Factors which impede teaching of communicative English in rural Japanese junior high schools
by Makito Kuroda

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education
Montana State University

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FACTORS WHICH IMPEDE TEACHING OF COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH IN RURAL JAPANESE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

by

Makito Kuroda

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS—Continued

TABLE OF CONTENTS—Continued

Page

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were to identify the perception of Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) in Kumamoto with regard to adopting more communicative English teaching strategies and to identify possible ways to encourage that change. One questionnaire for JTEs and one for Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) were sent to the principals of all junior high schools in Kumamoto. The principal was asked to choose one from among the staff of JTEs' to complete the questionnaire. The results were reported with descriptive statistics. According to the findings, both JTEs and ALTs perceived the presence of the High School Entrance Examinations and JTEs' lack of knowledge and ability as English teachers as the major reasons why they do not emphasize more communicative English. The findings also imply that the educational goals of JTEs and ALTs were somewhat different. In conclusion, it was questioned if ALTs were really needed in English education in junior high schools in Kumamoto.

CHAPTER 1

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

As Koike (1993) points out, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture has been struggling to find ways to adopt English language education to enable students to use English as a means of communication. However, the high school and college entrance examinations get in the way of this goal (J. D. Brown, 1995). These examinations are designed to measure technical knowledge about English rather than the student's ability to communicate (J. D. Brown, 1995). As such, it is very hard for Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) to justify an increased emphasis on teaching communicative English.

These examinations should be changed to measure more authentically the use of English as outlined by Koike. There are two ways to approach this change. One would be top-down, the other bottom-up. A top-down approach is to change college entrance examinations first, followed by change of high school entrance examinations. A bottom-up approach refers to the change of high school entrance examinations first and college entrance examinations second. This researcher believes a bottom-up approach would be preferable because, in this way, the flow of the change would be smoother than if a top-down approach is used. This means that high school entrance examinations, which are

written by high school English teachers, would have to be changed first. Key in accomplishing this is the JTEs at the junior high level who would have to make changes in English education in Japan at that level.

History of Japanese English Education

In order to understand the state of English language education in Japan today, it is necessary to know how the program developed during this century. English education in Japan in the early twentieth century was influenced by H. E. Palmer. Palmer was invited to Japan in 1922 from London University, where he worked until the Second World War (Aiga, 1996). Palmer directed the Institute for Research in English Teaching to help develop classroom procedures suited to teaching basic grammatical patterns through his version of the Oral Approach (Richards &Rodgers, 1986). The Oral Approach was the accepted British approach to English language teaching. In the Oral Approach, speech was regarded as the basis of language, and structure was viewed as being at the heart of speaking ability (Richards &Rodgers, 1986).

In 1930s, a "re-Japanization" of the educational system evolved in reaction to the signs of the Second World War (White, 1987). English was perceived as the "language of enemies." Thus, English instruction was eliminated from most schools. People who learned English at that time were viewed as unpatriotic.

After the Second World War, the educational system in Japan was scrutinized thoroughly, and re-organized by the Occupation, and English education was reestablished. C. C. Fries, a professor at the University of Michigan, was prominent in the language teaching profession at that time in the United States, and was invited to

Japan in 1956 (Aiga, 1996). Fries viewed grammar in a similar way to Palmer. For Fries, grammar, or "structure," was the starting point (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Fries' approach advocated aural training first, then pronunciation training, followed by speaking, reading, and writing (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). According to Fries (1945), speech is the language, and habit formation through repetitive oral practice by imitating the native speaker, was the way to learn it. Both Palmer and Fries employed spoken forms of language instruction rather than written. However, both also employed structures of language rather than communication.

As can be seen, both approaches emphasized the importance of teaching language orally. Therefore, it can be summarized that English education in Japan in those days emphasized teaching English grammar through oral practice.

By the late 1950s, however, a portion of Fries' Oral Approach which was oral mechanical drill, became separated out in the curriculum as if it alone were the technique of teaching English. After that, various language teaching methods, both communication oriented and grammar oriented, were introduced to Japan. However, these were not used extensively, except for the Grammar-Translation Method, which emphasizes reading and writing (Aiga, 1996). As the name suggests, the Grammar-Translation Method targeted only grammar and language translation.

In the past two decades, the communicative aspect of English language education in Japan has been reemphasized. In 1987, a program called Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) was introduced. Through this program, native speakers of English called Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) were hired to help students as well as JTEs through team

teaching to develop their communicative skills in English and to implement Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

However as Y. Okushi (1990) mentions, English education in Japan still depends largely upon the Grammar-Translation Method. As noted, an important reason for this is the emphasis on the Senior High School Entrance Examinations (Aiga, 1996). English is a required subject in those examinations, and that test is primarily grammar-translation. The main purpose of English education in the minds of students and parents is to prepare students to be ready for that English examination. The examination primarily measures reading and grammatical skill with little emphasis on oral communication (J. D. Brown, 1995).

Consequently, teachers do not emphasize listening and/or speaking, and their students fail to develop communicative English skills. Japanese junior high school students in general have difficulty recognizing familiar English words when spoken even though they spend three years studying English (Kuroda, 1998).

It appears that this specific problem will not be fully resolved until testing of English becomes communication oriented and the learning of English becomes a real subject of interest for students. Ultimately, this change must be made by high school English teachers who are in charge of constructing entrance examinations. Meanwhile, JTEs at the junior high school level must do what they can to tackle this conflict between the examination emphasis and the English speaking needs of Japanese students.

Unfortunately, many JTEs are not willing to teach English as a means of communication. They rigidly retain the Grammar-Translation Method (Aiga, 1996). If JTEs in junior high schools begin to promote some communicative English, the benefits

of the students' increased authentic use of English would become evident. When these benefits are more evident, the high school educational leaders will recognize that the entrance examinations should include measurement of some communicative language competence and they will modify the examinations. As the examinations begin to change, there will be increased motivation for the teaching of communicative language in the junior high schools.

The Researcher's Experience in Teaching English in Japan

This researcher taught English to junior high and high school students at a "juku", a private after-hours school, for more than 12 years and as a part-time lecturer at Kumamoto Gakuen University for three years. This researcher has been especially interested in junior high school students because at that grade level students officially begin learning English in schools.

In teaching these students, this researcher has observed that when they begin, students are ambitious to learn to speak English. They often show off how much they know in English by saying "How are you?" or "Good morning" to the teacher. Still, others dream of becoming fluent English speakers. However, within two months, some start to lose interest and begin to see English more like a grueling subject to study. At the end of the first year of study, most students perceive English as a subject much like math. They also come to realize that English is a subject which will be tested in the Senior High School Entrance Examinations. Some, however, do retain the desire to learn functional English.

Through conversation with students who graduated from Japanese school, this researcher found that regardless of how high they scored on the English tests at junior

high school, many were disappointed in that they had not learned to effectively communicate in English. In fact, sometimes those getting the highest score on the tests are the most disappointed in their communication skills.

This researcher has identified three major concerns about English education in Japan.

(1) JTEs are likely to teach English for the Senior High School Entrance Examinations using exclusively the textbooks, even though students want to become fluent English speakers.

(2) Many JTEs do not know how to use ALTs because either they do not know how to conduct CLT or they do not wish to conduct lessons with CLT.

(3) Many JTEs do not implement team-teaching with ALTs because either they do not wish to do so or they have difficulty in communicating with ALTs.

This researcher, like many other JTEs, originally taught English to have students pass the entrance examinations, not considering the communicative aspect of the language. However, in one lesson, the song "We Are the World" was the content on a topic in the textbook. As the song was available to be replayed, the researcher had students listen to the song. The lyric sheets, which contained some blanks, were provided to students, and they were asked to provide a word in each blank parenthesis while listening to the song. Students enjoyed the activity, and asked this researcher to do more of this type of exercise.

As a result, this researcher developed an eighteen-month long program using such exercises. When students completed the program, a survey was taken to determine students' attitude toward English. All their answers were in some way positive. More than that, this researcher was impressed that the students understood more spoken English than they had in previous years.

This small modification to the lesson made a great difference. In Plato's BOOK XII, there is a story about men dwelling in a subterranean cavern with their legs and necks fettered. They could only see reflections of the real world and these reflections became the only world they knew. Many JTEs are like the cave men, and the examinations are reflections believed to be reality. This researcher and other JTEs should go out of the cave to see the real world.

Problem Statement

The Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture had been trying to adopt Communicative Language Teaching for more than two decades. However, many Japanese Teachers of English still retain the Grammar-Translation Method. They seemed to be reluctant to implement Communicative Language Teaching. As a result, many students fail to acquire English as a means of communication even after three years of instruction.

Statement of the Purpose

There were two purposes of this study. The first purpose was to identify the perceptions of Japanese Teachers of English in Kumamoto with regard to adopting more communicative English teaching strategies. The second purpose was to identify possible ways to improve their ability to teach communicative English.

Research Question

The central research question to be answered was: What are JTEs' attitudes toward and skills for teaching communicative English? The specific questions asked in this study were:

(1) To what extent are Japanese Teachers of English in junior high schools interested in teaching English as a communication skill?
(2) Are the JTEs well prepared to teach English?
(3) Do the JTEs use available resources to improve themselves as English teachers?
(4) How do the JTEs use ALTs to teach English more effectively?

CHAPTER 2

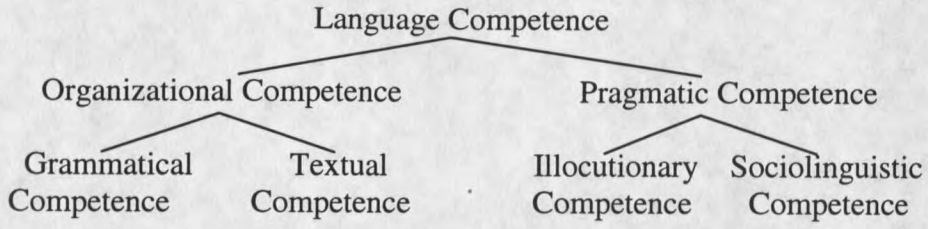
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Language Competence

According to Cazden (1996), D. H. Hymes first discussed the importance of communicative competence in 1966. Cazden defines Hymes' communicative competence to include not only knowledge of formal grammatical structures, but knowledge also of form/function relationships learned from the embeddedness of all language use in social life.

According to D. H. Brown (1994), research on communicative competence in the 1970s distinguished between linguistic and communicative competence. D. H. Brown noted that by 1990 Bachman coined the term "language competence," and developed a conception of it (See Figure 2.1). To him language competence has two sub concepts: organizational (linguistic) and pragmatic (communicative) competencies. Organizational competence deals with the forms of language. Pragmatic competence deals with functional aspects of language. These two sub concepts have two further sub concepts respectively. Organizational competence is further divided into grammatical and textual competencies. Grammatical competence deals with sentence-level structures of language. Textual competence deals with discourse-level structures.

Figure 2.1. Bachman's "Language Competence" (D. H. Brown, 1994 p.229)



D. H. Brown further explained that pragmatic competence is also divided into two sub concepts, illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence. Illocutionary competence deals with sending and receiving intended meanings such as ideational, manipulative, heuristic, and imaginative functions. Sociolinguistic competence deals with such considerations as politeness, formality, metaphor, register, and culturally related aspects of language.

It seems that grammatical competence is an essential part of textual competence. People usually start learning second and/or foreign languages in word-level. Then they proceed to sentence-level, followed by discourse-level which is on the pragmatic side of the scheme.

It also seems that illocutionary competence is easier to learn than sociolinguistic competence. The only variable that governs illocutionary acts is the situation in which the language was uttered. On the other hand, there are many variables such as: politeness, formality, metaphor, register, and culturally related aspects of language, that affect language use in terms of sociolinguistic concerns.

Both grammatical and textual competencies contain both illocutionary and sociolinguistic competencies. Even in word-level, there are illocutionary and sociolinguistic aspects of language use. For example, when somebody says "Kazuma," it

can imply many meanings, such as "Watch out, Kazuma," or "Don't do that, Kazuma." Besides, adding the word "please" to a word can change politeness. For instance, "Kazuma, please." can mean "Can I borrow your toy, Kazuma?" It is more polite than to just stick out a hand with the palm up, and say, "Kazuma."

English education in Japan has not addressed these areas of language competence (Browne & Wada, 1998). They seem to reach only word-level of language competence. Students learn sophisticated English grammar rules such as those dealing with relative clauses and perfect tense, but they do not know the application of these grammatical rules in a social setting. What they know they have learned by rote memorization. What they really need is to learn authentic language usage. This means that learners should acquire communicative competence as well. In order to do so, teaching method, instructional materials, and teacher education must be revised.

Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has grown out of the realization that the mastery of grammatical forms and structures does not adequately prepare learners to use the language they are learning effectively and appropriately when communicating with others (Berns, 1983). One problem with CLT is that there is no single text, authority or model for instruction (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). It uses an eclectic methods, collecting many advantages from other methods (Xiaoqing, 1997). Usually, each teacher develops her/his own CLT approach. In the early stages, many teachers do not know where to start. Xiaoqing, however, summarizes the CLT characteristics as follows.

1. The CLT sets the communicative competence as its desired goal.

2. The CLT insists that interactional speaking activities used in the classroom be instances of real communication, based on a genuine information gap.
3. The CLT stresses two-way communication.
4. The CLT ensures that students have sufficient exposure to the target language. Students' communicative competence can be developed as they try to deal with a variety of language situations.
5. The CLT embraces all four skills.

What, then, does the teacher actually have to do to implement CLT? According to Breen and Candlin (1980) cited in Richards and Rodgers (1986), the roles for the teacher are three-fold. The first role is as an organizer of resources and as a resource herself/himself. The teacher can select and use the authentic materials. She/he can also provide information on the forms and meaning of the target language. Besides, she/he can provide information on the target cultures. The native speaker is a good source of knowledge and skill, too.

The second role is as a guide within the classroom procedures and activities. The teacher should set up appropriate activities to create the situations in which learners are supposed to use the language productively.

