

Facilitating Discussion in the Japanese University EFL Classroom

Neal Jost

Abstract

Fluency in the target language is the Holy Grail for most all second language learners. Not only is it the most recognizable skill a second language learner can have, but it also carries with it obvious benefits: it naturally promotes intrinsic motivation and allows for more meaningful interaction. To be sure, university administrators and instructors alike hope that their students will have the skills necessary to communicate in English with more competence and confidence upon graduation, thus, making them more prepared for a globalized society, an objective the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology advances. How to help students gain a high level of fluency in an efficient manner is the issue that foreign language instructors grapple with as they design their instructional plans. One common classroom approach is to have students engage in various kinds of discussions or other fluency related group tasks. Yet what constitutes a ‘discussion’ and how best to utilize this commonly used practice as it pertains to EFL education in general calls for further discussion. The aim of this paper is to look at the use of discussion in the EFL university classroom in Japan, and to discuss the conceptual underpinnings associated with it.

Introduction

English education in Japan has traditionally relied on grammar translation as its primary method of instruction for well over a hundred years. Classroom activities center on the instructor providing material written in English and having students translate it verbatim into Japanese. The teacher provides grammatical explanations in Japanese, but allows for few opportunities to use spoken English. This method is often referred to as *Yakudoku* (Gorsuch, 1988). That instructional paradigm, however, falls short of the demands required of an ever-growing globalized world where English is widely accepted.

Japan’s role in the globalized world has greatly increased, particularly in the past thirty five years,

and so has the need for communicative English skills. In order to meet those demands, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT, 2014), introduced a number of programs and initiatives throughout the past 30 years to help advance the communicative skills of high school and junior high school students. The introduction of Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) was one of the more noteworthy programs. More than 5,000 English speaking foreign nationals were invited to assist Japanese English teachers with the more salient and communicative features of English. It was in the late 70s and early 1980s that the idea of communicative English education gained popularity, and finally in the late 1980s courses that promoted communicative competence were introduced (Yoshida, 2003). Two of those courses gained a considerable amount of attention in that they required competence in all the four skill areas. They also required students to learn and develop critical thinking skills--a skill more closely associated with Western education. The two courses are namely 'Discussion' and 'Debate'.

It is easy to understand how such courses could be trying or even intimidating for many non-native English language instructors. They are by their very nature production-based courses, courses which exist far outside the realm of traditional translation and reading classes. Yet those courses and others like them afford students a basic understanding and skill in the use communicative English--preparing them for advanced curricula at the university level. At the university level, the use of 'discussion' in the EFL classroom, however manifested, represents a communicative activity commonly employed. However it calls for further consideration on how it can be effectively utilized and on the conceptual underpinnings justifying its use.¹

Conceptual underpinnings

The theoretical underpinnings for the use of discussion in the EFL classroom are associated with a number of principles based in second language acquisition (SLA) research. The following highlights several of the main principles on which the use of discussion in the university EFL classroom is grounded.

Motivation

One of the primary aims of second language acquisition research is to find commonalities on how learners can most efficiently acquire the target language. Yet it is very often the individual differences, such as learning styles, personality, language aptitude, anxiety, or motivation that can help explain why some learners attain higher levels of success and achieve that success so quickly in comparison to other learners. Motivation is often seen as a determining factor in the success of such learners. This is particularly true when it comes to courses which are designed to be group oriented such as discussion or debate as they require students to participate together for a collective benefit.

The concept of motivation has no one single encompassing definition. Dörnyei states that, “motivation is one of the most elusive concepts in applied linguistics and indeed in educational psychology in general” (1999, 525). Kleigina and Kleigina (1981) provide over one hundred definitions as they pertain to general psychology. It would seem, all the same, that motivation is concerned with a person’s choice of action, ability to continue on with that choice of action, and the degree of effort put forth. Oxford and Ehrman provide this definition, “The external or behavioral features of motivation include decision making, persistence, and activity level. The learner decides to choose, to pay attention, to engage in one activity but not others; the learner persists over an extended time....and the learner maintains high activity levels” (1992, 190). In the early 1990s, as motivational studies were becoming more common in the foreign language acquisition literature, Crookes and Schmidt wrote, “...teachers would describe a student as motivated if he or she becomes productively engaged in learning tasks, and sustains that engagement, without the need for continual encouragement or direction” (1991, 480).

Gardner’s (1979) socio-educational model, however, investigated motivation, and foreign language learning. His model, which was one of the first in the field, investigated motivation in second language learning focusing on the classroom setting. Gardner’s and Lambert’s (1972) seminal work distinguished two types of language learning motivation: instrumental, and integrative. Instrumental motivation is concerned with the practical aspects associated with language learning such as gaining employment or entrance into a university, receiving a foreign assignment etcetera. On the other hand, integrative motivation is concerned with ‘being part of’ the target language community. Those learners want to better understand and know the people who are associated with the target language. Deci and Ryan (1985) advanced a model which looked more specifically at the role of motivation in the EFL context. Their model advanced a notion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as it pertains to the EFL context. For them, extrinsic motivation is based on external elements. A learner learning for extrinsic reasons is directed toward some specific benefit, for instance a material reward, or acceptance into a community. Intrinsic motivation, conversely, deals the learner putting a higher value on learning for personal reasons--having a higher calling for language acquisition, if you will.

Group discussions in the EFL classroom call on learners to collaborate with one another to ensure that a discussion progresses in a linear fashion irrespective of what the linguistic requirements are. Each member of a group discussion must 1) be prepared for the discussion; 2) have an understanding of the topic; 3) develop an interest in presenting their thoughts and views; 4) participate to their fullest; and, 5) encourage others to engage. Unlike traditional the classroom setting where learners maintain a more passive role as receivers of knowledge or are simply responsible for their own performance in class, success in discussion is dependent on group participation and individual motivation. By preparing and participating fully in group discussions, learners are better able to advance their understanding of the topic area and attend to their linguistic requirements. Motivation is key a factor in this, and Csizer’s and Dörnyei’s (2005) notion of an ‘ideal language self’ is of relevance here. Stemming from

their study on more than 8,000 Hungarian foreign language learners, they found that ‘integrativeness’ was a key influencing factor for motivation. Once a learner is able “reduce the discrepancy between one’s actual and ideal or ought-to selves” (Dörnyei, 2005, 101), they are able to reconsider the idea of integrativeness. Learners can achieve that by applying what they imagine of themselves as L2 learners and then actualizing that within a L2 community--in this case the group discussion. External motivation then becomes internalized, and that helps shape the ideal language self. Accordingly, long-term instrumental motivation is influenced, and, thus, the learner has a better, and more formulated sense of ‘integrativeness’. What can be had from this and his other research² is that motivation is dynamic. It is indispensable for learners to appreciate the value of motivation and how it can be utilized whether individually or collectively. And, in his words, “student motivation can be consciously increased by using creative techniques” (2005, 144), which, I would suggest, is the duty of both student and teacher alike.

