevick (1976) also says, "Classrooms that encourage low filters are those

that promote low anxiety among students, that keep students 'off the defensive.'" Many of my students, however, are ready to accept the idea that language learning involves hardship. This is presumed to be a part of the influence caused by the above-mentioned spiritualism inherent in language-teaching in Japan.

The fifth question corresponds to Mr. Miura's essay quoted above, with which the majority of them would never agree. We teachers have to admit that there exists a big gap between the common understanding on our side and wishes on the students' side.

The response to the last question is interesting to the effect that those who have given an affirmative answer increased in number as they advanced in academic years. This is presumed to mean that the more they study English in this university the more they are disillusioned. If so, whose responsibility is that? However, it is important here that the majority of students still admit the necessity of studying English.

As far as this research is concerned, I conclude that the students are very serious in studying English but not satisfied with the grammar-translation method which is quite commonly used in many universities including ours. This is a rather common problem teachers have been aware of for a long time. It is the problem of the student who may be rather structurally competent, but who cannot communicate appropriately.

⁽⁶⁾Leonard Newmark (International Journal of American Linguistics, 1966) refers to a case of a person who knows perfectly the structures that the linguist teaches, cannot know that the way to get his cigarette lit by a stranger when he has no matches is to walk up to him and say one of the utterances. "Do you have a light?" or "Got a match?" (Not one of the equally well-formed questions, "Do you have fire?" or "Do you have illumination?" or "Are you a match owner?")

I agree with ⁽⁷⁾J. P. B. Allen's view (International Review of Applied Linguistics, 1974) that the difficulties which the students encounter arise not so much from a defective knowledge of the system of English, but from an unfamiliarity with English use. In other words, 'knowledge of a language' is not the same thing as 'ability to use the language.' The grammar-translation method they have been exposed to provides knowledge without skill. That is, they are supposed to have no communicative competence.

Teaching Practice

I myself would rather agree with Mr. Hiraizumi who proposed in the above-introduced controversy with Professor Watanabe that above high school level English should be an elective and concentrate on those who have strong motivation. Professor Watanabe is a proponent of traditional thinking which finds value in reading, originating from reading Chinese classics. The actual situation, however, is that English is compulsory to a large extent in many universities, and the majority of teachers support its being compulsory. Thus I had to compromise somewhere in between, deciding to teach current English in an elective class as a trial. If it is proven successful, we can offer some other electives and try various teaching methods for those who have specific objectives and motivation,

although in regular compulsory classes it will take some time to change drastically mainly because of financial reasons causing packed classes where we have not much choices but to resort to the traditional reading-centered approach.

This particular class is elective for seniors who have already obtained credits necessary for graduation. They are ready to leave the lesson unless it is proven effective and interesting. Thirteen students registered but ten showed up at the first lesson, and since then one more has dropped out. The requirement of this class is for them to further acquire themselves with current English, such as newspapers as well as magazine articles, an ability which they have already learned to some extent. However, it is much more interesting to participate actively in some activities related to using than just translating them and a well-constructed task can be fun as well as learning-effective.

As they have never practiced four skills (hearing, speaking, reading and writing) at one time, I wanted to give them a chance to make full use of their knowledge. As an opener, I gave them homework to make up a story as imaginary and interesting as possible after looking at a four frame picture strip (Appendix 1). The students were requested to introduce their own stories to other members of the class, who were allowed to interrupt whenever they had a problem in understanding. I urged them to try to express themselves in whatever way was appropriate and didn't check them at all as long as they managed to get its meaning across. They enjoyed this activity and mentioned later that they had a sort of self-confidence in communicating in English (Appendix 2).

For the next lesson, I showed a nine frame comic strip (Appendix 3) and gave every member a role from a director to a dog. They discussed for some hours out of class to create a dialogue in English (Appendix 4) and the director made a play based on this discussion which was shown in the class with each one taking his or her own part.

As was mentioned above, the students of this class are required to get used to media English. I assume that in spite of the shortcomings of English teaching in the past the students have acquired considerable dormant competence in the manipulation of the language system. They also have a large amount of knowledge about daily happenings through Japanese media. Hitherto, however, these two kinds of knowledge have existed in separation. My task is to relate them.