The third role is as a researcher and a learner. Sheils (1986) mentions that the teacher should reexamine the nature of her/his contribution to the learning process. The teacher also should have a high degree of competence in the target language as well as a critical, flexible and experimental attitude to teaching. In order to do so, the teacher should be a life-long learner.

Richards and Rodgers (1986) add three more roles of the CLT teacher. Their first role is as a needs analyst. Informally, the teacher assesses students' learning style, learning assets, and learning goals through one-to-one sessions with them. Formally, the teacher

determines students' motivation for studying the language through a needs assessment instrument.

The second role is as a counselor. The teacher is supposed to listen to speakers so that she/he can clarify their intention. The teacher also asks questions to insure accurate interpretation. She/he can do these through the use of paraphrase, confirmation, and feedback.

The third role is as a group process manager. During an activity, the teacher monitors, encourages, and suppresses the inclination to supply gaps in lexis, grammar, and strategy but notes such gaps for later commentary and communicative practice. At the conclusion of group activities, the teacher leads in the debriefing of the activity, pointing out alternatives and extensions and assisting groups in self-correction discussion.

Instructional Materials for CLT

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), the primary role of instructional materials for CLT is to promote communicative language use. Materials are classified into three types: text-based, task-based, and realia. There are many diverse kinds of text based materials from very close to the traditional textbooks to very different from them. A typical lesson, however, consists of the following six components: the theme, a task analysis for thematic development, a practice situation description, a stimulus presentation, comprehension questions, and paraphrase exercises. Task-based materials typically are exercise handbooks, cue cards, activity cards, pair-communication practice materials and student-interaction practice booklets. Realia is often called "authentic" materials. Examples include signs, magazines, advertisements, and newspapers.

Besides, there are maps, pictures, symbols, graphs, and charts that can be used to elicit communicative language use. Whichever types of instructional materials are used, the key issue is to create a situation in which learners are supposed to use the language.

In summary, CLT is to provide a genuine information gap in the quasi-real situation where learners are supposed to use the target language either in written or spoken forms to seek information needed to accomplish the task. The roles of teachers are to facilitate language learning by providing appropriate authentic materials and the quasi-real situation, which require learners to use two-way communication and include linguistic and sociolinguistic information needed by the learners.

Attitude of Japanese Students toward English

A survey (Kuroda, 1996) was conducted in 1996 on 89 freshmen at Kumamoto Gakuen University to see what perspectives the students had on English education in Japan. According to the survey, about 58% of these respondents reported that they liked English when they were in junior high schools. They identified three reasons: English was easy for them (20 responses), English was new to them (17 responses), and they liked the English teacher (11 responses). About 27% of these respondents did not like English because they did not like the English teacher (8 responses), and because English was difficult for them (8 responses). At high school level, the number of students who did not like English increased drastically to about 87%. Most of them perceived English as either too difficult (32 responses) or boring because it is taught as a subject and only for the entrance examinations (20 responses). At university level, students expected the

university to offer English courses that teach them English as a means of communication (62%).

From the results of this survey, it can be said that these students are fond of an easy subject, and that the English teacher is one of the powerful variables that determine students' motivation to learn English. Moreover, entrance examinations can have negative effect on students' motivation. Furthermore, the English education they received may not have offered what students really wanted to learn. What they really wanted seems to be Bachman's view of "language competence."

Entrance Examinations in Japan

It is commonly believed that the entrance examinations are considered to be one of the variables that discourage a change to emphasizing communicative English and students' motivation to learn communicative English. Success or failure on the entrance examinations has life long effects upon students. If accepted to a good high school, she/he has a good chance to enter a good university. Consequently, she/he will likely have a chance to take employment at a good company. However, better schools attract many applicants. These schools use test scores to select students for admission. So, it is apparent that entrance examinations are critically important.

J. D. Brown (1995) analyzed the entrance examinations in Japan in terms of item quality, test revisions, and test validity. The findings are discussed below.

Item Quality

According to J. D. Brown (1995), the item writers for the Senior High School Entrance Examinations often have little or no experience in writing language tests. They seldom receive guidance in how to write the items. Besides, they are kept isolated from the rest of the world for security reasons when they write the items. Consequently, they can not consult authorities in item writing even when they really need to do so. He concluded that as a result, about one-third to one-half of items on the Senior High School Entrance Examinations are ineffective.

The item writers consist mainly of content specialists, usually high school English teachers. They usually have a bachelor's degree. Many of them have their degree in English literature (Browne & Wada, 1998). Given the likely structure of their training, there is little chance that they took an educational assessment course (Browne & Wada, 1998). Frequently, the main source of their knowledge about writing test items is their own experience. It is easy to believe that the test writers do not have strong theoretical base in psychometrics, and, therefore, do not develop items that assess what they purport to assess.

Test Revision

According to J. D. Brown (1995, p. 273), the entrance examinations in Japan were usually not carefully developed nor revised through systematic procedures. An appropriate test development procedure would include ten steps.

1. Carefully develop the test.
2. Pilot the test.
3. Analyze the results of the pilot administration statistically.
4. Select those items that fit the group being tested and discriminate well.

5. Revise the test based on the statistical analyses.
6. Administer the test under optimum conditions.
7. Score the test as reliably as possible.
8. Report the scores to the students.
9. Analyze the final results statistically.
10. Publish the test and technical manual that describe the test development, norms, reliability, validity, etc.

J. D. Brown asserts that the test developers in Japan usually omit some of these steps (1995, p. 273). The procedure to construct entrance examinations often consists of steps 1, 6, 7, 8, and 10 (this researcher's observation). This means that there is often no pilot study, no statistical analyses, and, therefore, no revision.

Kanatani (1995) points out Japanese scholars' are generally unfamiliar with empirical research. Their most problematic area in empirical research is statistical analyses. In the field of technology, Japanese are accustomed to implementing analyses including statistical tests, but not in education. In the literary fields that include English education, statistics are rarely taught. So, most teachers are unfamiliar with statistical analysis. Without statistical analyses, test revision can only be arbitrary. As a result, test reliability is questionable (Popham, 1995).

Test Validity

Validity is the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure and, consequently, permits appropriate interpretation of scores (Gay, 1996). J. D. Brown (1995) questioned as well the validity of the entrance examinations in Japan. He pointed out that the desired trend of language teaching has moved toward teaching communicative use of language. However, many of the entrance examinations include

discrete-point grammar questions. Besides, they consist of a large number of multiple-choice items.

According to H. D. Brown (1994), linguistic competence is knowledge "about" language forms. On the other hand, communicative competence is knowledge that enables a person to communicate functionally and interactively in a language. J. D. Brown (1995) has communicative use of language in mind. Therefore, he expects the entrance examinations to reveal test takers' linguistic as well as communicative competence. However, it is clear that the entrance examinations in Japan only deal with linguistic competence. To develop communicative skills, the examinations should assess communicative competence as well as linguistic competence. To make matters worse, test items require only mechanical application of linguistic competence instead of quasi-realistic application of it. In other words, they do not assess what J. D. Brown has in mind. Thus, he concludes that the tests are not valid in terms of assessing language proficiency.

As J. D. Brown (1995) points out, the entrance examinations in Japan have many deficits when they are considered in terms of assessing communicative use of English. They mainly assess the knowledge part of linguistic competence. If they are to assess language communication skills, knowledge as well as "higher order" skills, anything higher than knowledge, will have to be assessed (Popham, 1995). Learners should be required to show language competence, that is, not only linguistic competence, but also communicative competence.

Assistant Language Teachers

Sick (1996) briefly describes Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs). The Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture (JMESC) introduced a program called "Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program" in 1987. Foreign native speakers of English, the target language, were hired for one year. They were assigned to work in the classroom with JTEs for a specified number of classes. The goals the program was expected to achieve have not been stated explicitly by JMESC. However, it was assumed that the goals included exposing students to native speech and accent, increasing student motivation by providing cultural awareness, and inducing JTEs to improve their own spoken communication skills (Sick, 1996). Similarly, one would assume the goal to be the increase use of English for communication.

ALTs have diverse backgrounds in training, experience, and commitment to education and Japanese language. Cohen (1996) reviews the book titled "Studies in Team Teaching" by Minoru Wada and Antony Cominos (1994), and briefly summarizes the characteristics of ALTs. According to Cohen, ALTs must be under 35 years of age at entry. Only 11.7% of them in 1991 had any sort of TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) qualification. They may re-up for a maximum of three years.

While there are ALTs in all parts of Japan, the numbers of ALTs are far less than ideal. Many ALTs are assigned more than one school. There are three patterns of ALT assignment. In the occasional-visit pattern, ALTs visit a school once or twice a year. The schools assigned this pattern are usually small and/or remote. In the regular-visit pattern, ALTs are assigned to more than one school, and usually visit a school once a

month. Middle size schools, in general, assign the ALT using the regular-visit pattern. Finally, in the base-school pattern, a school has its own ALT(s). They generally teach in any given classrooms once a week or twice a month. Large and/or urban schools fall into this pattern.

Scholefield (1996) conducted a survey on 121 JTEs at 31 junior high schools. The JTEs were asked to evaluate two ALTs from Australia who worked with them after two years of team teaching. 86 Evaluation Forms were returned.

From this survey, it can be said that both JTEs and students are impressed with teaching characteristic demonstrated by ALTs, compared to those demonstrated by JTEs. They have the communicative confidence of native speakers of English: pragmatic use of English, cultural information, and use materials other than textbooks. ALTs' use audio visual aids and realia more extensively than do JTEs.

Criticism of the JET Program had more to do with structure of the program rather than personnel. First, the schedules of ALTs are too tight to allow for extended talk about lesson plans with JTEs. Besides, ALTs have to deal with too many students. Second, there is no requirement concerning ALTs' knowledge about TEFL and English speaking cultures when they are recruited.

Japanese Teachers of English

Role of Japanese Teachers of English

Kanatani cited Horiguchi's (1991, p. 12) definition of the role of Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) as follows.

1. Finding, choosing, and constructing teaching materials

2. Presenting materials
3. Demonstrating
4. Presenting tasks
5. Answering students' questions
6. Motivating students to learn
7. Monitoring progress
8. Introducing other opportunities to learn English

Finding, Choosing, and Constructing Teaching Materials. Instructional materials play a very important role in teaching English. The use of authentic materials is strongly recommended, especially when teaching communicative use of English.

In the real situations, however, many JTEs use the textbook almost exclusively (Browne & Wada, 1998). It is commonly believed that few JTEs, if any, construct their own instructional materials. Because of the examinations they are likely to teach the contents of the textbooks exclusively instead of teaching the use of English language. They believe that in order to succeed in the examinations, they must "deposit" as much information from the textbook as possible.

Presenting Materials. The materials should be presented so that it induces students' communicative use of English. Authentic materials themselves will not induce students' communicative use of English. JTEs need to have knowledge of how to present materials to elicit real communication. Commercially produced materials, such as textbooks, may be used as if they are authentic. JTEs, in general, present materials either through reading or by giving explanation of vocabulary and/or grammar.

Demonstrating. Demonstration by teachers is an important part of instruction. JTEs often ask ALTs to demonstrate reading the text and vocabulary, which is strongly

recommended. Conversation between the JTE and the ALT serves as a good demonstration. It shows students that English they are actually learning can be used as the means of communication. Besides, it demonstrates the effectiveness of JTEs' English.

Teachers are supposed to be living examples of what students are to be. Students are prone to think that it is impossible to be like native speakers. However, they should think that they could be like JTEs as they share the same language background. Therefore, JTEs should demonstrate their use of English as often as possible with the help of ALTs. They should also demonstrate that even though their English is not perfect, they can still communicate with native speakers of English.

In reality, many JTEs are not willing to converse with ALTs in the presence of students. They want to avoid communication breakdown and they fear embarrassment. While they may have had English conversation classes in the university, they lack confidence. Often they have only memorized dialogues. Therefore, their English conversation skills may not work unless they have done extra preparation to acquire skills.

Presenting Tasks. The tasks, like instructional materials, should be well thought out to induce students' communicative use of English. As mentioned in the section of "Communicative Language Teaching," JTEs should present a genuine conversation where information gap causes students to use English communicatively to obtain information they really need or want. The customary tasks JTEs present are drills. Students have little room for creative use of English

Answering Students' Questions. Answering students' questions sincerely helps to establish a good relationship between the teacher and students. Consequently, this good relationship helps motivate students' learning English.

Unfortunately, Japanese students in general do not ask questions of the teacher. It is commonly believed it is so because students are afraid of losing their self-esteem by asking irrelevant and/or trivial questions. As an old proverb "A stuck-up nail will surely be hit" indicates, students are also afraid of being outstanding by asking a teacher a question.

Motivating Students to Learn. The question "Why should we study English?" is the one often asked by students. These situations provide a good opportunity for JTEs to motivate students to learn English. JTEs can talk about other countries, and they can tell students that they may have opportunities to go abroad by giving them the statistics of how many Japanese actually go abroad.

Motivating students by saying, "If you work really hard right now, you can enter a good high school, and your parents will be very proud of you," may work for making students memorize materials for the entrance examinations, but it will not motivate them to become fluent English speakers. The worst answer to the question is "Because you have the entrance examinations." Unfortunately, some JTEs actually tell students this is the reason they should study English.

Monitoring Progress. Monitoring. individual students' progress, and giving individualized instruction based on that progress is the ideal aspect of teaching. In this

way, students feel less stress, and it lowers their affective filter, that is, level of student's anxiety. Learning is facilitated.

There are usually about thirty to forty students in one class. With such enrollment, it is hard for JTEs to monitor progress of every single student during the class period. As a result, teachers depend heavily on tests and assignments to assess students' progress. Unfortunately, many JTEs have not received education concerning assessment. The tests they develop may not be valid.