Communicative competence

Savignon was one of the first researchers to advance the notion of communicative competence (Savignon, 1972). She held that the fundamental aim of communicative language instruction is to help learners develop communicative competence while the notion of linguistic competence, associated with Chomsky (1965), makes the distinction between competence and performance. For Chomsky, in most general terms, competence refers to speaker-listener’s knowledge of their L1, and performance relates to the ordinary use of L1. Savignon and others in large part rejected Chomsky’s view of competence as a methodology for the learning, teaching, or testing of languages. Hymes (1971) advanced a view of communicative competence that included not only inherent grammatical competency, but also sociolinguistic competence. While Hymes was among the first researchers to define communicative competence in terms of the social aspects of language acquisition, others involved in second language acquisition research during the 1970s and 1980s worked to clarify it further and to advance new theories on its role in second language learning and instruction.

Widdowson (1983) was the first to introduce the notion of capacity. His view distinguished between competence and capacity. Stemming from his research in discourse analysis and pragmatics, he viewed communicative competence in terms of sociolinguistic conventions and language knowledge. Capacity referred to both procedural and communicative capacity. What Widdowson suggested was that more attention should be focused on performance and real language use where capacity stands for the ability of using knowledge to perform language tasks. His views placed more consideration on language use and performance. Canale and Swain (1980) looked at the underlining knowledge and skill systems required for communication. For them knowledge was based on the understanding of the grammatical properties of language, conscious or unconscious, on the ability to use language within a social context, and on the understanding of principles related to discourse. They advanced

a model of communicative competence that included grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence.

Bachman's (1990) notion of communicative competence included language competence as well as strategic competence. Language competence consists of two main areas: organization competence and pragmatic competence. Organizational competence looked at both the learners' grammar knowledge (vocabulary, phonology, writing systems, syntax, and morphology) and textual competence (comprehension and production of both written and spoken text). Textual competence considered the understanding of cohesive techniques, rhetorical organization, and conversational patterning as well. Bachman's view of pragmatic competence centered on the learner's ability to intuit and interpret discourse conventions (e.g. speech acts, expressing and interpreting the illocutionary function of communication, and sociolinguistic conventions of language). For Bachman, strategic competence centered on the learner's metacognitive aptitude to set goals for communication, to assess one's ability for a particular linguistic activity, and to plan language events.

By its very nature a discussion requires the active participation of each member of the group. They are each responsible for trying to comprehend and understand the views of others while also trying to express their own views or respond in kind. It is self-evident that this requires each member to have a level of communicative abilities commensurate with those of the other members of the group. However, it is less self-evident if learners have a working knowledge of what constitutes communicative competence. In the context of a group discussion, learners are forced into production and, as a result, devote more mental resources, or their implicit knowledge systems, to the development of the discussion (Ellis, 2003). This may be at a cost to the less salient features of communication such as pragmatics or social appropriateness, a 'sociopragmatic failure', in Thomas' terms (1983). Explicit instruction in communicative competence may help students gain awareness for those less obvious features of communication. Searle (1969) proposed that certain conditions must be met for specific illocutionary acts to be successful. For instance, a learner is required to understand that for the (speech) act of giving an order both speaker and hearer must be aware that implicitly the speaker is in a position of authority, at that particular moment. Other examples related to illocutionary acts may include the use of unrealistic demands or the intentional use of inappropriate language both representing a lack of understanding of the sociolinguistic conventions of a language. Bachman's strategic planning may also aid learners in giving direction to group discussions. Goal setting, linguistic planning, continuous assessment are all part of Bachman's model of strategic knowledge. They represent the metacognitive components that learners can be instructed in for aiding in what Vygotky termed 'interactional competence'.

What is often construed as communication within the group context may sometimes fall short of the mark and simply serve as individual language practice. The distinction being made here is that learners have an inherent responsibility to maintain a group dynamic that is conducive to promoting the language acquisition of all. Having metalinguistic knowledge of communicative competence may help them achieve a higher level of group dynamics and promote better language acquisition.

Comprehensible Output

Research on input in second language acquisition has played an important role in helping understand how language learning takes place, and, thus, influencing pedagogy. From the late 1970s onward a number of hypotheses have been proposed. One of the first was Hatch and Wagner-Gough's frequency hypothesis (Hatch and Wagner-Gough, 1976). Their view held that the order of acquisition is closely related to the frequency that linguistic features occur in the input: exposure to a limited range of topics would effect change in that common grammatical or lexical features would occur at a higher frequency, and, would, thus, influence acquisition order. Krashen (1981, 1982) made the distinction between learning and acquisition. For Krashen 'learning' is an explicit conscious activity that learners engage in, and it helps them gain metalinguistic knowledge which may not 'necessarily' influence language acquisition. Acquisition, conversely, deals with the knowledge a learner gains implicitly through input related episodes. Later in 1985, he proposed an input hypothesis. The input hypothesis looked at several features related to the input. Perhaps most significantly in Krashen's model is the notion of $i+1$; that is, the input has to be slightly beyond the learner's present level of competence in order for it to become fully acquired. The above hypotheses do not require learners to consciously attend to their acquisition; learning is accomplished in a natural, implicit way. Schmidt (1990, 1994), however, proposed that noticing is a requirement language learning. As for noticing, the learner tries to reconcile the disparity between present knowledge/capabilities and the input that challenges that status. The issue of fluency versus accuracy comes into play. A learner may be fluent, but at the expense of being accurate. This is remedied by the learner noticing the gap and intervening through language learning tasks, for instance.

The above primarily pertains to the role of input in language acquisition. Under the same rubric of research, however, is another hypothesis which looks at the role of output in language acquisition: comprehensible output. It is of particular interest for communicative-based language learning.

Looking at the role of input in second language immersion programs in Canada³ and the resulting quality-quantity values of the output (see Allen, Swain, Harley, and Cummins, 1990), Swain (1985, 1995) argued that input alone was not adequate for language acquisition, and that output had to play an important part. Output is defined as the language produced by learners whether in written or spoken form.⁴ Swain posited that production forces learners into a different processing model from that of an input model.⁵ In his view, processing input may force a learner to process from a top-down perspective whereas output may require bottom up processing. The learner is, thus, forced to consider a multitude of linguistic issues when producing language such as word choice, syntactical features, grammar, pragmatics--formal properties, and even larger contextual concerns such as the social appropriateness of an utterance, sociolinguistic considerations. As Swain (1995, 127) famously stated, "learners...can fake it so to speak, in comprehension, but they cannot do so in the same way in production." Output may also serve as an opportunity for the learner test their output, hypothesis testing. Pica (1988) found that learners produced more grammatical output if they received corrective feedback. This suggests

that the learners are consciously monitoring and adjusting output. Skehan (1998) suggested that output had a number of different roles: 1) it helped provide better input based on feedback; 2) forced learners to attend to grammar more carefully; 3) allowed learners to test various aspects of language particularly grammaticality; 4) helped make language production automatic; 5) provided opportunities for understanding discourse and developing discourse skills; and 6), more personally, allowed learners to negotiate topics. Although the psycholinguistic processes that are associated with output cannot be fully described, they do play an integral part of second language acquisition. Output requires learners to utilize those implicit systems that govern production, and output-based instruction must consider how best to activate those systems.