For the next lesson, I asked them to write an imaginary conversation between then Prime Minister Takeshita and his wife on the day he decided to resign because of the 'Recruit Scandal' and also an imaginary will by his secretary who killed himself the next day. The students had plenty of knowledge about the scandal through reporting by Japanese media which as background information helped them understand stories in English. The traditional way of just reading English newspapers without prior knowledge often hinders their understanding and interest, but I felt this method, that is, knowing something in Japanese first, confirming it in English, writing something else related to it themselves and presenting it to the class, would stimulate their imagination and creativity. The easiness and familiarity of the content of the news would make the task easier,

at least until they got used reading something completely new in English.

After Takeshita's decision to resign, Ito's name emerged as the most prominent candidate for the premiership. But Ito stubbornly refused to accept the nomination partly because of his poor health and partly because of his abhorrence of the old constitution of the Liberal Democratic Party. These exchanges and negotiations between Takeshita and Ito interested the Japanese very much, showing one phase of Japanese politics. I took the opportunity of using it for my class and divided the class into two groups, one for Takeshita and the other for Ito, with each having a leader. Each team studied articles and reports by English papers beforehand and had a debate in the class. The subject was persuasion by Takeshita and refusal by Ito. Each leader had his own strategy and gave his members a chance to speak up according to circumstances to counter the opponent's remark. It was not quite smooth going, but eight out of nine admitted they enjoyed the class.

Later the Uno Cabinet was born. The Prime Minister had not been very popular among the people and a week before nobody had expected him to be the successor to Takeshita. As he was not known internationally at all, I asked the students to suppose a situation to introduce the Prime Minister to their friends overseas, explaining who he was and how he was chosen. Again what they had to do first was to read stories and articles in English papers carefully. It was a rather tough assignment for them with so many things to read, but they could manage it, exchanging their letters to discuss the contents with one another in the next class. (Appendix 5)

Presenting to classmates what they wrote, sometimes in the form of letters, after reading something related is my tactic to make my students interested in current English. I often used this in the class. For example, when a story on Alcatraz was chosen as a topic and a six hundred word article was given, I asked them to suppose themselves to be inmates there and write letters to anybody to explain what the life was like and what kind of pleasure or agony they supposed they would have in there. Besides this writing of imaginary letters, I gave them a skimming exercise, true/false questions, comprehension questions, and a cloze exercise to check their understanding of the content. They particularly enjoyed letter-writing and fully exercised their imaginary power.

Conclusion

After spending a couple of months with this approach, I asked everyone to write his or her comment anonymously on the lessons he had received so far. Their response was unanimously affirmative, saying they enjoyed the class and some even admitted they had found their own hidden ability of communicating in English. High attendance (usually 100%) and their diligence in finishing their homework every time (rather unusual in this university) back up their anonymous comments.

The only dissatisfaction some of them had with this class was that they often felt uneasy about whether what they said in English was grammatically right or not or correctly

pronounced, as I made it a rule not to correct them as long as they could manage to communicate in English. I have some reasons for my principle, of course. First, I want to get rid of their fear of using English in front of others. ⁽⁸⁾Penny Ur (1984) says nothing is more unpleasant to students than constant checking by teachers. Ur also says spontaneity is far more important than accuracy, and students who learn from native speakers do not necessarily seem to acquire noticeably better accents than those who learn from non-natives.

⁽⁹⁾Krashen (1982) advocates leaving most errors alone. He makes a distinction between formal conscious 'learning' and natural unconscious 'acquisition' of a language through lots of exposures to it. Error correction may be useful, he says, if the focus of the lesson is on learning, but not valuable if it's on acquisition. It merely puts students on the defensive, he asserts. He advocates eliminating it from communicative activities because it doesn't facilitate acquisition and it brings out negative reactions towards language learning.