Introducing Other Opportunities to Learn English. Some students want to improve their linguistic knowledge and/or communicative use of English. JTEs are supposed to give them advice, for example, which books to read, what TV/radio programs to watch/listen to. Consequently, JTEs should know the levels of students as well as books and/or TV/radio programs that suit students' level of proficiency in English and their needs. Unfortunately, many JTEs read few English books. They may not watch/listen to English TV/radio programs. Unless they try to improve themselves as English teachers by utilizing these sources, they may not be successful in helping their students.

Abilities and Qualities JTEs are Required to Have

According to Kanatani (1995), there is almost no empirical research on this topic. The reasons there are few such empirical researches on JTEs are the following.

1. the tradition among Japanese scholars which makes light of empirical research
2. the difficulty of controlling the many variables associated with this topic
3. the unfamiliarity of Japanese scholars with empirical research
4. the taboo against conducting research on teachers, especially on their English and pedagogical competence

Most existing research addressed the issue of "What English teachers should be and do." Kanatani (1995, p17) reviewed these studies to list the following general abilities and qualities that JTEs are supposed to have.

1. English language competence
2. Knowledge
3. Pedagogical competence
4. Good personalities

English Language Competence. According to Kanatani (1995), there is no agreed upon definition of English language competence. Besides, there are no criteria of fundamental knowledge and skills JTEs are required to have. Furthermore, there is no English language proficiency test, which measures the language competence.

Knowledge. There are essential, but not exclusive, domains of knowledge JTEs are to have. Knowledge of English speaking cultures, of language acquisition and education, of learners, of learning materials, and of audiovisual equipment are needed. However, there is no consensus on the extent to which JTEs are required to have these domains of knowledge.

Pedagogical Competence. Pedagogical competence has many definitions. For instance, some consider it as classroom control, while others view it as teaching skills. Without a clear definition, discussion is very difficult.

Good Personalities. Kanatani (1995) includes eagerness, fairness, sense of value, and attitude in good personalities. Attitude includes flexibility toward different cultures.

Good personalities, again, have no agreed definition because the word "good" is the relative term.

The definitions of these abilities and qualities and the degree to which JTEs are supposed to have them is still vague. Therefore, it is impossible to describe exactly what kind of people can make good teachers. More study on these topics is needed. However, these are touchy issues to investigate especially for JTEs whose abilities and qualities are considered to be relatively low. Therefore, very carefully designed research should be conducted to elicit data that reveal the real JTEs' abilities and qualities. Besides, the better measurement tools to assess these abilities and qualities should be developed.

Weakness of JTEs. Kanatani (1995) cited the work of Kamiyama et al (1982), Minamimoto (1998), and Kishimoto et al (1981) as evidence that JTEs themselves admit their weakness in teaching strategies and knowledge of English. Kanatani cited Kano's seminal work (1984) that defined teacher abilities as knowledge of education, analyzing instructional materials, understanding students, conducting lessons, leadership, and general knowledge. Kano conducted a study on these abilities, and found that practical applications of these abilities are lacking. Kano presented four reasons JTEs had not acquired practical competence.

1. few professors who are familiar with these educational practices
2. no systematic curriculum for teacher education
3. characteristics of Japanese universities. There are some universities specifically designed to educate students to become teachers, but many universities offer students courses to become teachers. The courses of these universities are usually intensive. Therefore, there is not a sufficient amount of extensive education to adequately prepare a teacher.
4. Professors' indifference to the need to study and teach about educational practice.

In summary, it seems that JTEs have not had sufficient education to be teachers. They may not have clear ideas which way to proceed when they start their career as teachers. They usually follow the experienced teachers blindly, and find their own way of teaching that is very similar to their forerunners. They often do not have the theoretical background in learning and teaching to challenge convention. Therefore, they are apt to act as if what has been is what should be the way to teach English. Besides, change in teaching behavior would make great demands on JTEs. Furthermore, it works because it is assumed in Japanese educational system that the teachers are supposed to "deposit" tons of knowledge in students' memories, and they believe that traditional methods work for this purpose.

According to Kanatani (1995), there are general abilities and qualities JTEs are supposed to have. Unfortunately, there is no single measurement tool that assesses these abilities and qualities. We sometimes use TOEFL or other English language proficiency tests to assess JTEs' English language competence.

Additionally, these tests do not have tools to assess JTEs' knowledge of English speaking cultures, of language acquisition and education, of learners, of learning materials, and of audiovisual equipment. Neither have we tools to assess JTEs' pedagogical competence. We may have tools to assess JTEs' personality, but we do not know exactly what kind of personality will be the characteristic of good JTEs. It is also unknown if there is a causal relationship between the high score such as on English proficiency test and teaching effectiveness.

Chapter Summary

Generally speaking, many Japanese students are interested in learning English when they enter junior high school (Ogawa, 1981). However, due to grammar centered instruction, English education at junior high school level often yields students who do not like English (Koike et al., 1994). Many students perceive learning English as distasteful by the time they become high school students. There are three reasons. First, they are forced to study it because of the entrance examinations. Second, English becomes very difficult for them as they proceed in their study. Third, they do not like the English teacher. In general, it is easy to believe that what they wanted to study was communicative use of English, not English linguistic structures.

English tests in the entrance examinations try to assess what students know about the target language rather than what students can do with the language. Such tests are against the JMESC's English education policy, and are therefore invalid. The schools, on the other hand, use the examinations to rank students to provide exact cut-off points for admission selection. Consequently, it is believed that the more difficult the tests are, the better they are. This is the reason English education in Japan emphasizes linguistic competence rather than communicative competence.

Language competence consists of linguistic competence and communicative competence. As the name suggests, linguistic competence deals with linguistic information such as morphology, phonology, syntax, and semantics. On the other hand, communicative competence deals with pragmatic information such as sociolinguistics. Learning a language means acquiring not only linguistic competence, but also

communicative competence. What is needed is teaching approaches that facilitate learning communicative use of English along with knowledge about the language.

Communicative Language Teaching is one of the ways to have students acquire language competence. The teacher is supposed to facilitate students' learning instead of "depositing" information into students. The teacher should give students genuine information gaps using authentic materials, and students should try to fill the gaps by communicating either in written or spoken forms. While students are working on the tasks, the teacher should observe and analyze what students are doing. The teacher should also give advice and answers to students' questions in English. Each of these and especially the last one are very difficult for non-native English teachers.

The JET Program provides ALTs, who are the native speakers of English to help JTEs. ALTs impressed JTEs with their knowledge as native speakers and use of authentic materials. One of the problems is that there is not sufficient number of ALTs to achieve the apparent goals of the program. Another problem is that there is no requirement concerning ALTs' knowledge about Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and cultural awareness required of ALTs. For these reasons, JTEs can not totally depend on ALTs, and the program is not as successful as might be.

Horiguchi presented eight-fold definition of the role of JTEs. What JTEs actually do is far from this ideal. Kanatani presented general abilities and qualities JTEs are supposed to have. However, this definition of abilities and qualities and the degree to which JTEs need them in order to be effective is still unclear.

JTEs themselves admit their weakness in teaching strategies and knowledge of English. Kano uncovered four reasons JTEs are weak in these areas. Generally, it seems that JTEs have not had sufficient education in teaching. As a result, JTEs are left to educate themselves to be the English teachers who can implement Communicative Language Teaching.

In conclusion, students are generally interested in English as a communicative mode of communication. However, because of JTEs' grammar oriented ways of teaching English, because of the presence of the Senior High School Entrance Examinations and because of the persistence with traditional teaching methods, students come to perceive English as distasteful. JTEs also do not have enough knowledge about CLT and team-teaching methods. Therefore, JTEs do not know how to implement CLT and how to use ALTs. Further, JTEs' inability in spoken English hinders communication with ALTs, and it makes team-teaching even more difficult. Finally, in-service training for JTEs does not appear to be effective as they tend to be intensive, rather than extensive.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Site Selection

There have been some studies on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) conducted in Japan, but most have been limited in urban areas like Tokyo (Browne & Wada, 1998; Koike, 1993; White, 1987; Okushi, 1990; Tajino & Walker, 1998). English education in these areas represents just part of Japanese education spectrum. As is the case in many countries, there are more rural areas than urban areas in Japan. Therefore, it is very important to conduct studies in rural areas as well. Table 3.1 presents a list of population density of all the prefectures in Japan as well as the number of the cities whose population is more than one hundred thousand. The researcher defined a prefecture with a population of at least one million and at least ten cities of more than one hundred thousand as urban. The rest are defined as rural. Kumamoto prefecture, the identified site for this study, is placed approximately in the middle of this range of prefectures defined as rural. In that sense, it can be said that Kumamoto prefecture is a representative rural area of Japan (See Table 3.1 and Appendix A).

Table 3.1. Population Density of Prefectures in Japan(census in 1995).

Name of Prefectures	Population Density (people/km^2)	*	Name of Prefectures	Population Density (people/km^2)	*
Tokyo	5385	38	Ehime	266	3
Osaka	4652	21	Toyama	264	2
Kanagawa	3417	14	Yamaguchi	255	6
Saitama	1780	17	KUMAMOTO	251	2
Aichi	1334	12	Wakayama	229	1
Chiba	1125	14	Tokushima	201	1
Fukuoka	993	4	Gifu	198	4
Hyogo	664	9	Niigata	198	3
Kyoto	570	2	Yamanashi	198	1
Okinawa	562	2	Fkui	197	1
Kagawa	548	1	Kagoshima	195	1
Ibaragi	485	5	Oita	194	2
Shizuoka	480	9	Tottori	175	2
Nara	388	3	Nagano	162	4
Nagasaki	377	2	Fukushima	155	4
Saga	363	1	Aomori	154	3
Hiroshima	340	4	Miyazaki	152	3
Miyagi	320	2	Yamagata	135	3
Shiga	320	3	Kochi	115	1
Mie	319	6	Shimane	115	1
Gunma	315	5	Akita	105	1
Tochigi	309	3	Iwate	93	1
Ishikawa	282	2	Hokkaido	68	17
Okayama	274	2			

* the number of the cities whose populations are more than one hundred thousand

School Respondents

Within the prefecture of Kumamoto, there are 202 public junior high schools. One remote school had no students in 1998. Consequently, 201 schools were eligible to be included. As this was not a large number, all the schools were included.

There were two populations in this study. One was Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs), and the other was Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs). There are usually several JTEs in each school. As a result, some selection of which JTEs to use was required. Also, JTEs are both female and male. Ideally, a stratified sampling technique based upon gender as well as the number of the teachers per school would be preferred. However, the ratio of female to male English teachers and the number of the English teachers at each school could not be determined. Consequently, a stratified sampling technique was not used. The same lack of information on the number of teachers per school prevented using a random sampling technique.

As an alternative to a stratified or random sampling procedure, the researcher asked the principal of each school to identify one JTE to participate in this study. For each questionnaire sent to a school, the principal assigned one JTE to respond. The cover letter also asked that the selected English teachers have experience teaching English at levels seventh, eighth, and ninth grades and that all three levels of experience be at that one school. It was reasonable to believe that this procedure would yield a representative group of experienced teachers.

There was no need for sampling of the ALTs because all of them were included in this study. There was, however, one problem concerning ALTs. Some ALTs worked at more

than one school which, if not recognized, could have resulted in getting more than one response from a single ALT. That problem was addressed in the instructions for the questionnaire. ALTs were to complete only some items on their second questionnaires and leave the rest unanswered.

Questionnaire Development

Two questionnaires (Appendix D and E) were developed specifically for this study with the help of Dr. Gloria Gregg, a specialist in survey methods at Montana State University (Bozeman, MT). One questionnaire was for JTEs and the other for ALTs. They were both developed in English. The questionnaire for JTEs was then translated into Japanese by this researcher.

Although Gay (1996) strongly recommends implementation of a pilot study, because of the cost and time limitation, a pilot study was not used. However, the questionnaire for JTEs was first reviewed by Mr. Sentaro Okamoto, a Japanese exchange researcher in chemistry from Tokyo Kougyou University, currently working at Montana State University (MSU). Then, the questionnaires in both English and Japanese were proof-read by Dr. Hideo Hayashi, a professor in applied linguistics in Kumamoto Gakuen University in Japan, currently serving as an exchange professor at MSU. Finally, the questionnaire for ALTs was reviewed by an American national who had just returned from Japan completing two years of work as an ALT.

Data Collection

Two questionnaires, one for JTEs and the other for ALTs, the cover letter for the principals (Appendix A), a follow-up postcard (Appendix B), and the cover letter of a follow-up letter for the principals (Appendix C) were developed specifically for this study. The questionnaires were then sent by mail to the principals of 201 public junior high schools in Kumamoto. The cover letter asked the principal to give the respective questionnaire to a selected JTE who met the criteria and to the ALT who worked in the school. The JTE and the ALT were asked to fill out the questionnaire, and return it by mail from Japan to the U.S. before the specified deadline.

As noted above, one ALT may have received more than one questionnaire because she/he worked at more than one school. The cover letter for ALTs asked the ALT to complete all questions on only one questionnaire. On any additional questionnaires, the ALT was to answer only questions 2 through 17. Questions 2 through 17 describe their assigned JTEs. This researcher requested this information in order to compare the ALTs' perception toward their assigned JTEs' self-perception. The number of matched pairs of a JTE and an ALT was 86 (See Table 3.2). However, the total number of JTEs' response was 142 and that of ALTs' was 98. If only matched pairs were taken into account, many data would have to be ignored. Therefore, JTEs' perspectives toward ALTs in general and vise versa were compared. In order to do so, duplicated number of ALTs' response (16 of them) were deleted so that one ALT responded to only one questionnaire. Three responses from 142 total responses of JTEs were also deleted because these three

responses were returned from the JTEs who had less than three years of teaching experience at the school.

Table 3.2. Number of Valid Responses from JTEs and ALTs.

	JTEs	ALTs
Number of total responses	142	98
Number of matched responses	86	86
Number of unmatched responses	56	12
Number of valid responses	139	82

There were two return envelopes from each school. Both the JTE and ALT were asked to use separate envelopes to return their questionnaires. Doing so decreased the possibility that answers given by one respondent could be influenced by those of the other.