Because discussion requires students to fully engage in communicative activities, learners are forced into an output mode. While they are able to prepare in advance for discussions by studying or reviewing the discussion topic, they cannot anticipate the actual language that they will be called upon to produce. It requires them to work from an online position, and must, therefore, utilize their implicit knowledge system to a large degree as Swain's model suggests. This is especially true for pushed output,⁶ where a learner is near the limit of their linguistic capabilities. Comprehensibility of output is also a relevant factor for learner output in a discussion class. It goes without saying that language has to be comprehensible in all modalities for it to communicate. Beyond the linguistic aspects related to enunciation and prosody, learners must be reminded that discourse needs to consider further aspects of output such as illocutionary functions and discourse organization. Learner output in a discussion is associated with hypothesis testing as well. In a discussion, learners must be encouraged to "experiment" with language to activate implicit language systems. By using a new lexical item or different syntactical organization, for instance, the learner will be able to make a judgment on its use. Skehan's view on feedback is of importance here. It may give learners an opportunity to reflect on their own language use and to provide the instructor with an opportunity to offer specific instruction on metalinguistics or language usage. Output is a primary component of discussion and manifests itself in a multitude of ways. To be sure, learners will benefit from having an understanding that output is not simply language practice or chit chat time, and from having an understanding of the role of output in the discourse of discussion.

The SLA underpinnings for the use of discussion in the EFL university class are numerous. The above has highlighted some of those underpinnings that seem most relevant to the teaching context of this author as he believes that in order for Japanese learners to continue gaining communicative competence, confidence and fluency in communicative English they need to further develop their explicit knowledge and language production systems.

Facilitating discussion in the Japanese university classroom

The instructional paradigm of discussion in the communicative classroom was introduced into Japan's national English education guidelines in the late 1980s & early 1990s, viz, Oral Communication A. It is without question that communicative classes such as speech, debate and discussion have had a beneficial impact on competency levels here in Japan, not to mention on building confidence and improving motivation. It is perhaps most noticeable at the university level where anecdotal and empirical evidence show how learners entering university are now more accustomed to using spoken English.⁷

The following describes and discusses some of the features and practices of a discussion course which has yielded favorable results. It is designed from a macro perspective considering various aspects of second language instruction (SLI). It is hoped that they are generalizable⁸ for other teaching contexts as they do take into consideration the objectives MEXT has envisioned for communicative English instruction and the needs of students in a culturally diverse globalized society.⁹ The perspective presented here is based on two simple notions regarding instruction for university level students in particular: one, that it should have a bias toward production-based models; and, two, that it should aim to build group cohesion through cooperative engagement.

Defining discussion

When designing a discussion course, perhaps the most fundamental point to consider is how to define discussion as it pertains to the context. One entry point would be to consider the objectives advanced by MEXT's reform plan for high school English education: for students to have an "accurate understanding and conveying of information and intentions in English corresponds to STEP Pre-2 or Higher" upon graduating from high school (MEXT 2011:3); or as advanced by earlier initiatives that point to metalinguistic aspects of learning English reflected in their statement: "...students should be shown concretely how mastering English would expand their opportunities in future, and how English can be used in any profession and position. This is required to provide the children with a "global perspective" and to enhance their motivation for English learning" (MEXT, 2011: 6). University course catalogues may also provide guidance as they offer a level of specificity toward the aims and goals of particular courses. More common still is the use of descriptors in course textbooks. Yet in most instances, it is the instructors themselves that define discussion based on their intuition of what will 'work best' in any given class.¹⁰ They may define it as a communicative task or as a series of more specified activities such as meaning focused instruction, skill based instruction or, perhaps content-based instruction. Some may even look at the presentation-practice-production (PPP) model since it is seen as move away from lock-step instruction. As it pertains to this paper, however, a working definition considers the following:

- 1) has a work plan in place based on applicable theoretical principles
- 2) production based: an opportunity to move declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge
- 3) student led to the highest degree possible
- 4) guided by context
- 5) limits formal instruction
- 6) has defined outcome
- 7) considers issues related to course management
- 8) follows generally accepted protocols for group discussion: active participation, regular attendance, and preparedness
- 9) aims for a high level of dynamism
- 10) adheres to guiding principles related to student performance: ‘English only,’ e.g.
- 11) provides metalinguistic instruction or the use of language related episodes (LRE)¹¹

Having a working definition in place for a discussion course will provide a practical as well as a theoretical foundation for students to follow and appreciate. It will help make goals and objectives comprehensible and attainable; furthermore, it will naturally promote intrinsic motivation. The above list is in large part dictated by context. Proficiency levels are one area that will guide what needs to be considered when defining discussion.¹² Variables such as class size, differences in proficiencies, shyness, social distance between learners, and even such unknowns as senpia-kouhai relationships¹³ unique to the Japanese teaching context are factors in need of consideration. It goes without saying that there is no one guiding and unchanging definition of discussion. It is the instructor’s own ability to decide on guiding principles and to implement them in a way that will define and determine the success of a discussion class.

Critical thinking skills

In what might be considered the fifth skill area, critical thinking has a central role in discussion-based courses.¹⁴ Critical thinking, in the Western sense of the word, centers not only on one’s understanding of an issue, but particularly on one’s ability to qualify or quantify it through various cognitive processes. The Critical Thinking Community defines it as follows:

Critical thinking is that mode of thinking — about any subject, content, or problem — in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing it. Critical thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking. It presupposes assent to rigorous standards of excellence and

mindful command of their use. It entails effective communication and problem-solving abilities, as well as a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism. (TCTC, 2017)

While it is easy to view critical thinking as an innate, static feature of our mental being, it is a skill that can indeed be further nurtured and developed. In reference to two competing views on what defines critical thinking, Hack (2015, 28) states, “these two interpretations share an emphasis on activity over passivity. They both enable students to reject the face value of things and strive for deeper understanding. This common point allows us to flexibly define critical thinking as *active thinking*. It empowers the learner to become an active contributor instead of a passive consumer.” What Hack is suggesting, for our purposes, is that the role of the learner in the university EFL classroom needs to move to a more engaged position through active participation in order to develop better critical thinking skills. This is where an instructor needs to consider guiding questions like these: How best can it be taught? How can it be integrated into the class? What sort of communicative activities promote it? Should it be taught explicitly or, perhaps, implicitly? Practical issues are of concern as well: How much time should be dedicated to it? Will it be a primary aim of a discussion or an auxiliary aim? There is no denying the fact that speaking requires ‘online’ thinking; it is a necessary cognitive requirement of communication. Yet it would seem clear that the learner while involved in discussion would need to engage critical thinking skills for topics beyond his/her present cognitive schema, while simultaneously attending to linguistics needs. Instructors could ease that burden by addressing the subject matter in a number of engaging ways such as: pre-teaching, illustrating, describing, asking questions or, even, making analogies which may all provide a way for learners to consider a topic from a different perspective. The Socratic Method of instruction may even have applicability to stimulate student communication and thinking. The Socratic Method centers on cooperative interaction between members of a group where each member tries to stimulate critical thinking by asking questions and by providing answers. It is aimed at delving deeper into the thinking or ideas of the speaker(s). Such kinds of approaches provide valuable examples of classical approaches to Western thought as well.