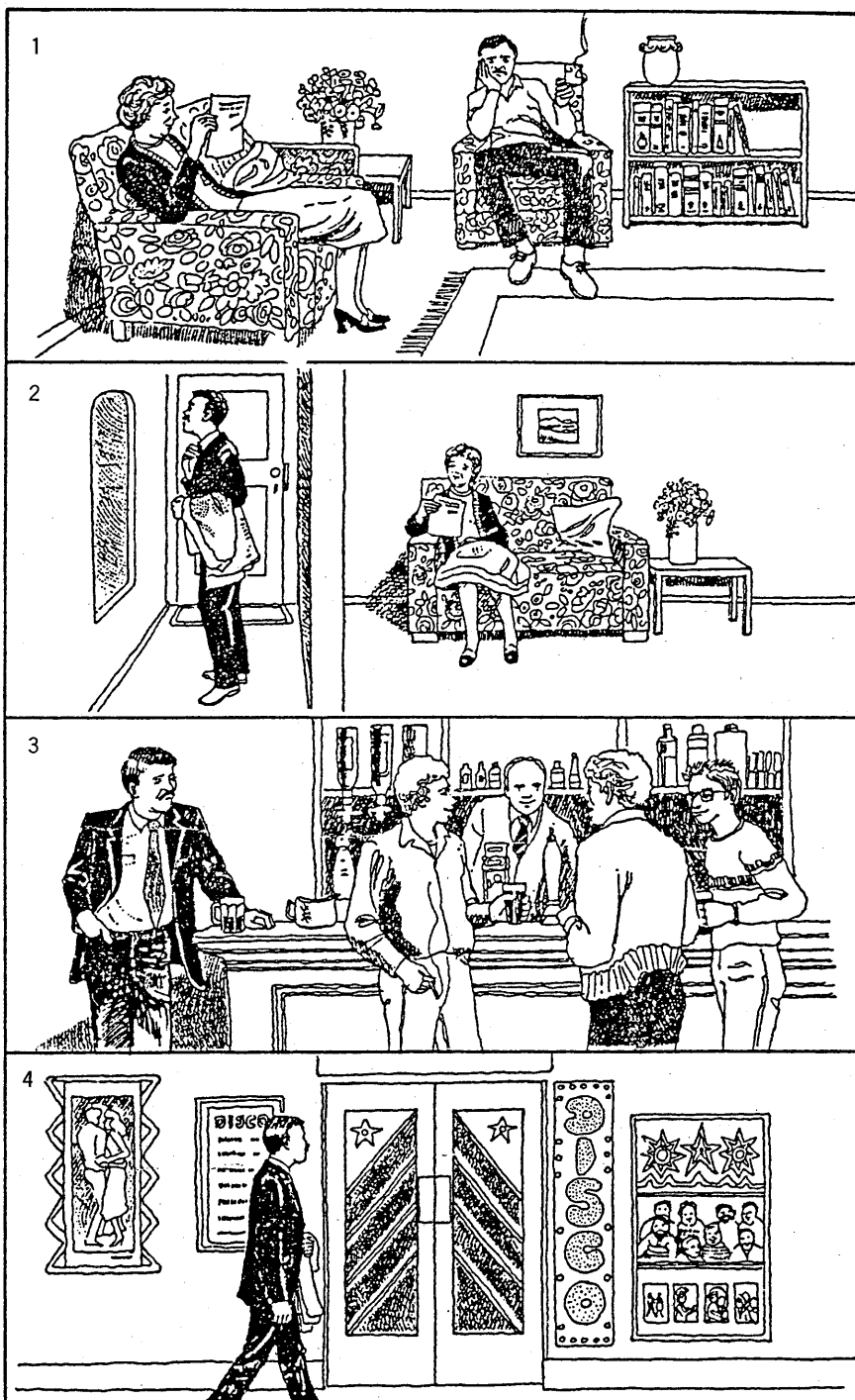
Secondly I want to give them a kind of self-confidence in using English. As their learning English in the past was reading-and-pattern-drill-centered, it is quite natural for them to pay much attention to grammaticality first of all, but as is shown in the class, they are overriding this mentality very quickly.

From my own experience, I want to point out that if I can succeed in giving them instrumental motivation by letting them use their English in quasi-real situations or multi-purpose ways, their development is guaranteed. Lesson hours in the class are so limited that it is essential for them to willingly prepare for class by themselves. The achievements so far in the class show that they have spent a lot more time at home or in groups than the actual class hours in finishing assignments each time.