One week after the first mailing, follow-up postcards were sent to the principals to thank them for their cooperation, and to remind those who had not returned the questionnaires to do so immediately.

For those schools on which no response had been received, two weeks after the first follow-up postcard, a second mailing was sent to the principals of the schools. It contained a new cover letter to the principal, questionnaires for JTE and/or ALT, and a pre-paid return envelope for each teacher. Gay (1996) recommends phone calls as the third follow-up. However, due to cost considerations, no international telephoning was done.

When a questionnaire was returned, the name of the school was checked off. At this point, the questionnaire was left unopened until the questionnaires for both the JTE and ALT were received. When the questionnaires of both the JTE and ALT were received

from one school, the name of the school was deleted from the mailing list and the return envelopes were separated from the questionnaires so that the schools or individuals could no longer be identified. Finally, the questionnaires from both the JTE and ALT were stapled together. If the schools requested the results of the survey, envelopes for sending out the results were prepared.

Two types of the data were obtained through the questionnaires. One was narrative, and the other, numerical. The narrative data were obtained from the questions 3 (b), 4 (b) 5, 6 (c), 7 (c), 8, 10 (c), 10 (d), 11, 21, 22, 23, 24 (b), 27, 30 (b), and 30 (c). All the data were then listed under each question, and the same or similar responses were gathered under a certain category. Frequencies of each category were added to the lists.

Numerical data were analyzed using SPSS. First, means, medians and frequency distributions were calculated for each question for JTEs and ALTs. Next, these statistics were used to compare and contrast the responses of JTEs and ALTs on the variables represented by the questions. The results are contained in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

In the first half of this chapter, return of the survey, Japanese Teachers of English's (JTEs') and Assistant Language Teachers' (ALTs') demographics, JTEs' communication ability, and ALTs' knowledge about Japanese language and its culture will be presented. In the second half, results on the four research questions will be presented. Finally, the problems Japanese English education in general as reported by JTEs and ALTs are presented.

Return of the Survey

For JTEs, 142 questionnaires were returned. However, three responses were from JTEs who had less than three years of teaching experience in one school. These three were not used in this study because, as planned and as stated in the cover letter sent to the principals, only JTEs with three years or more of teaching experience at their schools were to be selected.

The questionnaires for ALTs were sent to all 201 junior high schools in Kumamoto. ALTs returned 98 questionnaires. However, the number of ALTs was unknown. Therefore, return rates of ALTs are not reported.

Table 4.1. Survey Return Rates.

	No. of survey sent	No. of survey returned	Return rate (%)
JTEs	201	139	69.2
ALTs	201	82	*
Total	402	221	*

*(including repeats, so no return rate has been calculated)

As a questionnaire for ALTs was sent to every school, some ALTs received more than one questionnaire. ALTs were instructed to complete only one questionnaire fully, and to answer only some items on any additional questionnaires. Of the 98 questionnaires returned, 16 of them were partially completed and returned. This would indicate that 82 ALTs responded to the entire questionnaire.

Teachers' Demographics

JTE Demographics

The principals were asked to invite one JTE at each junior high school to participate in this study. One hundred thirty-nine responses from JTEs were usable. The results of questions concerning JTEs' demographics are presented in Table 4.2.

Regarding gender, the distribution turned out to be 69 females (48.9%) and 68 males (49.6%). One point four percent did not identify their gender.

Under the questions of travel experience of JTEs, the survey yields the following data. Most JTEs (90.6% with 2.2% not responding) had some previous experiences of travelling abroad. Those JTEs who had been abroad were asked "when," "where," "how long," and "the purpose" of their visits. Many visits could be considered as recent (from 1987 to 1998). The most popular countries JTEs traveled were English speaking

countries (221 responses). Among the visits to English speaking countries, 144 visits were made to the United States, 35 visit were made to Australia, 34 visits were made to the United Kingdom, and 20 visits were made to Canada. A little more than two fifths of all the visits (134 responses) were from 1 to 2 weeks. A little less than one third (95 responses) were from 1 to 2 months. The most popular purpose of their visit was touring (197 responses). The second most popular purpose was to study English language (58 responses). A little over one-tenth (35 responses) reported leading student group tours as their purpose.

The data concerning JTEs' intentions for future travelling abroad yield the following results. Most JTEs (92.8% with 5% not responding) reported they would like future travel abroad if given an opportunity.

On the open-ended part of the question concerning the countries JTEs would want to visit in future, 81 wished to visit English speaking countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Fourteen responses did not specify the English speaking country to which they wished to go. European countries were popular among JTEs as well. Some were interested in Asian countries

JTEs reported years of experience teaching English ranging from 3 to 36 years with 10 years as the median. The data were positively skewed. Therefore, the median was used to describe central tendency because, as Gay (1996) mentions, the median is not affected by extreme scores that cause a skewed distribution. One point four percent did not respond to the teaching experience question.

Under the questions of JTEs' teaching conditions, class size, it was found that JTEs had from 3 to 40 students in one class. Most of the classes (79.2% with 0.7% not responding) had from 30 to 40 students with the median of 34.5 students per class.

Under the question of JTEs teaching hours per week, it was found that JTEs teach from 3 to 26 hours per week. The most common pattern was that teachers taught 4 (13.7%), or 12 (15.8%), or 16 (25.2%), or 20 (23.0%) hours per week. As there were 4 modes over the range, the calculation of a mean would be misleading. Point seven percent did not respond to the question concerning the number of hours JTEs teach per week.

The JTEs were asked about English proficiency test they have taken. There are several English language proficiency tests conducted in Japan. The two most popular were STEP (Society for Testing English Proficiency) which was developed in Japan and the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) developed in the United States. Two thirds of JTEs (69.1%) had taken STEP and many of those (65.6% with 10.8% not responding) received from the level 1 through 2.5, 1 being the highest level.

About one third of JTEs (32.4%) took the TOEFL. Their scores on the TOEFL ranged from 400 to 600. Central tendency is not reported because there is no outstanding mode over the frequency distributions, and because frequency of each score was from 0 to 5. Only 3 JTEs took the TOEIC (the Test of English for International Communication), while 7 took other English language proficiency tests. The number of JTEs who took any of the other tests was so few that the results were not instructive.

In summary, almost equal numbers of female and male JTEs who were rather less experienced participated in this study. In general, JTEs are interested in other countries, and have visited abroad. Their main purpose was touring. JTEs have relatively large class size. The numbers of teaching hours per week are scattered over the range with four distinct modes. Many JTEs achieve high level scores on STEP (level higher than 2.5).

Table 4.2 JTEs' Demographics.

Variable	Frequency
Gender	
female	69
male	68
Experience of travelling abroad	
yes	126
Total visits from 1987 to 1998	255
Length of visits	
1~2 weeks	134
1~2 months	95
Purpose of visits	
touring	197
study English	68
leading a student group tour	35
Intention of future travel abroad	
yes	129
Future travel to English speaking countries	
yes	81

Table 4.2 JTEs' Demographics (continued).

Variable	Frequency
Experience as JTEs (range 3~36 years)	
median	10 yeears
No. of students per class (range 3~40)	
median	34.5 students/class
No. of hours of teaching per week	
4 hours/week	19
12 hours/week	22
16 hours/week	35
20 hours/week	32
English proficiency tests taken	
STEP	96
TOEFL	45
Results of STEP	
level 2.5 and above	63
Results of TOEFL (range 400~600)	
mean	509.3

ALT Demographics

All the ALTs working for junior high schools in Kumamoto were asked to participate. Eighty-two questionnaires out of 98 were usable. The results of questions concerning ALTs' demographics are presented in Table 4.3.

There were 38 female (46.3%) and 44 male (53.7%) ALT respondents. Most of the ALTs (84.2%) were in their 20's. A little more than a half (54.9%) were from the United States. There were some ALTs who were from the United Kingdom (22.0%), from Canada (15.9%), and from Australia (7.3%).

Most ALTs (67 individuals) had bachelor's degree. Only 16 had background in language study and/or education. There were 11 ALTs that did not specify their major fields of study. The number of ALTs holding master's or doctorate degrees was very small (15 individuals), so any generalization based on that data might be misleading.

A little more than two thirds of ALTs (69.5% with 1.2% not responding) had prior teaching experience. Twenty-two responses reported that they had previously taught language.

Under the question of experience serving as an ALT, the lengths ranged from 2 to 60 months. There were three peaks in this range: 14.6% had 7 months of experience (first year), 13.4% had 19 months of experience (second year), and 11% had 30 months of experience (third year) as ALTs.

From the answers to the question asking ALTs for the number of junior high schools to which they were assigned, it was found that they worked at from 1 to 10 junior high schools. Most ALTs (93.9%) worked in from 1 to 4 schools with the median of 1.5 schools per ALT.

The question also asked JTEs to report the frequency of an ALTs' visits per school. It was calculated that those visiting each individual school at least one day per week was 41.0%. Some ALTs reported even fewer visits to school. Some indicated they visited only 1 to 3 weeks per month (15.1%) and others just 1 to 3 weeks per 16 weeks (12.9%). Two point nine percent did not respond on the number of visit per school question.

Then, JTEs were asked the frequency of ALTs' visits per class. Many JTEs (41.7%) reported that ALTs visited at least one day per week. The frequency of from 1 to 4 days

per month was calculated to be 25.2%. Two point eight percent did not respond to the number of visit per class question.

ALTs were asked the reason they applied to participate in the JET Program. A little more than one third (39.0%) mentioned interest in "Japanese culture" as their reason to be an ALT. A little less than one third (29.3%) selected "others" as their reason. Under the open-ended question asking to specify what were "others," many of them (25 responses) implied "pursuing the excitement of being in a different culture" as the reason. Eight point five percent failed to answer their reason to be ALTs.

ALTs were asked if they found teaching English in Japan to be interesting. Many ALTs (84.1% with 7.3% not responding) considered it so.

In summary, relatively equal number of female and male ALTs participated in this study. Most of them are in their 20's. A little more than a half of ALTs are U.S. citizens. Most have bachelor's degree as the highest degree. Their experiences as ALTs are scattered over the range with three peculiar modes. The average number of schools visited is 1.5. About two fifths of both schools and classes are visited at least once a week by an ALT. Many became ALTs because they were interested in experiencing different cultures including Japanese culture.

Table 4.3. ALTs' Demographics.

Variable	Frequency
Gender	
female	38
male	44
Age	
20~24	34
25~29	35
Nationality	
U.S.	45
U.K.	18
Canada	13
Australia	6
Highest degree	
bachelor's	67
master's	14
doctorate	1
Presence of prior teaching experience	57
Presence of prior language teaching experience	22
No. of months of experience as ALT (range 2~60)	
7 months	12
19 months	11
30 months	9
No. of schools an ALT work at (range 1~10)	
1~4 schools (median 1.5)	77

Table 4.3. ALTs' Demographics (continuted).

Variable	Frequency
Frequency of ALT's visits per school	
at least one day per week	57
1 to 3 weeks per month	21
1 to 3 weeks per semester (about 16 weeks)	18
Frequency of ALT's visits per class	
at least one day per week	58
1 to 4 days per month	35
Reasons to be an ALT	
interest in Japanese culture	32
others	24
Most frequent answer in "others"	
Pursuing excitement by being in a different culture	25

Conversation Between JTE and ALT

JTEs were asked to what extent their communication with ALTs was effective. The results of questions concerning conversation between JTEs and ALTs are presented in Table 4.4.

About one fifth (20.1%) reported they could "always" communicate with ALTs effectively. About two thirds (64.7%) responded that they could "often" do so, and 12.2% perceived themselves as "rarely" communicating effectively with ALTs. Two point one percent did not respond to the question regarding their effectiveness in communicating with ALTs.

ALTs were asked to what extent JTEs' speaking ability was effective. About one third of ALTs (37.8%) reported they could "always" understand JTEs. A little more than a

half (51.2%) reported they could "often" understand JTEs. Two point four percent did not respond to the JTEs' speaking ability question.

Next, ALTs were asked to what extent JTEs' listening ability was effective. Many (79.2%) believed JTEs could either "always" or "often" understand what ALTs said to them. Some ALTs (14.6%) believed JTEs could "rarely" understand what ALTs said to them. Three point seven percent did not respond to the JTEs' listening ability question.

Under the question about ALTs' speech rate, a little more than a half of JTEs (54.2%) reported ALTs' speech rate was "slow." Very small portion (2.8%) reported it was "very slow." Five percent did not respond to the ALTs' speech rate question. From the ALTs' perspective, a little more than a half of ALTs (56.1%) reported their speech rate was "slow." Very small portion (2.4%) reported it as "very slow." Three point seven percent of ALTs did not respond to the their speech rate question.

JTEs were asked to rate ALTs' articulation. Many JTEs (71.8%) reported ALTs' articulation was "clear." A little less than one fifth (18.3%) reported ALTs' articulation was "very clear." Two point two percent did not respond to the ALTs' articulation question. Again the ALTs (76.8%) reported their articulation was "clear." A little less than one fifth (18.3%) reported their articulation was "very clear." Two point four percent did not respond to the articulation question.

In summary, many of both JTEs and ALTs report that they can "often" communicate with each other effectively. However, some ALTs questioned about JTEs' listening ability. Both JTEs and ALTs share the same perception on ALTs' speech rate and articulation.

Table 4.4. Conversation between JTEs and ALTs.

Extent to which JTEs and ALTs communicate effectively

	JTEs' perspective (speaking & listening)	ALTs' perspective (JTEs' speaking)	ALTs' perspective (JTEs' listening)
always	28	31	17
often	90	42	48
rarely	17	7	12

ALTs' speech rate when talking to JTEs

	JTEs' perspective	ALTs' perspective
very slow	4	2
slow	75	46

ALTs' articulation when talking to JTEs

	JTEs' perspective	ALTs' perspective
very clear	25	15
clear	101	63

The numbers are frequency.