The very nature of discussion hinges on cross talk, interruptions, negotiation, challenging different points of view, listening to critical interpretations, giving consideration to cultural anomalies, and synthesizing new ideas--a dynamic atmosphere. An effective speaker needs to raise questions, assess information, consider different points of view, devise solutions to complex problems, and bring to the fore a larger knowledge base. An effective teacher needs to have the tools to facilitate that readily at hand. These are all aspects related to critical thinking, and pertain to the advancement of linguistic and communicative abilities.

Group dynamics

While critical thinking primarily centers on the individual, group dynamics is concerned with how a group functions collectively.¹⁵ EFL instructors often view success in the classroom according to the level of participation or interaction by students; indeed, it is a holistic and subjective characterization based on “how they feel,” an intuitive summary. Although such intuitive feelings might not inevitably serve as a basis for the evaluation of individual performance, they do influence the teaching decisions an instructor makes, and, most importantly, serve as a basis regarding the question of what makes a discussion successful.

An interesting conundrum instructors often address rests on the disparity between two or more classes of equally abled students having completely different group dynamics: that is, why similar lessons plans do not work equally well with different classes. Ushioda (2003) suggests that the quality of interactions within the groups and with teachers most likely have an effect on group dynamics. Dörnyei (2007, 720) in his discussion on group dynamics within a Western context states, “the quality of teaching and learning is entirely different depending on whether the classroom is characterized by a climate of trust and support or by a competitive... atmosphere.” There are indeed several common threads that aid the promotion of a dynamic classroom. Chang (2010) looks at three contributing factors: group cohesiveness; group norms; and, self-efficacy.

For Chang, group cohesiveness is concerned with how well group members get along with one another: whether they work effectively and easily; whether they share ideas and communicate; and, whether they create connectivity. Citing other researchers (Clement, Dörnyei & Noels, 1994; Senior, 1997; & Hinger, 2006) Chang (2010, 131-132) states, “The frequent studies of group cohesiveness conducted in language classrooms have shown promise: Group cohesiveness affects learners’ positive evaluation of their learner group (Clement, Dörnyei & Noels, 1994), a cohesive group learns more efficiently because the members feel more at ease when speaking and sharing ideas with peers (Senior, 1997), and a relationship exists between the time group members spend together and their development of group cohesiveness (Hinger, 2006). Such studies point to the relevance of group cohesiveness in language learning and thus helped motivate this study’s exploration of the relationship of group cohesiveness to motivation in the language classroom.” Group cohesion is one of Chang’s group processes that help determine whether a group achieves a high level dynamism; another pertains to group norms or codes of conduct.

For Chang, group norms center on the group as a collective body following a code which has been pre-defined. While she does not explicate in detail what constitutes a rule, certain common codes of conduct serve as her basis. Handing in assignments on time, coming to class ready and prepared, respect for others as well as the group all represent what she considers normal. These are positive attributes required for individual participation in a group. Considering how this interestingly plays into second language learning with regard to using only the target language during class, she

states the following, “A group of learners, who have established the norm of using only the target language, English, in an L2 class, could persuade a member violating this norm (or boundary) to attune her behavior to the group by creating an unpleasant experience for her, such as giving her the cold shoulder” (2010, 132). Group norms could be seen as a form of silent pressure, a kind of collective pressure that serves the advancement of the collective group. It lends itself to individual motivation, another area that helps form Chang’s perspective on group dynamics.

Looking at how learner motivation aids the development of positive group dynamics, Chang considers self-efficacy. She categorizes self-efficacy as one’s perception of their self, their judgment on their ability to perform (2010, 133). Learners who have a higher level of self-efficacy are more likely to be a positive element within the group and individually challenge themselves to tasks outside the ordinary, have a better set of study skills and habits, and invest more time and effort into their endeavors. Citing Oxford and Shearin (1994), she points out that “learners with high self-efficacy set more challenging goals for themselves, which in turn generates in them stronger motivation to achieve those goals; conversely, learners with low self-efficacy lack confidence, which can lead to lower levels of motivation and can compromise their ability to achieve” (2010). What may be of concern here is that learners with little or no sense of self-efficacy will negatively influence the group while those with an understanding of self-efficacy and higher self-esteem will be left to advance the goals of the group on their own. How to reconcile that is even a larger issue.¹⁶

The promotion of group dynamics might be considered something outside the influence of an instructor: language teachers are not by definition specialists in that area of psychology. A teacher’s common sense and positive nature can certainly provide both an implicit and explicit foundation for students to consider or internalize. Establishing rules to create a positive feedback loop, reinforcing positive attitudes, respecting individuals and the group as a whole, considering the uniqueness of ideas, providing guidance to students in need are things at the disposal of instructors. Students themselves should be self-directed toward positive influencing characteristics. Ordinary practices such as regular and punctual attendance, active engagement, setting and achieving specific goals, being ready to participate should be taken as ordinary practice. The promotion of positive commonalities within the group can help create what has been termed a positive class identity which is the corner stone of language learning through discussion.

Establishing rapport

In many ways rapport may be viewed as a corollary to group dynamics. It focuses on students sharing common goals and creating a sense of esprit de corps. It perhaps distinguishes itself by considering the interrelationships between individual learners. Creating rapport within the EFL classroom to a large degree centers on the simple and practical techniques an instructor can employ as a matter of course. As an initial step, it is paramount for students to know each other’s names. Obviously, this reduces the

social distance between them that sometimes inhibits interaction. Techniques common to other social situations such as ice breakers or names games do provide students with an excellent opportunity to get to know each other. Yet in order for students to commit to memory the names and perhaps some personal information on other students, it is imperative for each person to address each other by name during a discussion. While adding an element of formality, the use of individual name placards will provide students with a written reminder of each student's name. By using the names of students on a regular basis and by having all students know each other, rapport can be established in a more natural, organic way.

Consideration to a certain degree needs to be given to the culture background and associated customs of addressing people. Within the context of the Japanese university foreign language classroom, the use of honorifics and the concern for hierarchical positioning exists, though far less than in other contexts, and the instructor may need to instill a notion of egalitarianism for students to feel at ease with one another.

Classroom seating is another practical consideration that aids in establishing rapport within the class. Because discussion requires students to address each other face to face, the traditional seating configuration of a classroom is not conducive for interaction. The size of the class will determine how seats can be arranged. Yet having the students sit in a semi- or full circle facilitates better interaction. For larger classes, it may be necessary to create a number of smaller groups so students are not intimidated by the sheer number of students. It goes without saying that the instructor must be seated within group where he/she is acting as a leader or participant. The close physical proximity of the instructor reassures those who may need feedback.