If this is called a success in teaching, it has been brought about by the fact that the class is usually small by Japanese standards and the students are basically motivated from the beginning as the class is elective. The question is, therefore, how this result can be applied to the usual teaching situation in Bunkyo University.

What I would like to appeal with these results to school authorities is to increase the numbers and varieties of electives of English lessons by decreasing required ones as the first step. As a long term target, I'd point out necessity to reduce the numbers of the students in regular classes, although I have to admit that this will take time as many teachers are needed. Even if this long term target is not attained soon, we teachers should revise our teaching methods rather drastically. As the research on the video above-introduced shows, students are waiting to be stimulated to greater effort to improve their English. Teachers should try various methods from pair work to debate to promote students' hidden motivation before falling into despair believing grammar-translation is the only method.

Appendix 1

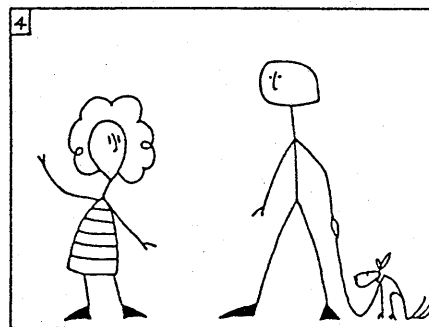
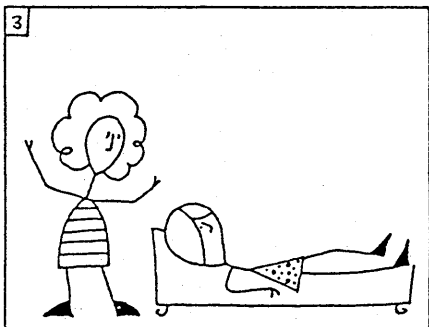
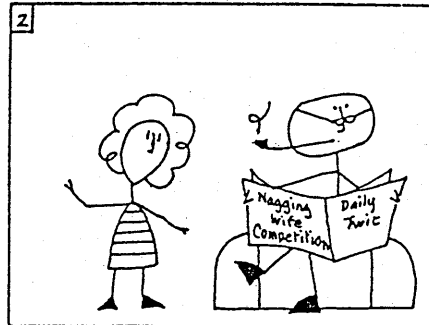
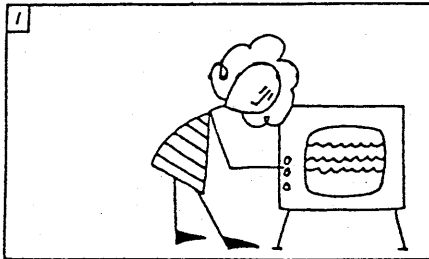


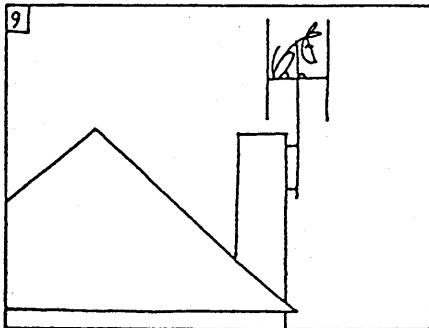
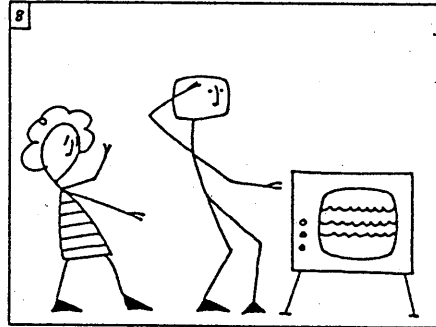
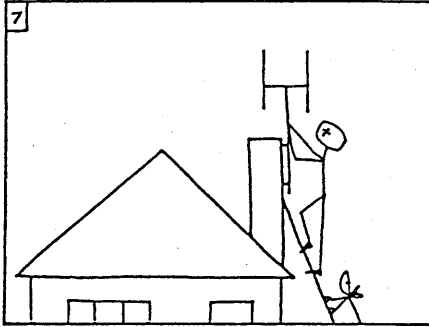
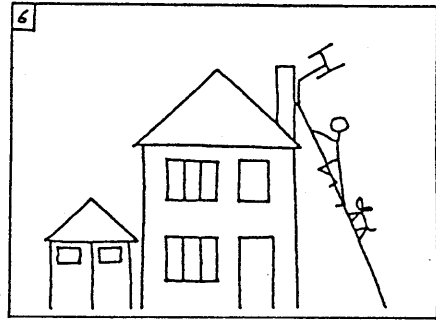
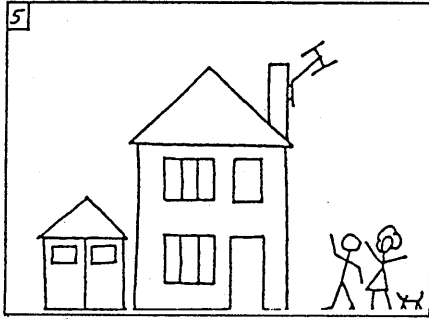
Appendix 2 (an example of students' works)