Conversation Between ALT and Students

Both JTEs and ALTs were asked about students' willingness to talk to ALTs. The results of questions concerning conversation between ALTs and students are presented in Table 4.5.

A little more than one fifth of JTEs (22.3%) thought students talked to ALTs "quite a lot," and 59.0% reported students talked to ALTs "somewhat." Sixteen point five percent stated that students did "not" talk to ALTs "much." Two point two percent did not respond to the question concerning students' willingness to talk to ALTs. On the other hand, about two fifths of ALTs (42.7%) thought their students talked to them "quite a lot." The same percentage (42.7%) considered students talked to them "somewhat," and

12.2% reported students did "not" talk to them "much." Two point four percent did not respond to the question regarding students' willingness to talk to them.

About one fourth of JTEs (23.7%) thought ALTs spoke "very slowly" to the students, and 68.3% reported that ALTs spoke "slowly" to the students. Two point nine percent did not respond to the ALTs' speech rate question. To the contrary, a little less than a half of ALTs (47.6%) reported that they spoke "very slowly" to the students. Almost the same percentage (43.9%) stated that they spoke "slowly" to the students. Six point one percent did not respond to the speech rate question.

About two fifths of JTEs (41.0%) thought ALTs spoke "very clearly" to the students. About a half (53.2%) reported ALTs spoke "clearly" to the students. Two point two percent did not respond to the ALTs' articulation question. Similarly, about three fifths of ALTs (59.8%) considered they spoke "very clearly" to the students. A little more than one third (37.8%) thought they spoke "clearly" to the students. One point two percent did not respond to the articulation question.

In summary, ALTs believe students talk to them more often than JTEs believe they do. ALTs also perceive they speak more slowly and clearly than JTEs perceive they do.

Table 4.5. Conversation between ALTs and Students.

Variable	Frequency	Frequency
Extent to which students talk to ALTs		
	JTEs' perspective	ALTs' perspective
quite a lot	31	35
somewhat	82	35
ALTs' speech rate when talking to students		
	JTEs' perspective	ALTs' perspective
very slow	33	39
slow	95	36
ALTs' articulation when talking to students		
	JTEs' perspective	ALTs' perspective
very clear	57	49
clear	74	31

ALTs' Knowledge about Japanese Language and Culture

Japanese Language

JTEs were asked to what extent ALTs should be able to speak Japanese. The results of questions concerning ALTs' knowledge about Japanese language and culture are presented in Table 4.6.

A little less than one third of JTEs (27.3%) expected ALTs to be able to speak Japanese "quite a lot." Some JTEs (12.2%) expected ALTs "not" to be able to speak it "much." Three point six percent did not respond to the ALTs' use of Japanese language question.

ALTs were asked to what extent they believe they should be able to speak Japanese. About two fifths of ALTs (40.2%) believed they should be able to speak Japanese "quite

a lot." Eight point five percent thought they may "not" be able to speak it "much." Two point four percent did not respond to the their use of Japanese language question.

Japanese Culture

JTEs were asked to what extent ALTs should know Japan and Japanese culture. About one tenth of JTEs (10.1%) reported ALTs should know it "quite a lot." Many (83.5%) believed ALTs should know Japan and Japanese culture "somewhat." Two point nine percent did not respond to the ALTs' knowledge about Japan and its culture question.

ALTs were asked to what extent they knew Japan and Japanese culture. Many (40.2%) reported they knew them "quite a lot." Almost a half (48.8%) reported they knew them "somewhat." One point two percent did not respond to their knowledge about Japan and its culture question.

In summary, fewer numbers of JTEs had high expectation for the ability of ALTs to speak Japanese language. On the other hand, greater numbers of ALTs had high expectation about their ability of speaking Japanese. ALTs also believed that they knew Japan and Japanese culture more than JTEs believed ALTs were expected to do.

Table 4.6. ALTs' Knowledge about Japan and its Culture.

Variable	Frequency	Frequency
Extent to which ALTs should be able to speak Japanese		
	JTEs' perspective	ALTs' perspective
quite a lot	38	33
somewhat	77	39
Extent to which JTEs expect ALTs to know Japan and its culture		
quite a lot	14	
somehwat	116	
Extent to which ALTs report they know Japan and its culture		
quite a lot	33	
somewhat	40	

Research Question 1

To What Extent Are JTEs in Junior High Schools Interested in Teaching English as a Communication Skill?

The discussion in this section will include: JTEs' and ALTs' perception of teaching communicative English; knowledge of students' needs; willingness to talk about target cultures; use of teaching materials other than textbooks; experience in constructing their own materials; and the ALTs' perception about JTEs. The results of questions concerning Research Question 1 are presented in Table 4.8.

Most JTEs (96.4% with 1.4% not responding) believed communicative English should be taught. The problems JTEs perceived when they tried to teach communicative English included the presence of entrance examinations (45 responses), JTEs' lack of knowledge and/or ability as English teachers (28 responses), motivating students to learn English (19 responses), lack of teaching time (17 responses), inappropriate textbooks (15 responses),

and too many students per class (15 responses). Although only 17 responses reported that lack of teaching time was a problem, many JTEs (78.4% with 6.5% not responding) believed four hours per week was not enough to teach English. Under the question about what JTEs would add as extra activities if time allowed, JTEs were asked to rank order the available choices from 1 to 6, 1 being the first to be added. Then, the medians of each choice were calculated (see Table 4.7). JTEs seemed that they would want to add oral/aural conversational activities ("conversation": second in frequency, "speaking": second in frequency, and "listening": third in frequency). However, they were not enthusiastic about teaching "target cultures": fifth in frequency.

Table 4.7. Extra Activities JTEs Want to Add if They Have Extra Time

	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	Target culture	Conversation
Median	4.0	4.0	3.0	2.0	5.0	2.0

On the other hand, 58.5% of ALTs (with 12.2% not responding) reported JTEs were not trying to teach communicative English. Under the open-ended question asking ALTs the reasons JTEs did not try to teach communicative English, there were five major reasons ALTs reported why JTEs did not try to teach communicative English. They included: the presence of entrance examinations (53 responses), inappropriate textbooks that include grammar-centered contents and unnatural use of English (11 responses), JTEs' poor English proficiency (10 responses), JTEs' negative attitude towards communicative English (9 responses) and rigid curriculum/syllabus (8 responses).

Surprisingly, only about a half of JTEs (51.1% with 5% not responding) reported that they had learned how to teach communicative English. The most popular way of learning how to teach communicative English was "in seminars" (50 responses), followed

by "in lectureships" (13 responses), "from professional books" (10 responses), and "at universities abroad" (5 responses). Only 13 responses reported JTEs learned it in pre-service training programs in Japanese universities.

Many JTEs (79.9% with 5% not responding) thought they knew what their students wanted to learn in English classes. Those who answered that they did know what were students' needs were asked to state what were the specific students' needs. They believed most students wanted to learn English to be fluent communicators (101 responses), and to pass entrance examinations (29 responses). Sixty-nine point four percent of those who considered that they knew what were students' needs reported that they were striving to meet students' needs. The question concerning students' needs was not asked of ALTs.

Most JTEs (97.2% with 1.4% not responding) reported they had talked about target cultures to some extent. A little less than one fifth (18.0%) claimed that they "always" talk about the target cultures while 76.3% reported that they "often" talk about them. It was reported that JTEs' sources of cultural information was their own experience (85.9%), books (73.4%), TV programs (71.9%), and videos (38.1%).

About two fifths of ALTs (40.2%) reported JTEs "often" talked about target cultures. A little less than a half (47.6%) reported JTEs "rarely" talked about them. Four point nine percent did not respond to the question about JTEs' talking about target cultures.

About one third of JTEs (33.1% with 3.6% not responding) reported they had not used teaching materials other than textbooks. However, only 2.4% of ALTs (with 4.9% not responding) reported that JTEs had never used teaching materials other than textbooks.

Among JTEs who had used extra teaching materials, 48.9% reported they "often" used them, and 5.0% reported they "rarely" used them. Three point six percent did not respond to the question regarding their use of extra teaching materials. On the other hand, 43.9% of ALTs reported JTEs "often" used them. Almost the same percentage of ALTs (45.1%) thought JTEs "rarely" used them. Four point nine percent did not respond to the question regarding JTEs' use of extra teaching materials.

The popular teaching materials JTEs used other than textbooks were worksheets/reference books (49 responses), materials for communication activities (19 responses), listening materials (15 responses), reading materials (11 responses), and videos (7 responses).

About two thirds of JTEs (59.7% with 7.9% not responding) had made their own teaching materials. Most of the materials they made were worksheets (35 responses), skits (17 responses), games to teach English grammar (13 responses), reading materials (10 responses), picture cards (7 responses), and flash cards (6 responses).

In summary, most JTEs believe they should teach communicative English. Many know students' needs, and they perceive students' needs as learning communicative English and preparing for entrance examinations. However, more than a half of ALTs perceive JTEs as not trying to teach communicative English. There are some problems both JTEs and ALTs report that prevent JTEs from teaching communicative English. Prominent among these problems is the presence of entrance examinations and JTEs' lack of knowledge and/or ability as English teachers.

More JTEs believe they talk about target cultures than ALTs believe JTEs do. JTEs' sources of cultural information are their own experience and second-hand information such as books, TV programs, and videos. ALTs believe JTEs have used teaching materials other than textbooks more than JTEs believe they have. The most popular extra teaching materials JTEs have used is worksheets and/or reference books. More than a half of JTEs reports they have constructed their own teaching materials. The most popular extra teaching materials JTEs have constructed is worksheets.

Table 4.8. To What Extent are JTEs Interested in Teaching English as a Communicatve Means?

Variable	Frequency	Frequency
No. of JTEs believing CE should be taught	134	
No. of ALTs reporting JTEs are not trying to teach CE	48	
Problems when teaching CE		
	JTEs' perspective	ALTs' perspective
negative effects of entrance exams on teaching CE	45	53
JTEs' knowledge and/or ability as English teacher	28	10
motivation students to learn English	19	
lack of teaching time	17	
textbooks	15	11
No. of students/class	15	
JTEs' attutude toward CE		9
rigid curriculum/syllabus		8
No. of JTEs who have learned how to teach CE	71	
Places or occasions JTEs learned how to teach CE		
seminars	50	
lectureships	13	
Japanese universities (as pre-service training)	13	
professional books	10	
universities abroad	5	
No. of JTEs who know students' needs	111	
Students' needs from JTEs' perspective		
English for communication	101	
English for entrance exams	29	
Extent to which JTEs talk about target cultures (TC)		
	JTEs' perspective	ALTs' perspective
always	25	3
often	106	33
rarely	4	39

Table 4.8. To What Extent are JTEs Interested in Teaching English as Communicatve Means? (continued)

Variable	Frequency	Frequency
Source of JTEs' information on TC		
JTEs' own experience	119	
books	102	
TV programs	100	
videos	53	
Extent to which JTEs use extra teaching materials		
	JTEs' perspective	ALTs' perspective
always	13	3
often	69	36
rarely	7	37
never	46	2
Popular extra teaching materials for JTEs		
worksheets/reference books	49	
materials for communication activities	19	
listening materials	15	
reading materials	11	
videos	7	
No. of JTEs who have made their own teaching materials	83	
Teaching materials JTEs made		
worksheets	35	
skits	17	
games to teach English grammar	13	
reading materials	10	
picture cards	7	
flash cards	6	

Research Question 2

Are the JTEs Well Prepared to Teach English?

This section will include findings on the extent to which JTEs are well prepared for their classes and to what extent JTEs talk about how to do team teaching with ALTs. The results of questions concerning Research Question 2 are presented in Table 4.9.

Many JTEs (69.1 % with 2.95 not responding) considered themselves as "often" well prepared for classes and only 0.7% of them reported they are never well prepared. Under the open-ended part of the question regarding the reasons JTEs were "rarely" or "never" well prepared for lessons, all the responses indicated lack of time because of the presence of extra jobs at school.

On the contrary, many ALTs (76.8% with 2.4% not responding) believed JTEs are not "always" well prepared. Under the open-ended question concerning the reasons JTEs were not always well prepared for lessons, those who thought JTEs were not always well prepared gave three main reasons why they were not so. First, JTEs are too busy with other school responsibilities (64 responses). Second, they do not bother to prepare for classes (17 responses). Third, they were unwilling or unable to communicate with ALTs to plan for lessons (8 responses).

A little less than a half of JTEs (44.6% with 4.3% not responding) reported they "always" discuss how to conduct lessons with ALTs. A lower percentage (22.0% with 2.4% not responding) of ALTs felt that the JTEs "always" discussed how to conduct a lesson with them. A little less than one third (28.0%) of ALTs reported JTEs "rarely" discussed how to conduct lessons with them.

In summary, both JTEs and ALTs, perceive that JTEs are not "always" well prepared for lessons. They both report the most prominent reason for not "always" being well prepared is the problem of too many additional school responsibilities. JTEs generally believe they discuss how to conduct lessons with ALTs. However, fewer ALTs report they do not do so as they should do.

Table 4.9. Are the JTEs Well Prepared to Teach English?

Variable	Frequency	Frequency
Extent to which JTEs are well prepared for lessons		
	JTEs' perspective	ALTs' perspective
always	25	17
often	96	
rarely	13	
never	1	
Reasons JTEs can not prepare for lessons well		
	JTEs' perspective	ALTs' perspective
too busy with other school responsibilities	14	65
JTEs' not bothering to prepare for lessons		17
JTEs' unwillingness to plan for lessons with ALTs		8
Extent to which JTEs discuss how to conduct lessons with ALTs		
	JTEs' perspective	ALTs' perspective
always	62	18
often	67	37
rarely	4	23
never		2

Research Question 3

Do the JTEs Use Available Resources to Improve Themselves as English Teachers?

In this section, JTEs' willingness to improve themselves as English teachers, what prevents them from doing so, and what else they would want to learn will be discussed. The results of questions concerning Research Question 3 are presented in Table 4.10.