A certain amount of routine at the start and at the end of class can promote rapport as well. Once students are accustomed to specific class patterns, they can anticipate and better prepare for class. An instructor, for instance, may outline the time schedule and activity schedule at the start, and allow time for reflection and notebook entries at the closing. Rapport within the EFL classroom helps minimize issues associated with the affective state which may negatively influence the rate of language acquisition in a non-explicit way; conversely, it can even help create a feeling of group cohesiveness allowing for better cooperation and collaboration.

Eliciting participation

Respect for others is one of the most endearing cultural traits within Japanese society, a trait that is amply manifested. Being an attentive listener is perhaps its most common manifestation. Second language acquisition researchers, however, have looked at how that impedes against active discourse in the EFL classroom (Sigler, 1999), (Littlewood 2014),¹⁷ and (Nguyen, 2006).¹⁸ Japanese students commonly operate from a passive position and only engage in communication acts when called upon directly; this may, indeed, be a carryover from the instruction received in the lower grades.

Nonetheless, it does raise a number of issues associated with lesson planning, consideration for material selection, classroom management, promotion of active learning and intellectual advancement, and, simply put, language production. In short it needs to be asked, how can instructors activate language production within that context? One common error is to allow speakers with higher proficiency levels dominate. Obviously, speaking time has to be allocated, if you will, in a way that is equitable and beneficial for all. While more advanced speakers do bring to the classroom admirable proficiencies, their performance alone does not solve the issue. The considerations presented here have shown promise:

1. Calling on students:

Although this may seem like a continuation of the approach common to the high school classroom, calling on students individually can aid in the development of discussion. Students do appreciate the opportunity to speak provided the request is not beyond their language abilities. As it becomes common place, more students will volunteer to participate in a discussion. Furthermore, it is effective to have policies in place that require all students to speak at least several times during the course of the class. With that requirement in mind, students are more likely to prepare in advance in terms of both ideas and language.

2. Have students learn about qualitative comments & responses:

Qualitative comments or responses are made in regards to the statements made by others. They can reaffirm what has been stated, offer a counterpoint, or even a critical viewpoint. They serve to give greater depth to a discussion and stimulate critical thinking. They can be made by either an instructor or a student. Such discussion techniques can be taught using instruction in meta-skills/strategy as well as a focused task. A learner, for example, may call for clarification on the meaning of a statement, and then recast it in a more appropriate way.

3. Keep the discussion interesting:

While the term ‘interesting’ is subjective, topics that are vague and have little direction do not serve the best interest of a university level academic discussion. The teacher’s role should include tactics that seek to enhance and promote discussion by interjecting thoughts and comments in order to nurture and give direction to a discussion. Students themselves can be instructed on the importance of keeping a focus and maintaining relevance,

and students must be encouraged to question their own ideas and to stimulate their own thinking for the benefit of all. In many cases, this is closely associated with advanced preparation. When students anticipate the topic for discussion, they can clarify and readjust their thinking to avoid being ordinary.

4. Discuss how to discuss:

It is easy to assume that a group of students will be able to discuss something to a high degree, whether in the target language or even the L1. That assumption, however, may be misguided. Certain features of a discussion in the Western sense of the word may include illocutionary acts that may be unfamiliar, or even considered rude, in the Japanese context, or vice versa. Direct questioning, refutation, rebuttal, interjections, and criticism are strategic discussion techniques within the realm of ordinary Western rhetoric. Conversely, single word responses, for example, could be intuited as simplistic and inappropriate to the Western ear. The use of video material such as news discussion programs, YouTube lessons on discussion, or commercially available textbooks can help students conceptual what is expected. Engagement, turn taking, disagreeing and reinforcing are all aspects of a discussion that need to be taught, irrespective of proficiency. Students, in short, need to have a broad conceptualization of the macro features of a Western discussion.

6. Prepare discussion questions in advance:

Preparation by definitive is an intellectual activity that forces the learner to consider language preparedness, topical understanding, and enthusiasm for acting on what has been studied. The instructor can aid students by clearly setting out what will be discussed and complementing it with a series of specific or guiding questions. It is also for the benefit of the learner if such questions can be presented and even discussed in advance. It seems reasonable that there may be a gap between what is expected by the instructor and what the learner is anticipating—a mismatch of minds. By illustrating in specific detail what is intended, the learner will be able to perform to a higher standard. It is not outside the realm of things for the learners, individually or in teams, to prepare discussion questions on their own. It is a task of that naturally lends itself to more in-depth analysis on the part of the students.

7. Establish a class routine:

Routine does not suggest rigidity; quite the opposite, in fact. Routine concerns planning and keeping a familiar pattern for each class. It is a proactive attempt to have the learner's attention focused without having to detail a class agenda each session. A class, for example, may start with a simple warm-up task, and then move into the area more pertinent to the overall goals of the course. Such a systematic approach would be repeated on a class-to-class basis. This will help the learner anticipate what each class will entail, providing a sense of contentment. Knowing what to anticipate works for the creation of a cooperative and collaborative environment.

8. Over correcting language usage or pronunciation:

Inhibition is seen as psychological factor that handicaps language production. When students are self-conscious about aspects of their language proficiencies or skills, they tend to employ language avoidance strategies,¹⁹ which often include silence, a lack of specificity, or an aversion to interact. Modeling and corrective feedback are instrumental aspects of language instruction and pedagogy. Without it students may be at a loss as to what encompasses correct language usage. Yet attention needs to be given on how best to provide feedback. It is obvious that if communication is impaired because fundamental issues associated with a student's language, corrective feedback needs to be given albeit in a supportive way. Excessive attention to the formal properties of the language may very well corner a student into a language avoidance strategy. The fluency-vs-accuracy dilemma is of concern here. To be sure, it is the judgment of the instructor on which is more crucial to the individual, and perhaps to the even the context. Keeping notes on students' mistakes/errors during a discussion and then addressing them post hoc through corrective feedback or informative modeling may help serve both aims.

9. Silence as an engagement mechanism:

The old adage, 'silence is golden' has applicability in the EFL classroom. This would seem counterintuitive as the goal of discussion is the creation of a dynamic atmosphere where ideas are being discussed back and forth. Silence in this case is associated with facilitative anxiety,²⁰ and is referring to a position the instructor should assume. Students often

rely on the instructor to ‘fill’ the discussion time with his/her own information, ideas or opinions. In fact, for some students, it may seem like a comfortable arrangement; i.e., they are under the false assumption of language engagement: they are in a limited receptive mode only. Here the aim for the instructor is to provide clear enough instructions on what is expected for a discussion to advance and then to let the students assume the responsibility of ‘keeping it going’ while remaining completely silent. Although this will create a degree of anxiety within the class at first, it will inevitably force the students into a production mode. As the instructor reinforces this mode of operation, the students gain the confidence necessary for classroom management, and discuss more easily.