- (1) You see a man sitting in a living room. His name is Jimmy and he is 38 years old. But he is still single. A woman sitting beside him is his mother, who is reading a letter from Jimmy's cousin, Micheal. He is 32 years old. The letter said that he would marry in the next month. This letter made Jimmy's mother worry about her son, because she had never seen him go to a date with any girls.
- (2) She hesitated at first but finally asked him, "Don't you have any girl friends, Jimmy? Your cousin's going to marry. Don't you feel sorry for yourself?" Against her expectation, Jimmy answered firmly, saying "Of course, I have many." This surprised her very much. Jimmy said more. "I have a date with one of them tonight." And he dressed himself up and went out.
- (3) What he said to his mother was not true. The truth was he didn't have any girl friends, but he couldn't tell his mother so because of his pride. So he went to a bar alone. He wanted to make some girl friends there, but he saw only boys. He felt sad. Those boys were talking about their happy time they had at a disco. Suddenly an idea came up to him. "I'll go to the disco, too, where I hope I can make girl friends."
- (4) So he went into the disco. Do you think he has succeeded? If you think so, you are an optimist. If you don't think so, you are a pessimist. In real life, the road usually lies in between.

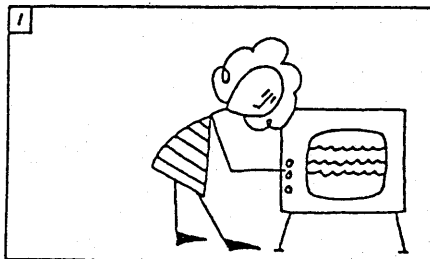
written by Eriko Kato

APPENDIX 3

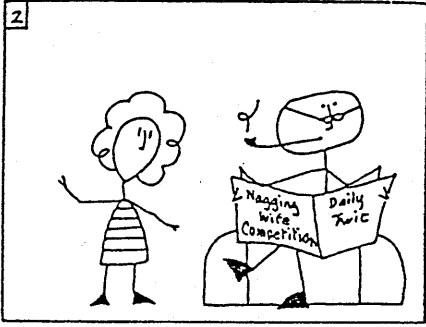




Appendix 4(Co-works by students)



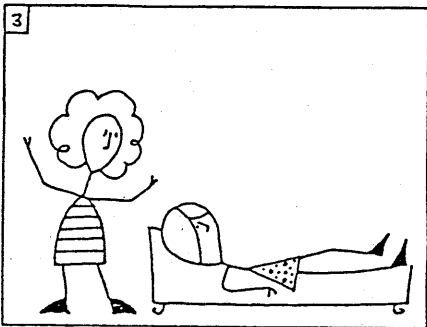
MOM Oh! dear! What's happening?
Is it broken?
It was working just before now.
Honey! Where are you?



MOM Oh! Honey! Our TV set seems to be something wrong. Could you fix it?
Honey? Can you hear me?
It doesn't work.
If you don't fix it now, you couldn't see your favorite TV show tonight.
Is that all right for you?

DAD (There she goes again.)
Sorry? What did you say?
I couldn't hear you.

MOM OK! OK! Just forget it.
I might have asked a wrong person.



MOM Mary, Could you do me a favor?
Mary I'm sorry, Mom. But I've got a big problem.

MOM What's that?