About two thirds (64.7% with 1.4% not responding) of JTEs reported they were trying to improve themselves as English teachers, and about the same number of ALTs (54.9% with 14.6% not responding) agreed that JTEs were doing so. JTEs seem to try to improve themselves as English teachers in terms of their oral/aural communication skills. Sixty-six of 139 JTEs listened to English recordings, 49 spoke in English, 43 read books concerning teaching methods, 42 read English books in general, 23 attended English conversation classes, and 22 practiced writing in English. Twenty-eight JTEs chose "others," adding what specifically they did to improve themselves as English teachers. The highest frequency count was reported as "attending seminars (11 responses); second was talking with ALTs (8 responses); third was watching/listening to English conversation programs on TV/on the radio (6 responses); fourth was traveling abroad (4 responses); and eleven other open-ended statements were given.

ALTs were asked what JTEs did to improve themselves as English teachers. What ALTs thought JTEs did to improve themselves included practicing speaking (24 responses), attending seminars (18 responses), listening to ALTs' advice (12 responses), studying to take English proficiency tests (9 responses), listening to English language recordings (6 responses), and trying new ideas of teaching (5 responses).

Forty-seven out of 139 JTEs (33.8%) reported they do not do anything to improve themselves as English teachers. Among the JTEs, most of them (97.9% with 0% not responding) reported they wanted to do something to improve themselves as English teachers. This meant that 47 JTEs did not do anything to improve themselves as English teachers, but would like to do something to improve. What prevented those JTEs from doing so included time constraint (37 responses), extra jobs at school (27 responses), family (9 responses), and money (4 responses).

Only 4.9% of ALTs reported JTEs did not do anything to improve themselves. They provided three reasons why JTEs did not do so. First, JTEs fall into routine (4 responses); second, they failed to treat English as a living language (3 responses) and, third, they did not take advantage of opportunities to improve their skills (3 responses).

JTEs reported that if JTEs had opportunities to learn, they would want to learn conversation (109 out of 139 responses), teaching methods (102 responses), and target cultures (75 responses).

In summary, a little more than a half of both JTEs and ALTs believe JTEs do things to improve themselves as English teachers. Both JTEs and ALTs report JTEs try to improve their conversational skills. However, JTEs' perspective on the reasons that they can not do more to improve themselves as English teachers is different from ALTs': JTEs gave "time constraints" and "extra jobs at school" as the major reasons whereas ALTs gave "JTEs' unwillingness" as the reason.

Table 4.10. Do JTEs Use Available Sources to Improve Themselves as English Teachers?

Variable	Frequency	Frequency
Do JTEs do something to improve themselves as English teachers?		
	JTEs' perspective	ALTs' perspective
yes	90	45
no	47	4
I do not know		21
What do JTEs do to improve themselves as English teachers?		
	JTEs' perspective	ALTs' perspective
practice listening	66	6
practice speaking	49	24
read books (teaching methods)	43	
read English books in general	42	
learn English conversation	23	
practice writing	22	
attend seminars	11	18
talk with ALTs	8	
watch/listen to English conversation programs on TV/on the radio	6	
listen to ALTs' advices		12
study for English proficiency tests		9
try new ideas of teaching		5
Reasons JTEs do not do anything to improve themseves as English teachers		
	JTEs' perspective	ALTs' perspective
time constraint	37	
extra jobs at school	27	
family	9	
money	4	
JTEs' falling into routine		4
JTEs' failing to treat English as living language		3
not attending opportunities to improve their skills		3
What would JTEs want to learn if they had opportunities?		
English conversation	109	
teaching methods	102	
target cultures	75	

Research Question 4

How Do the JTEs Use ALTs to Teach English More Effectively?

In this section, how JTEs use ALTs from both JTEs' and ALTs' perspectives will be discussed. The results of questions concerning Research Question 4 are presented in Table 4.11.

Many JTEs use ALTs for modeling conversation, reading and pronunciation (82 responses), for communication activities, that is, mostly games (64 responses), for introducing target cultures (45 responses), for team teaching (28 responses), and for correcting students' English (13 responses).

ALTs perceived themselves as being used as a model for conversation, reading and pronunciation (65 responses), as a game host (35 responses), as a resource person to introduce her/his culture (24 responses), as a partner of team teaching (17 responses), and as a person who corrects students' performance both writing and speaking (13 responses).

In summary, what JTEs ask ALTs to do is exactly the same as what ALTs see themselves as doing; modeling, implementing games, talking about target cultures, conducting team teaching, and correcting students' English.

Table 4.11. How Do the JTEs Use ALTs to Teach English?

Variable	Frequency JTEs' perspective	Frequency ALTs' perspective
Model for conversation, reading and pronunciation	82	65
Communication activities (a game host)	64	35
Introduction of target cultures	45	24
Team teaching	28	17
Correction of students' English	13	13

General Perspectives of JTEs and ALTs on English Education in Japan

JTEs' Perspectives

One hundred and eighty-four responses were expressed and categorized into five themes as follows: the problems associated with English education system in Japan; the problems associated with Japanese students; the problems associated with the difficulty faced by Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs); the problems dealing with teaching materials and facilities; and the problems concerning Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs). The results of questions concerning JTEs' perspectives on English education in Japan are presented in Table 4.12.

Regarding the problems associated with English education system in Japan, the most popular opinion was the problem created by the presence of entrance examinations (40 responses). Regarding the problems associated with Japanese students, many JTEs (30 responses) were concerned about the students' lack of motivation to learn English. Regarding the problems associated with the difficulty JTEs have, 24 responses in this group centered upon JTEs' lack of time. They reported that there were too many areas to cover in allocated time, and there were too many extra jobs besides teaching and preparing for classes in the school. Regarding the problems dealing with teaching

materials and facilities, a little more than a half of them (7 responses) reported that the textbooks were difficult to use. Regarding the problems concerning ALTs, two responses expressed the desire for more visits by ALTs.

Table 4.12. Problems on English Education in Japan from JTEs' Perception.

Problems	No. of responses
English education system in Japan	
Negative effects of entrance examinations on teaching CE	40
Necessity of learning teaching methods	8
Instruction and assessment of conversational skills	5
Assessment procedures in general	3
Necessity of earlier English education	3
How to deal with slow learners	1
Taking root of homeworks	1
Necessity of separate English conversation classes	1
How to conduct reading tests	1
Japanese junior high school students	
How to motivate students to learn English	30
How to deal with individual differences of students in knowledge and ability	17
Too many students in one class	8
Students' lack of free time	5
Students' inability to associate English pronunciation and its spelling	3
Problems Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) have	
JTEs' lack of time	24
JTEs' necessity to improve themselves as English teachers	13
JTEs' lack of experience in target cultures/in communicating in English	3
JTEs' ways of thinking on English education differe from ALTs'.	1
Human relationship among JTEs	1
Teaching materials and facilities	
Quality of textbooks (lack of quality)	7
Necessity of a classroom for English language instruction	4
Lack of facilities (computers/video etc.)	2
Assistant language teachers (ALTs)	
Frequency of ALTs' visit	2
Necessity to improve ALTs' quality	1
Total	184

ALTs' Perspectives

Sixty-six responses were expressed, and are categorized into five themes: the problems associated with the system of teaching English in Japan, the problems associated with JTEs, the problems dealing with ALTs' own situation, the problems associated with teaching materials and facilities, and concerns about Japanese students. The results of questions concerning ALTs' perspectives on English education in Japan are presented in Table 4.13.

Regarding the problems associated with the system of teaching English in Japan, about a half of these (15 responses) reported inconsistency between testing system and goals of English education. Regarding the problems associated with JTEs, eight were critical of the teaching situation to which the JTEs were assigned. Regarding the problems dealing with ALTs' own situation, four felt that they could have contributed more to the success in teaching English in Japan if their opinions and ideas would have been taken more seriously. Regarding the problems associated with teaching materials and facilities, four registered complaints about textbooks being unrealistic. Regarding the problems concerning Japanese students, each of the three responses was unique.

Table 4.13. Problems on English Education in Japan from ALTs' Perception.

Problems	No. of responses
English education system in Japan	
Inconsistency in English education(testing system and goals)	15
Improper age to start English education	7
Compulsory English education	6
Teacher's colleges should change their ways of training future teachers.	1
Schools should have English clubs.	1
Effective teacing in US did not work in Japan	1
Japanese teachers of English (JTEs)	
Bad teaching situation for JTEs	8
JTEs need to improve their English.	5
JTEs need to learn how to use ALTs effectively.	4
JTEs should teach English creatively.	1
Assistant language teachers (ALTs)	
ALTs have a lot to say concerning English education in Japan, but Japanese tradition would not let them speak out.	4
Some Japanese benefits ALTs.	3
ALTs' communication ability should be checked when they are hired.	1
JET Program is useless.	1
Teaching materials and facilities	
Not good textbooks	4
Language labs should be used.	1
Japanese junior high school students	
No time for students to review	1
In Japan, understanding the nature of the students is more meaningful than being well versed with teaching methodology.	1
Even after 3 years of English education, students have problems producing both spoken and written forms of English.	1
Total	66

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the results of the questionnaires for JTEs and ALTs were summarized and presented. The information gives us ideas about both JTEs and ALTs, what kind of attitudes they have toward English education in Japan, and what kind of problems they have to implement communicative English teaching.

As for JTEs' demographics, they have experience of traveling abroad and are interested in future travel abroad. They have teaching experience of 10 years on average. Their average class size is 34.5 students. Their teaching hours have 4 modes: 4, 12, 16, and 20 hours per week. Many have a level of 2.5 or above on STEP.

As for ALTs' demographics, they are in their 20's. A little more than a half came from the United States. Most have their bachelor's degree as the highest degree. A few have prior language teaching experience. Their experience as ALTs has three modes: 7, 19, and 30 months. The average number of schools one ALT is assigned is 1.5 schools. The number of the schools visited by ALTs at least once a week was 41%. Almost the same percentage of classes were visited by ALTs at least once a week. The reason why they participated in JTE Program is interest in different cultures including Japanese culture.

Regarding attitude toward English education in Japan, JTEs are interested in teaching English as a means of communication. However, the presence of entrance examinations prevents them from teaching communicative English. They also report inappropriate education they have received to be English teachers. ALTs believe JTEs are not teaching

communicative English. They perceive the presence of entrance examinations as the reason JTEs can not teach it.

Regarding JTEs' preparation for lessons, few JTEs and ALTs report that JTEs are "always" well prepared for their lessons. The main reason why JTEs can not be well prepared is their lack of time.

Regarding JTEs' will to improve themselves as English teachers, many JTEs and ALTs report that JTEs are trying to improve themselves, especially in their oral/aural communication skills. JTEs report the main reason why they can not do anything to improve themselves as lack of time. On the contrary, ALTs report that the reason is JTEs' unwillingness to do so.

Regarding JTEs' use of ALTs, both JTEs and ALTs report exactly the same use of ALTs.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

There are three sections in this chapter: limitations of the study, conclusions of this study, and recommendations. Limitations of the study have three parts: questionnaire development, sampling limitations, and generalizability of this study. Conclusions are drawn by answering the four research questions. Recommendations are given based both the results of this research project and upon the experiences of this researcher. They are presented under the following headings: how to synchronize educational goals of JTEs and ALTs, teacher education, JTEs' lack of time, effective use of ALTs, and reevaluation of desirability of JET Program.

Limitations of Study

The limitations that should be recognized in this study deal with questionnaire development, sampling limitations, and the generalizability of this study.

Questionnaire Development

This research project was conducted under a severe time constraint. The spring break for junior high schools in Japan starts at the end of March, and frequently this is the time when some teachers move from one school to another. JTEs who have more than three

years of teaching experience at one school are sometimes required to move to another school. If the questionnaire had been delayed into March and returned after April, when Japanese junior high schools start a new school year, several teachers would have been excluded from this study. This researcher did not want those JTEs who would move to lose their opportunity to participating in this study. An additional factor is that February is one of the busiest months for JTEs in junior high schools. Therefore, it was essential for this researcher to send the questionnaires so as to reach JTEs in January.

A second limitation was budget. The questionnaires were sent to Japan from the United States. The number of schools was 201. This expense was substantial, but individual mailings to each school would have been prohibitive.

Given these time and budget constraints, a pilot study was not used. Instead, the questionnaire for JTEs was scrutinized by two Japanese college personnel, and the questionnaire for ALTs was reviewed by a former ALT. While those procedures helped to make a more effective questionnaire, it did not help to anticipate four problems related to the questionnaires.

Sampling Limitations

For this study, a stratified sampling would have been the preferable procedure. However, stratified or true random sampling techniques could not be used because the prefecture administration office of compulsory education in Kumamoto does not have the detailed information about the teachers. For example, they do not collect information about such things as the number or gender of JTEs in the junior high schools. Given that lack of information, an alternative method was used to try to get a representative sample.

The principals of each junior high school in Kumamoto were asked to select one JTE from their school to participate in this study. Unfortunately, this technique provided a sample which the findings show was skewed toward younger teachers. This researcher speculates that younger JTEs were chosen because the principal may have thought a younger teacher would answer the questionnaire more positively, thereby showing an enthusiastic attitude about English in their school. Another possible explanation for the skewed result is that the younger teachers were chosen because, when the principals first asked an older JTE, they were unwilling to participate. These older JTE may have been too busy in these last months of the school year so they asked a younger JTE to fill out the questionnaire for her/him.

Generalizability

The subjects of this study were selected from all the JTEs working at junior high schools in Kumamoto. As such, the results of this study can only be applied with confidence to English teachers in junior high schools in Kumamoto. If the results of this study should be applied in other prefectures, great caution would have to be exercised.

Conclusions

RQ1 To What Extent Are Japanese Teachers of English in Junior High Schools Interested in Teaching English as a Communication Skill?

Many JTEs at junior high schools in Kumamoto seem to be interested in teaching English as communication skill. In fact, they reported that they would add oral/aural conversational activities if there were more time allocated for English language. In

addition, many JTEs perceive that students need to become fluent in communication aspects of English. They also report that they believed that they talk about target cultures in classes.