10. *Choosing a topic for discussion:*

Willingness To Communicate (WTC),²¹ according to Ellis (2004, 698), “is of obvious interest to communicative language teaching (CLT), which places a premium on learning through communicating; learners with a strong willingness to communicate may be able to benefit from CLT while those who are not so willing may learn better from more traditional instructional approaches.” As discussion is seen as the culmination of all skill sets, it is fundamental that the nature of a discussion be inviting. In other words, the more interesting the topic the more likely students will have a higher level of a WTC. Yet deciding on a topic that is interesting as well as academically appropriate and challenging enough creates a dilemma. Is it the role of the instructor to decide on the topic based on his/her cultural background, academic interest, or even personal likes? Or is it for the students to decide based on *their* cultural background, academic interests or personal interests? It is fair to ask those questions, but far more difficult to actually decide on a topic. Given the fact that instructors are often from different cultural backgrounds than their students, and given the assumption that most likely there is a generation gap, it would serve the best interest of the students to find a middle ground—to negotiate for a suitable topic. Considerations regarding proficiency levels, the aim of the discussion, the size of the group, or even their maturity levels all have to be taken into account as does the scheduling of the topic. A topic of a more serious nature would be best left for a time when students are more familiar with each other. Easier more personalized topics would certainly be fitting for early in the semester. Whatever topic is ultimately chosen,

the instructor has keep in mind that the topic for discussion has to have relevance to the students: it must stimulate their thinking; it must lend itself to the advancement of their language skills; it must pique their interest; and it must be naturally inviting. Needless to say, not every topic will fit that measure, but with proper negotiation and flexibility many will.

Eliciting participation can be viewed from a number of different vantage points: first, creating an environment where students feel at ease about discussing would not be considered a method; rather, it is concerned with creating an atmosphere. For Japanese university students, this is an essential element of group consciousness. Students who are comfortable with each other have fewer inhibitions about speaking. Having students fully engaged is also about having them self-conceptualize their views of language learning and their respective aims and targets. This is an introspective position that they may not ordinarily consider, yet it is highly beneficially for them in terms of classroom performance and overall academic achievement. Finally, it is concerned with the instructor not being burdened with issues associated with language avoidance strategies among students. An instructor who has a class with engaged students is naturally directed toward creating an even more engaging dynamic. Needless to say, every instructor will formulate his or her own way of aiding students to create a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning.

Further considerations

Japanese culture and discussion

Although the primary aim of second language learning is the develop competency and fluency in the target language, a corollary aim is to be able to disseminate, or share, aspects of one's own culture to the larger, target language community. Japan has a rich cultural heritage and enjoys immense popularity throughout many parts of the world. Popularity, however, does not equate with understanding. To some non-Japanese people current pop cultural presents itself as the primary representation of Japan while others may have a more traditional view and look towards classical arts. For Japanese learners of English such disparities or misconceptions provide an opportunity for them to talk about their own culture, and requires them to have a better understanding what it constitutes when meeting with those people. General questions such as the following should serve as a starting point for learners whereas questions relating to specific cultural aspects of Japan should be studied ad hoc.

How do you define Japanese culture?

How would you describe Japanese culture?

What are some of the cultural differences between Japan and other countries?

How can such gaps be bridged?

How is Japanese culture and society changing?

How can Japan adopt and adapt to changes going on in the world?

How can Japan promote understanding of Japanese society and culture?

Culture is a central part of any society; indeed, the very fabric of a society. Learning a second language, furthermore, does not deny or dismiss one's own view of their own culture or change their cultural identity. In fact, learning a second language allows learners the mental flexibility to reflect on their own culture more deeply by making natural comparisons. Discussion courses provide the perfect forum for students to address aspects of Japan's cultural, history and to consider the differences--preparing for them for more authentic encounters.

Technology

Technology can play a supportive role for a discussion class. A discussion class is communicative based, and, as such, the instruction of the formal properties of the target language is often addressed implicitly. That is to say time allocation favors tasks associated with language production more so than with linguistic tasks featuring accuracy, vocabulary usage, or pronunciation, for instance. This may be at the cost of proficiencies in those areas. Commercial-based online services can help learners address their concerns with online programs and services. IXL, for instance, provides tutoring in grammar. This service is comprehensive in its approach. It covers all aspects of learning grammar as well as stylistic aspects of English usage. For vocabulary learning, Vocabulary.com provides an interactive interface which maintains student profiles and study records. As students continue through the study and review activities, sessions are recorded with comprehension tests available upon completion. Voicethread is an interactive service which focuses on student production. Learners can prerecord their spoken material to be shared with other students or even the whole class. This site provides learners with the opportunity to test their oral skills via recording sessions. And, for overall comprehension skill development, English Central has news clips and other video material with accompanying transcripts. Learners create users account and then can access the site at will. Student study records are kept on file for learners to examine their progress. Comprehension questions, vocabulary quizzes, discussion topics are all available. Technology cannot replace the traditional classroom in all of its manifestations, but it can provide learners with interactive services that will reinforce the areas which they may need to improve upon.

Conclusion

Creating a classroom environment where students interact in a way that promotes the active exchange of ideas, advances language knowledge and fluency, and deepens understanding between one another is a formidable task. In a communicative class like discussion, reaching such a state represents a high

level of achievement. In such an environment, students are truly able to test their linguistic boundaries and genuinely seek to learn new things. How this is achieved, in a way, rests on the ‘chemistry’ of the class, a chemistry that can be nurtured and directed. The above has offered some guidance on what may aid instructors in achieving that goal of a dynamic classroom. Every EFL teaching context is unique: students have different aspirations, different motivational levels, and different proficiencies levels; teachers have different approaches, different backgrounds, and different goals and aims for the classroom; and, institutions have specific objectives, issues related to resource allocation, and concerns for the greater student body. The use of discussion in the university EFL classroom has shown considerable promise in helping students advance their overall English abilities, increase their aspirations for a higher level of fluency, and deepen their understanding of global issues.