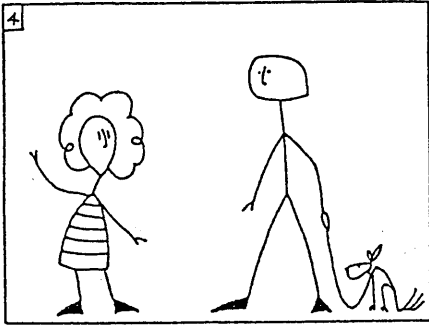
Mary Do you remember my boy friend, Steve?

MOM Yes.

Mary I saw that Steve and his another girl friend were walking in the town today.
Maybe he must have changed his mind.
What a fool I am!

MOM Again?! Why can't you keep him!

Mary Don't give me a hard time.
Please, leave me alone.



MOM Oh! Jim! What a nice timing!
Are you busy now?

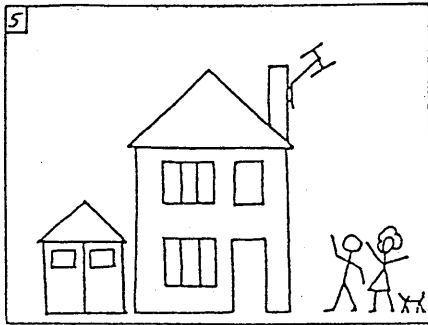
Jim No. I'm just about to go for a walk with
Jack. What's the matter?

MOM The TV seems to be getting trouble. So,
I want you to fix it.

Jim OK. But I can't work free, Mom.

MOM I know that. Let's see...
How about \$5?

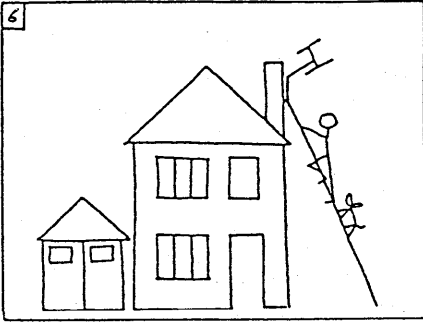
Jim You've got a deal. Let's go, Jack.



Jim Look! That antenna bends.
That's why TV doesn't work well.
I'll bring the ladder and fix it.

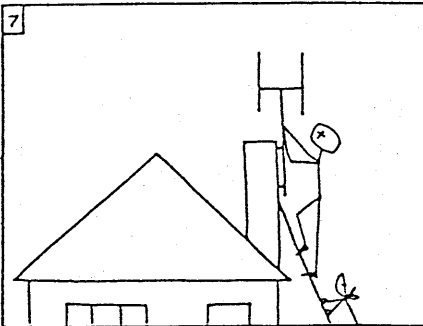
MOM You're very helpful, Jim.
But don't push yourself too hard.

Jim Don't worry, Mom.
Just leave it to me.



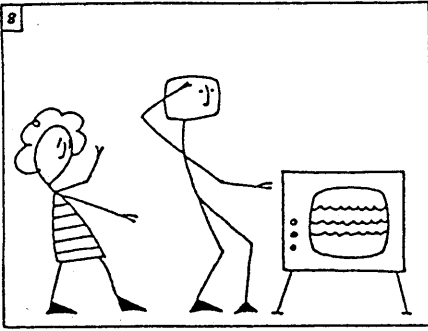
Jim Come on, Jack! We'll climb up the ladder
 to check the antenna.
 What are you waiting for?
 Don't be afraid.

Jack (Don't get pushy! I know that you want to
 hurry. But I don't like to do that.
 Because I'm an acrophobia.



Jim OK! That's it.
 It wasn't a big trouble, was it?
 Let's go down. I can get \$5.

Jack What a height! I can't move.
 Hey, wait, Jim.
 Don't leave me alone, Jim!



Jim Mom, I've done all.
Maybe because of the strong wind
yesterday.

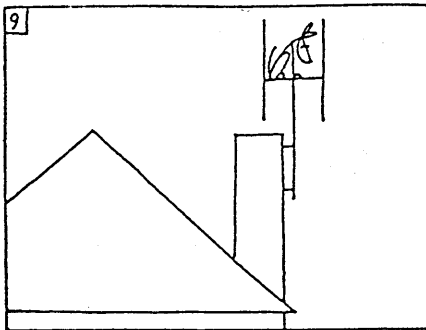
MOM Oh, you've finished so soon.
It wasn't a big trouble, was it?