However, what JTEs believe and what ALTs believe JTEs did seem to be somewhat different. Many ALTs report that JTEs are not trying to teach communicative English. Many ALTs have a negative perspective on the amount of the JTEs' talk about target cultures in classes. Besides, both JTEs and ALTs report that the extra teaching materials JTEs use emphasize English grammar and vocabulary.

Both JTEs and ALTs agree that the presence of the Senior High School Entrance Examinations and JTEs' lack of knowledge and ability as English teachers are the two main obstacles that discourage communicative English teaching.

Senior High School Entrance Examinations. As reported in Chapter 4, both JTEs and ALTs agree that the largest obstacle is the presence of the Senior High School Entrance Examinations. The examinations force JTEs to concentrate mainly on teaching English grammar and vocabulary as contained in the textbooks. Some JTEs report they would be criticized if they did not teach the whole contents of the textbooks. Many extra teaching materials JTEs use are the ones that reinforce students' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary because they believe that they have no choice but teach English for the examinations.

ALTs did not take such a resolute stand. They think the examinations can and should be changed to be more pragmatic or should be totally abolished. They believe that the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture (JMESC) should be the agency to

implement such change. Their plan is not that simple. According to a former official within the JMESC, that organization has been trying for some time to change English education system to be more communication-oriented, but schools would not allow change in the system (Shiraishi, personal communication, 1999).

When ALTs do not recognize the situation, they may give suggestions that JTEs can not put into practice. The JTEs must ignore the ALTs' ideas and opinions. Eventually, ALTs become frustrated and may cease to speak up. In fact, ALTs in general see themselves as on the lowest hierarchical order in the English education system.

JTEs' Lack of Knowledge and Ability as English Teachers. Even if the examinations were changed to be more communication-oriented, one could still ask whether JTEs have the necessary knowledge and ability in English language. Both JTEs and ALTs report that JTEs' lack of knowledge and ability in English language is the second big obstacle to teaching communicative English. The finding showed that JTEs ranked this problem as second and ALTs ranked it as third. This topic of teachers' knowledge base will be discussed under these sub topics: JTEs' English language proficiency, their knowledge of target cultures, and pre- and in-service teacher education.

First, JTEs' English proficiency will be discussed. Sixty-three out of 139 JTEs (45.3%) report they obtained a level of 2.5 or above on STEP (Society for Testing English Proficiency). Therefore, it can be claimed that JTEs in general show high proficiency in English. However, this researcher speculates that STEP may not measure authentic use of spoken English, but rather like the Senior High School Entrance Examinations measures grammar and vocabulary. This would mean that JTEs have

acquired linguistic competence, but still lack the necessary communicative competence to teach communicative English. Therefore, even with high test scores, JTEs see their English proficiency as an obstacle to teach communicative English.

A finding, which is inconsistent with the foregoing, is that many JTEs and ALTs reported they can either "always" or "often" communicate effectively in English with each other. Their statements would be contrary to the idea that the communication ability is the reason for not teaching communicative English. This researcher speculates on an explanation for this seeming contradiction by noting that the ALTs may frequently use foreigner talk when they converse with JTEs. Foreigner talk is the special ways native speakers talk to foreigners. Its characteristics are simple grammar, clear pronunciation, and slow speech rate. This may make it easier for JTEs to understand ALTs. Besides, ALTs may be accustomed to JTEs' spoken English. Therefore, both JTEs and ALTs report that they can communicate effectively, but still may consider the JTEs' ability as insufficient to teach communicative English.

Next, JTEs' knowledge of target cultures was scrutinized as well. Here again, we see differences in perceptions between JTEs and ALTs. While most JTEs believe they regularly talk about target cultures, many ALTs report that JTEs "rarely" talk about target cultures. This discrepancy in perspectives may come from difference of their sources of information.

JTEs talk about target cultures referring to their own experience and second hand information from books, TV programs, and videos. However, their sources of the information may not be rich. The data indicate that most JTEs have less than 2 months

experience staying in other countries. This means that JTEs' cultural information is likely to be superficial or limited in scope.

On the other hand, ALTs' cultural information is usually rooted to their every day lives in their native cultures. While their information may be region specific, it still richly reflects their native cultures. Therefore, ALTs may consider JTEs' cultural information not significant. Some JTEs did note on question 6 that JTEs did not have confidence to talk about the target cultures because of their lack of experience.

The questions dealing with knowledge and ability in English raise questions on how the JTEs were trained. The teacher education system in Japan is problematic. A little more than a half of JTEs reports that they have learned how to teach communicative English. Only a few, however, learned it in pre-service training programs at Japanese universities. Many learned what they know by attending seminars, lectureships, and/or by reading professional writings as in-service teachers. The problem is that those experiences are not enough. Often the seminars and lectureships are one-shot programs, and reading professional writings only provides them with theory but no practice.

RQ2 Are the JTEs Well Prepared to Teach English?

The question of how well the JTEs prepare for their teaching will be discussed in two ways. First will be the idea of how well the JTEs prepare, and second will be the JTEs' preparation for lessons as a team teacher with ALTs. The findings are that, in general, a few JTEs consider themselves as "always" well prepared for lessons. A similar low percentage of ALTs considers that JTEs were "always" well prepared. Some JTEs explain that they can not "always" be well prepared because they are too busy with extra

jobs at school, such as prevention of juvenile delinquency. Some ALTs also report that JTEs are too busy, but others believe that the JTEs do not prepare well because they do not bother to do so, or they are unwilling or unable to do so.

This researchers' observation is that JTEs in general have many extra jobs at school. These jobs consume much of their time and energy. As a result, they have less personal resources available to prepare for lessons. This interpretation would explain the response ALTs have given on question #2, b related to JTEs' lack of time.

On the second aspect, the preparation for team teaching, JTEs believe that they regularly discuss how to conduct lessons with ALTs. ALTs, however, do not agree. Again, it is possible to speculate on an explanation for this discrepancy as being explained by JTEs' lack of time and JTEs' English conversation skills. The explanation was discussed earlier in this section. A second explanation has also been addressed. While JTEs may have sufficient proficiency in English grammar and vocabulary, they feel it is insufficient to discuss in details how to conduct lessons with ALTs. Many ALTs report that they can understand what JTEs say to them, but they are not sure if JTEs understand what they are saying. This may indicate need for improvement in JTEs' listening skill more than speaking skill.

RQ3 Do the JTEs Use Available Resources to Improve Themselves as English Teachers?

Many JTEs try to improve themselves as English teachers, and many ALTs perceive JTEs as trying to do so. It seems that JTEs would like to improve their oral/aural communication skills. Some report they do not do anything to improve themselves as

English teachers. Those who do little to improve again give as their major reasons time constraint and extra jobs at school.

This researcher believes there is one more thing that prevents JTEs from taking opportunities to improve themselves, that being, the geographical distributions of JTEs. Many JTEs report they would like to attend English conversation classes, but live in remote areas and therefore cannot attend

RQ4 How Do the JTEs Use Assistant Language Teachers to Teach English More Effectively?

JTEs report that they use ALTs for modeling, communication activities (mostly games), teaching target cultures, team teaching, and correction of students' mistakes. ALTs for the most part confirm what JTEs report. In the view of the researcher, these are routine tasks that waste the ALT as a resource. Most of those tasks could be accomplished by well educated JTEs. It seems many JTEs think they are forced to accept ALTs, but they do not know how to use them more effectively.

Many ALTs report that they found that teaching English in Japan was interesting. Does this mean ALTs really enjoy teaching English in Japanese junior high schools? If the question was put in a different form such as "Do you wish to continue the job as an ALT?," this researcher speculates many ALTs might say, "No." In fact, some ALTs see themselves being used in ways which might be considered negative. They see themselves "as a reference tool," "doing nothing but standing around," "a warm-up tool," "a wall fixture," "sidekick in planning lessons," and "an accessory/decoration (a "performing monkey")."

Are ALTs really welcome to junior high schools? This researcher believes that ALTs provide students opportunities to learn first hand information about the target cultures and people. However, it is doubtful if many JTEs really feel the necessity of having native speakers in their language classes.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, JTEs are generally interested in teaching English as a communication skill. However, JTEs seem to have four main problems when they try to teach communicative English. They are the presence of entrance examinations, JTEs' lack of knowledge and ability as English teachers, JTEs' lack of time, and JTEs' inability to use ALTs effectively. If JTEs could only concentrate on teaching English for entrance examinations, they would feel comfortable. ALTs seem to be the ones who push JTEs to implement communicative English teaching. Some JTEs may appreciate the presence of ALTs, but others do not feel the necessity of having native speakers in their language.

Recommendations

How to Synchronize Educational Goals of JTEs and ALTs

In order to move toward more communication-oriented English teaching, and still deal with entrance examinations, this researcher suggests both JTEs and ALTs accept the same educational goal, that is, fusion of teaching English grammar and vocabulary with English conversation. To achieve this, JTEs should become more flexible in terms of their teaching practices. They should also try some new, unfamiliar ideas. If they did try such experiments, they would discover that they can teach grammar and vocabulary through communication.

The ALTs must learn and understand the situation to which JTEs are assigned. With such understanding, they will see more clearly what they can do to improve the situation. Most of all, both JTEs and ALTs need more conversation to understand each other. Without these efforts, greater emphasis on communicative English is unlikely to occur.

Teacher Education

Both JTEs and ALTs may need better education to achieve the synthesis of JTEs' and ALTs' educational goals. This challenge will be discussed for both pre-service and in-service teacher education.

Pre-Service Teacher Education for JTEs. C. M. Browne and M. Wada (1998) have written about the importance of pre-service training. They conducted a study on high school English teachers in Chiba, a prefecture located near Tokyo. They found that many high school English teachers in Chiba majored in English literature and reported that most literature majors considered themselves as "not adequately prepared in college for their duties as English teachers." By comparison, many of those who majored in TESL/TEFL considered themselves as adequately trained.

They also reported that, "Prospective English teachers studying in literature departments were not required to take any additional courses in second language acquisition theory, ESL methodology and techniques, or testing."

If the facts above are generalizable to JTEs in junior high schools in Kumamoto, pre-service teacher education should include TESL/TEFL along with courses that develop prospective JTEs' communicative English proficiency, especially listening skill.

The challenge of adding these courses to the existing curriculum of English literature departments would be that many of the programs are just two years in length. This is not sufficient to cover literature and TEFL. This researcher suggests English literature departments should create a new TEFL program specifically designed to educate prospective English teachers. Those who would like to be English teachers could choose these programs.

In-Service Teacher Education for JTEs. Some JTEs report that they have little access to in-service teacher education because of their geographical distributions. This researcher suggests the establishment of a "travelling professor system." Under this system, the professors fully qualified in TESL/TEFL would visit remote areas at regular intervals to discuss the problems JTEs are having. They would also organize "coaching teams" so that JTEs could teach and learn from each other.

According to Joyce (1996), "coaching" is a program where teachers "observe one another's teaching and learn from watching one another and the students" (p 382). Coaches help each other by reflecting on their teaching. They work with each other to check their perceptions, share their frustrations and successes, and informally think through mutual problems.

Coaching also provides an opportunity to learn new methods. As Joyce (1983) asserts in the video tape titled "The Concept of Coaching," only 5% of the teachers who learned a new model of teaching, even if they observe it as many as 15 to 20 times are able to transfer their knowledge to daily practice. On the other hand, when team coaching over extended period of time was added to the theory, demonstrations, practice and feedback,

90% of teachers transferred their knowledge to practice and sustained the ability to use the model in their classroom.

Pre-Service Teacher Education for ALTs. While ALTs receive some orientation and in-service training as part of their introduction to teaching in Japan, this researcher would like to emphasize the necessity of expanded education of ALTs as well. Not very many ALTs have TESL/TEFL training prior to employment. Besides, few have prior language teaching experience. Moreover, the most popular reason given by ALTs for entering the program is interest in different "culture," and not "teaching English in Japan." It can be concluded from ALTs' responses that many ALTs are not well equipped to help with teaching English in Japan prior to arrival.

This researcher believes ALTs should have an understanding of what language teaching is. However, it may be unrealistic to hope to hire only ALTs who have majors in TESL/TEFL. Therefore, this researcher suggests developing a three-month intensive pre-service program for new and untrained ALTs. The contents of the program should be a brief introduction to TESL/TEFL, and a systematic explanation of the conditions of English education in Japan. Because this researcher believes that all foreign/second language teachers should have an experience of learning a foreign/second language themselves, ALTs should also be given an introduction to Japanese language. They might also be introduced to peer coaching.

There is, however, a timing problem with a plan to spend three months for pre-serving ALTs. Because the current minimum contract for ALTs is one year, ALTs would only teach about 9 months. To solve this problem, the researcher suggests that the minimum

contract should be two years. The training program should start in June and end in August. ALTs could start working as soon as the second semester begins in September. Their contract would expire at the end of July and ALTs would be in Japan approximately two years and two months.

In-Service Teacher Education for ALTs. This researcher believes that ALTs also need on going peer coaching to improve their skills and to prevent them from falling into routines. This researcher talked to some ALTs in Japan, and found that many were enthusiastic about their jobs when they first arrived in Japan. As time went by, however, they had to face the realities of Japanese education system, and fell into patterns of repetition and lower motivation.

To prevent this situation, this researcher suggests ALTs be organized into coaching teams based upon proximity so they can gather easily. In coaching teams, they should periodically gather and talk about their problems in ways to seek solutions. They should also be scheduled to observe each other's lessons and to discuss the lessons immediately afterwards. There is, however, a problem with this plan. In the process of constructing a lesson plan for a lesson to be observed, ALTs are supposed to be supervised by their JTEs. Therefore, ALTs are not free to demonstrate any lessons they might wish to design.