Notes

- 1) The word ‘discussion’ as it pertains to this paper is often used interchangeably with ‘discussion class’ for the sake of convenience. The context makes the distinction clear.
- 2) Dörnyei, Z. (2001) has proposed over thirty five techniques on how teachers and students can deal with motivation.
- 3) Swain and Johnson (1997) provide a comprehension overview of immersion programs in Canada looking at the core features of various types of immersion programs and the efficacy of such programs.
- 4) It is worth noting that signing is the output form for sign language, and the processes associated with signing are similar to spoken output from a psycholinguistic perspective.
- 5) Izumi & et al (1999) look at the role of enriched input within immersion programs. Enriched input places emphasis on the formal properties of the target language. It is closely associated with form-focused instruction. To many researchers, it is an important element to immersion-based programs, though often disregarded.
- 6) Ellis (2012, 1977) refers to Pushed Output as the language “produced with effort and reflects the outer limits of their linguistic competence.” It would seem that pushed output works from an implicit mode even more so than expected as the learners would have less access to the explicit mode given that the affective aspects language production would be in place to higher degree and thus interfere.
- 7) An informal survey of the JALT Journal and the Language Teacher showed that classroom focus has shifted from grammar instruction to communicative language teaching, and more currently content-based instruction. This paradigm shift is also evidenced by the types of presentations given at EFL conferences in Japan and the informal discussions which take place at those conferences.
- 8) Both university-based course evaluations and student feedback sheets have shown that students are benefitting from the methodologies employed. There is, of course, no denying that this should be verified with empirical evidence such as cross-sectional surveys or longitudinal studies.
- 9) An expressed, as well as implicit, goal of second language education in Japan is for students to have the English language skills necessary to describe and present aspects of Japanese culture to people of other nations. (See MEXT 2017 for various related topics.)
- 10) Traditionally speaking, the word *kaiwa* in Japanese is more closely associated with causal conversations. This is not what would be construed as discussion.
- 11) Swain and Lapkin (1998, 326) define Language-related Episode as “talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or other.”
- 12) At the onset of the MEXT’s introduction of Oral Communication courses, it was thought that those courses were under purview of advanced speakers. It is the belief of this author, however, that those limitations are non-pertinent.

Discussion is a viable instructional method for most all proficiency levels.

- 13) *Senpai* (先輩) and *koohai* (後輩,) refers to a hierarchical relationship between individuals within different professional, social, or academic relationships. The relationship is interdependent: the *koohai* respects the *senpai*'s position of seniority and conversely the *senpai* relies on the *koohai*'s diligence and dedication.
- 14) A full discussion of Critical Thinking and its role in EFL is beyond the scope of this paper. Still, it does seem obvious that linguistic development hinges on the abilities to view things from various perspectives or different ways of thinking: re, the use of critical thinking.
- 15) Group dynamics is closely associated with the affective state of the individual learners and with how learners contribute to the betterment of the learning environment. Negative factors such as stress, anxiety, or alienation, for instance, interfere with language acquisition, and, obviously, positive factors are seen as beneficial. (See Greg 1984 for full discussion.)
- 16) It may prove beneficial for learners to engage in activities or tasks that focus on small-group collaboration, ones that allow them to immediately recognize success. The instructor's creativity certainly can contribute to this.
- 17) Littlewood (2014) acknowledged that Confucian Heritage Culture classrooms are often based on a lockstep teaching model where learner production follows in some form an Initiation-Response-Feedback cycle.
- 18) Nguyen (2006) argues for the need to take cultural heritage into account with regard to research and instruction citing the vast differences between Western culture and Confucian Heritage Culture.
- 19) Language avoidance strategies (LAS) is a concept, though not part of the literature, that looks at a learner's conscious position to employ strategies to avoid language engagement. Such strategies can be manifested openly or in a more private, subtle manner. Tardiness, silence, unpreparedness, a lack of specificity in discussion all represent various kinds of LAS. LAS is of great concern within the ESL context, particularly for students who may study abroad; those students may employ LAS because of affective or emotional reasons. This suggests that students need to be instructed on engagement strategies before joining a study abroad ESL program.
- 20) Eysenck (1079) suggested that lower levels of anxiety can lead to more effort in learning in some instances. Scovel (2001) noted that anxiety is not necessarily an inhibitive factor to language acquisition. This kind of anxiety is commonly referred to as 'facilitative anxiety', a kind of anxiety that aids in learning and language production.
- 21) MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, and Conrad (2001) established the Willingness To Communicate (WTC) model. It looks at the variables that affect a learner's willingness to engage in language speaking activities. It is seen as the final variable a learner contends with before speaking.

References

- Akbari, Ramin. "Postmethod Discourse and Practice." *TESOL Quarterly* 42.4 (2008): 641–52.
- Allen, Patrick, et al. "Aspects of Classroom Treatment: Toward a More Comprehensive View of Second Language Education." *The development of second language proficiency*, (1990): 57–81.
- Bachman, Lyle F. *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*. Oxford University Press, (1990).
- Canale, Michael. "From Communicative Competence to Communicative Language Pedagogy." *Language and Communication* 1.1, (1983): 1–47.
- Canale, Michael, and Merrill Swain. "Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing." *Applied linguistics* 1, (1980): 1.
- CHANG, L. Y. H. "Group processes and EFL learners' motivation: A study of group dynamics in EFL classrooms." *TESOL Quarterly* 44(1), (2010): 129–154.
- Chomsky, Noam. *Aspects of the Theory Of Syntax* MIT University Press, (1965): 16–75.
- Clément, Richard, Zoltán Dörnyei, and Kimberly A Noels. "Motivation, Self-Confidence, and Group Cohesion in the Foreign Language Classroom." *Language Learning* 44.3, (1994): 417–48. Print.
- Crookes, Graham, and Richard W Schmidt. "Motivation: Reopening the Research Agenda." *Language Learning* 41.4,

(1991): 469–512.