Jim No. It was just a piece of cake.
Mom, don't you think that you forgot a-
bout something else?

MOM How could I forget?
But I want to put on TV and check it,
first.
If you really fixed it, I'll give you \$5. Turn
on the TV.

Jim OK! Oh, boy! That's funny.
I'm sure that I've fixed it.
I swear, Mom.

MOM Go out and check it again, now.



Jack Jim! Where are you?
I can't go down until you come back and
bring me down.

Appendix 5 (an example of students' works)

Dear Brian,

You know who took the new prime minister's position, don't you? His name is Sosuke Uno, a former foreign minister and also a senior member of Nakasone's faction. He said that he had never been involved with the Recruit Scandal but why could I believe this? Even though he has never been given any money from Recruit, I can't support the idea of cleaning up the corrupt politicians and carrying out some political reforms.

When I heard the news Mr. Uno was decided to be the next prime minister instead of Mr. Ito, I couldn't come up with any idea about Uno. Of course I knew his name. But I didn't expect such an unfamiliar person to become the prime minister, just for the reason that he has a clean image: What do you think of the ridiculous system? It isn't democratic. All the LDP is thinking now is keeping majority at the upcoming Upper House election. The ruling party gets extremely damage and is losing people's support now.

Do you know how much supporting point Mr. Takeshita had when he resigned just after? It was just only under 10%. This is a very rare case in the history of Japanese politics. And in the same time, it is a good sign that publics are beginning to have interest in politics little by little, I suppose.

By the way, the prime minister Uno is said to be a versatile person; he plays piano, harmonica and published a few books. But unfortunately, he is the one who can't speak English well although he was a former foreign minister. This shows that there are few highly officers, being good English speakers in Japan. It is very humiliating things for Japan as the number one economic nation. If the prime minister or foreign minister has a capability of communicating with other western countries in English, any negotiations and meetings must have been more smoothed and then might help to get rid of any misunderstandings about Japan and the trade friction between the United States and Japan. But It will take some time to fulfill this thing.

We have also another wall when Japan goes to the international scene. That is a perception gap. The latest Mr. Uno's sex scandal is a good example. In America, if any politician's sex scandals came to light, its politicians could have nothing but to leave its job. On the other hand, Japanese politicians can do whatever they want in their private life so that there is nothing to interfere. This has been allowed for a long time. Even though there are beginning to appear some cases where women are given responsible positions, it will be difficult to get rid of the traditional stuff for some time in Japan.

Anyway, like or not, our Japanese's only choice is to rely on Mr. Uno to do his best to make Japan become not only the economic country but also the real world-class nation, so that he should get rid of any political contradictions and also reveal the whole picture of his private scandal immediately.

As long as he shows his enthusiasm to politics, honesty, he won't be able to get people's faith back to the LDP forever.

If you have any comments about this topic, please write it on the next letter.

Keep in touch.
Yumiko Yanagioka

References

- (1) William Littlewood, 1984. 'Foreign and Second Language Learning' pp.53-7. Cambridge University Press.
- (2) Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert, 1972. 'Attitude and Motivation in Second Language Learning'. Rowley, Mass. : Newbury House.
- (3) Rod Ellis, 1986. 'Understanding Second Language Acquisition', p.119. Oxford University Press.
- (4) Stephen Krashen, 1987. 'The Affective Filter Hypothesis', Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition, pp.30-32. Prentice-Hall International.
- (5) Earl Stevick, 1976. 'Teaching and Learning Languages'. p.97. Cambridge University Press.
- (6) Leonard Newmark, 1966. 'How not to interfere with language learning', International Journal of American Linguistics, 32, 1, 11, 77-83.

- (7) J.P.B. Allen and H. D. Widdowson, 1974. 'Teaching the communicative use of English', *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 12, 1, pp.1–21.
- (8) Penny Ur, 1984. 'Teaching Listening Comprehension', p.21. Cambridge University Press.
- (9) Stephen Krashen, 1982. 'Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition', pp.15–30. Prentice-Hall International.