- Csizér, Kata, and Zoltán Dörnyei. “The internal structure of language learning motivation and its relationship with language choice and learning effort.” *The Modern Language Journal* 89.1, (2005): 19–36.
- De Saussure, Ferdinand. *Course in General Linguistics*. Columbia University Press, (2011).
- Deci, E and Ryan, R. *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*: New York: Plenum, (1985).
- Dörnyei, Z. “Motivation” *Concise Encyclopedia of Educational Linguistics*. Ed. Spolsky, B. Oxford Elsevier, (1999).
- Dörnyei, Z. *Teaching and Research Motivation*. Harlow: Longman, (2001)
- Dörnyei, Z. *The psychology of the language learner*. New York: Routledge, (2005).
- Dörnyei, Z.. Creating a motivating classroom environment. In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds.), *International handbook of English language teaching* (Vol. 2, pp. 719–731), (2007) New York, NY: Springer.
- Dörnyei, Z, and Murphey, T. *Group dynamics in the language classroom*. Ernst Klett Sprachen, (2003).
- Ellis, Rod. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Second Ed: Oxford University, (2012).
- Englishcentral. <https://www.englishcentral.com/videos> Web, (2017)
- Eysenck, M. “Anxiety, Learning and Memory: A Reconceptualisation.” *Journal of Research in Personality* 13, (1979): 363–85.
- Gardner, R. C. *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning*. Bilingualism, multiculturalism, and second language learning: The McGill Conference in honour of Wallace E. Lambert, (1991).
- Gardner, Robert C, and Wallace E Lambert. “Attitudes and Motivation in Second-Language Learning.” (1972). ERIC
- Gass, Susan M, and Alison Mackey. “Input, Interaction, and Output in Second Language Acquisition.” *Theories in second language acquisition: An introduction* 175199, (2007) Gass, Susan M, and Carolyn G Madden. Input in Second Language Acquisition. ERIC, (1985).
- Giles, Howard, and Robert N St Clair. *Language and Social Psychology*. B. Blackwell Oxford, (1979).
- Gorsuch, G. “Yakudoku Efl Instruction in Two Japanese High School Classrooms: A Exploratory Study.” *JALT Journal* 20.1, (1988): 6–32.
- Gregg, Kevin R. “Krashen’s Monitor and Occam’s Razor.” *Applied Linguistics* 5.2, (1984): 79–100.
- Hack, B. (2015). “Critical Thinking and EFL at University: Towards a Trans-Disciplinary Classroom.” *JALT Journal JALT Conference Proceedings*, (2015): 27–33.
- Hatch, Evelyn, and Judy Wagner-Gough. “Explaining Sequence and Variation in Second Language Acquisition.” *Language Learning* 4, (1976): 39–47.
- Hinger, Barbara. “The distribution of instructional time and its effect on group cohesion in the foreign language classroom: A comparison of intensive and standard format courses.” *System* 34.1, (2006): 97–118.
- Hymes, Dell. *On Communicative Competence*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, (1971).
- Izumi, Shinichi, et al. “Testing the Output Hypothesis: Effects of Output on Noticing and Second Language Acquisition.” *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 21.3, (1999): 421–52.
- IXL. “IXL” <http://www.ixl.com> , Web, (2017).
- Kleinginna, P.R. & Kleinginna, A.M. “Motivation and Emotion.” *Motivation and Emotion* 5:263 (1981).
- Krashen, Stephen D. *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*. Addison-Wesley Longman Ltd, (1985).
- Krashen, Stephen D. *Principles and Practice in Second Language Learning*. NY: Pergamon, (1982).
- Krashen, Stephen D. *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. Oxford University Press, (1981).
- Kumaravadivelu, B. “Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis.” *TESOL Quarterly* 33.3, (1999): 453–84.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. “The Postmethod Condition: (E)Merging Strategies for Second/Foreign Language Teaching.” *TESOL Quarterly* 28.1, (1994): 27–48.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. “Toward a Postmethod Pedagogy.” *TESOL Quarterly* 35.4 (2001): 537–60.
- Littlewood, William. “Communication-Oriented Language Teaching: Where Are We Now? Where Do We Go from Here?” *Language Teaching* 47.3, (2014): 349–62.
- MacIntyre, Peter D, et al. “Willingness to Communicate, Social Support, and Language-Learning Orientations of Immersion Students.” *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 23.3, (2001): 369–88.

- MEXT. "Report on the Future Improvement and Enhancement of English Education Outline: Five Recommendations on the English Education Reform Plan Responding to the Rapid Globalization." Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. http://www.nier.go.jp/English/youji_kyoui_kenkyyu_center/y_index.html Web, (2011).
- MEXT. "The National Institute for Educational Policy Research," (2017). Web. <http://www.nier.go.jp/English/index.html>
- Nguyen, Phuong-Mai, Cees Terlouw, and Albert Pilot. "Culturally Appropriate Pedagogy: "The Case of Group Learning in a Confucian Heritage Culture Context." *Intercultural Education* 17.1, (2006): 1–19
- Nishino, Takako, and Michinobu Watanabe. "Communication-Oriented Policies Versus Classroom Realities in Japan." *TESOL Quarterly* 42.1, (2008): 133–38.
- Oxford, Rebecca L, and Jill Shearin. "Expanding the Theoretical Framework of Language Learning Motivation." *Modern Language Journal* 78.1, (1994): 12–28. Print.
- Oxford, Rebecca L, and Madeline Ehrman. "Second Language Research on Individual Differences." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 13, (1992): 188–205.
- Pica, Teresa. "Interlanguage Adjustments as an Outcome of Ns-Nns Negotiated Interaction." *Language Learning* 38.1, (1988): 45–73.
- Richard-Amato, Patricia A. "Making It Happen: Interaction in the Second Language Classroom", from Theory to Practice. ERIC, (1988).
- Robbins, Scarlett L. "The Study of Second Language Acquisition" by Rod Ellis. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, (1994). Vii + 824 Pp." *Issues in Applied Linguistics* 6.1, (1995). Review.
- Robinson, Peter. "Attention, Memory, and the "Noticing" Hypothesis." *Language Learning* 452, (1995): 283–331.
- Savignon, Sandra J. *Communicative Competence: An Experiment in Foreign-Language Teaching*. Vol. 12: Marcel Didier, (1972).
- Savignon, Sandra J. *Communicative competence*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., (1983).
- Schmidt, Richard. "Deconstructing Consciousness in Search of Useful Definitions for Applied Linguistics." *Consciousness in Second Language Learning* 11, (1994): 237–326.
- Schmidt, Richard W. "The Role of Consciousness in Second Language Learning1." *Applied Linguistics* 11.2, (1990): 129–58.
- Scovel, Thomas. *Learning New Languages: A Guide to Second Language Acquisition*. Heinle & Heinle Boston, (2001).
- Searle, John R. *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Vol. 626: Cambridge University Press, (1969).
- Sigler, Steven. "Contextualization in Longterm Role-Play." *The Language Teacher*.23.4 (1999)
- Skehan, Peter. "Task-Based Instruction." *Annual review of Applied Linguistics* 18, (1998): 268–86.
- Swain, Merrill. "Communicative Competence: Some Roles of Comprehensible Input and Comprehensible Output in Its Development." *Input in Second Language Acquisition* 15, (1985): 165–79.
- Swain, Merril. "Three Functions of Output in Second Language Learning". In. G. Cook and G. Seidhofer (Eds.) *Principles and Practices in Applied Linguistics: Studies in Honor of Hg Widdowson* (P. 125–144)." Oxford: Oxford University Press, (1995).
- Swain, Merrill, and Robert Keith Johnson. "Immersion education." *Immersion education: International Perspectives*, (1997): 1–16.
- Swain, Merrill, and Sharon Lapkin. "Interaction and second language learning: Two adolescent French immersion students working together." *The Modern Language Journal* 82.3, (1998): 320–337.
- The Critical Thinking Community (Team Authored) (2017 Current). "Our Concept and Definition of Critical Thinking." from <http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/a-brief-history-of-the-idea-of-critical-thinking> Web, (2017).
- Thomas, Jenny. "Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure." *Applied linguistics* 4 (1983): 91.
- Ushioda, E. "Motivation as a socially mediated process". In D. Little, J. Ridley, & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Learner Autonomy in the Foreign Language Classroom: Learner, Teacher, Curriculum and Assessment* (pp. 90–102).

Dublin, Ireland: Authentik (2003).

Vocabulary. <https://www.vocabulary.com/> Web, (2017)

Voice Thread. <https://voicethread.com/> Web, (2017)

Widdowson, Henry George. *Learning Purpose and Language Use*. Oxford University Press, (1983).

Yoshida, K. "Language Education Policy in Japan--the Problem Espoused Objectives Versus Practice." *The Modern Language Journal*. 87.2, (2003): 290–92.



Neal Jost

所属：獨協大学外国語学部交流文化学科准教授

専門：英語教育

Email: njost@dokko.ac.jp