This researcher also suggests that ALTs continue their learning Japanese language throughout their stay in country. Their board of education should help them find volunteers to be conversation partners and to teach them Japanese. It would be preferable if the persons would come from outside the school. Teachers are already very busy and

are not able to take on extra assignments. In addition, outside persons would provide fresh perspective and it would be easier for ALTs to talk about school-related matters because the persons have no relationship to the school.

JTEs' Lack of Time

It is commonly believed that much of JTEs' professional time is spent on prevention of juvenile delinquency and coaching after-school club activities. It is common practice that the principal of the school is blamed if her/his students misbehave. Therefore, teachers are directed to spend much time and energy to try to prevent misbehavior. Teachers try to influence students' out-look and behavior. They try to regulate such things as the length, color and style of their hair and their clothes. They believe that students with strange appearances are sure to misbehave. In fact, some ALTs have described this situation as if JTEs were trying to raise the children at school. Neither principals nor teachers should be blamed for their students' misbehavior. Parents must accept greater responsibility, so that teachers can save their time and energy to prepare for lessons and improving themselves as teachers.

Some teachers coach their assigned clubs until eight in the evening. They often take students to some places for competitions on Sundays. It is too demanding for a person to be a good coach while being a well-prepared teacher. For extra curricular activities, coaches should be hired to instruct students' club activities. Expert coaches know much better than amateurs efficient and safe ways to yield the same results in these programs.

Effective Use of ALTs

As discussed earlier, ALTs do not seem to be used effectively in junior high schools in Kumamoto. Most of what they do can be done by well trained JTEs. If ALTs are to be used most effectively in Japan, this researcher believes it would be a good idea to use ALTs in elementary schools. English education in Japan should start in elementary schools. There are some model schools trying out teaching English at elementary school level. If this were the case, pragmatic use of spoken English should be taught in elementary schools and it could be done with the help of ALTs.

Entrance Examination Considerations. As entrance examinations are considered to be the most persistent obstacle in achieving communicative English teaching in junior high schools, if there were no entrance examinations, as is true after elementary school, it would be easier to teach communicative English. Fortunately, there are few entrance examinations for junior high schools at the end of elementary school. At the elementary level, both JTEs and ALTs would be able to pursue the same educational goal, that is, to construct communication-oriented lessons.

This researcher suggests that ALTs teach one of the subject areas preferably "Seikatsu-ka," that is a combination of social studies and science, in English. In this way, ALTs can provide information from their unique perspectives on Japan and Japanese culture, and compare and contrast them with their own culture. In addition, students would have a chance to learn natural English rather than by just learning English language in a separated subject and therefore in an unnatural way. Students gain greater English proficiency when something else is learned through English.

Psychomotor Considerations. There are some English language phonemes that Japanese language lacks. Japanese learners of English are often self-conscious about them, and this may prohibit them from speaking out. There is one advantage of starting language education at an early age. According to Krashen and Terrell (1983), acquisition of native-like pronunciation is an advantage of starting language learning before puberty. This means that elementary school students should be exposed to rich input from ALTs so that they may be able to acquire native-like pronunciation.

Affective Considerations. According to Brown (1994) children begins to acquire certain attitudes toward a target language, the people who speak it, and their culture by the time they reach school age. English education in Japan starts about onset of puberty which is the time when students may have some kind of prejudice toward other languages, the people who speak them, and their cultures. This negative attitude toward target languages and cultures affects the success in learning the languages.

This researcher believes that positive attitudes are essential. It is recommended to implant positive attitudes toward a target language, the people who speak it, and their culture as early as possible. This researcher believes this can be done by ALTs through talking with their students in elementary schools.

Reevaluation of Desirability of JET Program

If the synthesis of JTEs' and ALTs' educational goals proved to be impossible and if the use of ALTs in elementary schools were to be unworkable, an alternative would be to extinguish the JTE Program and use the budget for reeducating JTEs.

This researcher suggests that a program could be developed to educate JTEs. In this program, JTEs should be sent to English speaking countries for at least one year following three years of teaching English. This researcher believes it takes at least three years to learn basic knowledge by actual teaching. With that level of teaching experience, teachers understand what is language teaching and what they should do to teach English in Japan.

JTEs should have at least two tasks to complete during their foreign experience. First, they should attend at least one regular undergraduate class per semester/quarter as non-degree students. What class they attend would be arbitrary. However, they should be required to report what grade they obtained.

Second, they should plan and implement at least a two-day trip per school break. In order to do so, they should either buy or borrow a car and do all that is necessary to negotiate a trip. They should make reservations for lodging, buy gasoline, and go to restaurants. They may encounter some problems, and they themselves should solve the problems without support of native speakers. These experiences will give them confidence to speak in English and first-hand knowledge with which to talk about the target culture they have experienced. This program will also allow them to recognize the importance of communicative English

After ten years, JTEs who had participated in the program but who wish to do it again would have an opportunity to do so. However, they must pick another country for their second English language experience abroad. Those who wish to do it again are supposed to reserve some amount of money per month so that they pay part of the cost themselves. In this way, the program could be offered to even more teachers. Some financial support

should be supplied by either the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture (JMESC) or the Board of Education for this program.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the limitations of this study, conclusion, and recommendations were discussed. Under the limitations of this study, the importance of a pilot study, sampling limitation, and generalization problems of this study were acknowledged.

Under Conclusions, the four research questions were answered. First, JTEs in junior high schools in Kumamoto generally would like to teach communicative English. However, the presence of the Senior High School Entrance Examinations and JTEs' lack of knowledge and ability as English teachers prevent them from teaching communicative English. Second, JTEs' lack of time prevents them from preparing well for their lessons. JTEs' lack of time and their poor English conversation skills prevent them from discussing how to conduct team-taught lessons with ALTs. Third, JTEs' lack of time and their geographical distributions prevent them from attending opportunities to improve themselves as English teachers. Fourth, ALTs are not used effectively. What they are usually assigned to do could be done by well trained JTEs.

Under Recommendations, five suggestions were made. First, educational goals of JTEs and ALTs should be synchronized. Second, teacher education system for JTEs and ALTs should be changed. Third, the main causes of JTEs' chronicle lack of time, prevention of juvenile delinquency and supervising extra curricular activities should be taken care of by parents and full time coaches respectively. Fourth, ALTs should be used in elementary schools if they are not used effectively in junior high schools. Fifth, if

these changes are not possible, JET Program should be extinguished, and the funds used to provide rich experiences for JTEs by sending them to English speaking countries for at least one year.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The Cover Letter for Principals

APPENDIX A: The Cover Letter for Principals

February 2, 1999

Name of principal
Name of school
Address

The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology has been emphasizing communicative aspect of English for more than a decade. Unfortunately, many of our students can not use English as a means of communication even after 3 years of instruction. Most of us, as practitioners have not yet found the way to solve this problem. There must be some things that have prevented us from doing so. This study is designed to identify the problems practitioners have experienced so that we may be able to tackle the problems.

All the public junior high schools in Kumamoto are asked to participate in this study. Your participation in this study is very important. Please ask one of the Japanese teachers of English and the Assistant Language Teacher to fill out the questionnaires. The Japanese teacher of English who is asked to fill out the questionnaire should have experience of teaching at least seventh, eighth, and ninth graders at your school. The information will ultimately be used to write Master's Thesis. Responses are anonymous and no individual or school will be identified in the final report. The purpose of the number on the return envelop is only to check your school's name off of the mailing list when your questionnaires are returned. You may receive a summary of results by writing "copy of results requested" on the back of the return envelop, and printing your school's name and address below it. Please do not put this information on the questionnaires themselves.

I would be most happy to answer any questions you might have. Please write or call. The telephone number in US is (406) 587-8093.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Makito Kuroda
Montana State University Graduate Student

APPENDIX B

First Follow Up Post Card

APPENDIX B: First Follow Up Post Card

February 11, 1999

Last week, a questionnaire seeking the opinions of a Japanese Teacher of English (JTE) and an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) about English education in Kumamoto was mailed to you.

If you have already completed and returned it to us, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. Inclusion of your English teachers in this study is extremely important for obtaining representative opinions from teachers in Kumamoto.

If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaires, please contact me right now, and I will get another one in the mail to you today.

Phone: (406) 587-8093 in US
E-mail: Makitok@montana.edu

Sincerely,

Makito Kuroda
Montana State University Graduate Student

APPENDIX C

The Cover Letter of Second Follow Up for Principals

APPENDIX C: The Cover Letter of Second Follow Up for Principals

March 5, 1999

Name of principal
Name of school
Address

About three weeks ago, I wrote to you seeking the opinions of a Japanese Teacher of English (JTE) and an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) about English education in Kumamoto. As of today, we have not yet received your complete questionnaires.

It is commonly believed that teaching English as a communication skills is very important. However, it seems that English education has not yet been changed toward that direction. There must be some problems that hinder teaching communicative English. The purpose of these questionnaires is to reveal the problems JTEs and ALTs have experienced so that something may be done to improve the situation.

I am writing to you again because of the significance each questionnaire has to the value of this study. All junior high schools in Kumamoto were asked to participate so that a representative opinion of English teachers in Kumamotò would be obtained. In order to do so, your teachers' input is crucial.

In the event that your questionnaires have been misplaced, a replacement is enclosed. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Makito Kuroda
Montana State University Graduate Student

APPENDIX D

Questionnaire for JTEs

APPENDIX D: Questionnaire for JTEs

QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING TEACHING ENGLISH AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

(for a Japanese Teacher of English)

I NEED YOUR HELP! The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology has been emphasizing Communicative Language Teaching(CLT) to teach English for more than two decades. By CLT, we mean the teaching of language for dealing with information gaps(understanding) in authentic life like situations in both written and spoken forms. Unfortunately our students frequently can not use English as a means of communication even after three years of instruction. Most of us, as practitioners have been trying but have not found a way to solve this problem. There must be some things that have prevented us from doing so. This study is designed to identify the problem practitioners in trying to tackle the problems.

Because your input is very important, I hope you will take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire. Responses are anonymous and no individual will be identified in the final report. The data collected are confidential. Only the researcher will be able to identify a respondent and even for the researcher there is no reason to do so. The number which appears on the return envelope is only to check off when your questionnaire is returned. You may receive a summary of results by writing "copy of results requested" and printing your school's name and address on the back of the return envelope. Please do not put this information on the questionnaire itself.

The Assistant Language Teacher with whom you work has also received a questionnaire. Please return your questionnaire in your own prepaid envelope. Please do not put more than one questionnaire in one envelope.

I would be most happy to answer any questions you might have. Please write or call. Address:111 C Julia Martin Drive Bozeman, MT 59715 TEL:(406) 587-8093 in US E-mail: Makitok@montana.edu

Please read each question carefully before responding. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Makito Kuroda

PLEASE TRY TO RETURN THIS NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 20.

1. On average, how many students do your classes have? _____STUDENTS

2. How many classes do you teach per week? _____CLASSES

APPENDIX D: Questionnaire for JTEs--Continued

3. (a) To what extent are you well prepared for a class when you teach?
(Check one response.)
_____ALWAYS _____RARELY (Go to "b.")
_____OFTEN _____ALMOST NEVER (Go to "b.")

(b) What prevents you from preparing for a class?
_____

4. (a) Would you like to use CLT to teach English at your school?
_____YES (Go to "b.")
_____NO (explain)_____

(b) Have you ever studied how to teach English for communication?
_____YES (explain)_____
_____NO (Go to "c.")

5. What is (are) the problem(s) when you want to teach communicative English?
_____
_____

6. (a) Do you talk to your students about English language cultures and people?
_____YES (Go to "b" and "c.")
_____NO

(b) How often do you talk about culture and people?
_____ALWAYS _____RARELY
_____OFTEN _____NEVER

(c) What is (are) your source(s) of the information about culture and people?
(Check all that apply.)
_____MY EXPERIENCE _____TV PROGRAMS
_____BOOKS _____OTHERS (specify)_____
_____VIDEOS

APPENDIX D: Questionnaire for JTEs--Continued

7. (a) Do you use any commercial materials besides textbooks?
_____YES (Go to "b" and "c.")
_____NO

(b) How often do you use them?
_____ALWAYS _____RARELY
_____OFTEN

(c) Please describe the materials you use.
_____
_____

8. Have you ever constructed your own instructional materials?
_____YES (specify)_____
_____NO

9. (a) Do you think 3 hours a week is sufficient for you to teach English?
_____YES
_____NO (Go to "b.")

(b) There are several activities you might do if you had more time to teach English. Please rank the following in order of priority. 1 is the most important, and 6 is the least.
_____READING _____SPEAKING
_____WRITING _____CULTURE
_____LISTENING _____CONVERSATION

10. (a) Are you doing something to improve yourself as an English teachers?
_____YES (Go to "b.")
_____NO (Go to "c.")

(b) Would you like to do something more to improve yourself as an English teacher?
_____YES (Go to "d.")
_____NO (explain)_____

APPENDIX D: Questionnaire for JTEs--Continued

10. (c) What prevents you from doing more to improve yourself as an English teacher? (Check all that apply.)

_____TIME _____EXTRA JOB AT SCHOOL (specify)_____
_____FAMILY _____OTHERS (specify)_____
_____MONEY

(d) What do you do to improve yourself as an English teacher? (Check all that apply.)

_____READ PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS
_____READ BOOKS IN ENGLISH
_____WRITE SOMETHING IN ENGLISH
_____LISTEN TO ENGLISH
_____SPEAK IN ENGLISH
_____LEARNING CONVERSATION
_____OTHERS (specify)_____

11. What else would you like to study to improve yourself as an English teacher? (Check all that apply.)

_____TEACHING SKILLS _____CONVERSATION SKILLS
_____TARGET CULTURES _____OTHERS(specify)_____

In questions 11 and 12, use the following scale to respond.
1=ALWAYS, 2=OFTEN, 3=RARELY, and 4=NEVER (Check one response.)

12. I discuss how to conduct lessons with my ALT.

_____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

13. I can understand what the ALT tells me about how to conduct English lessons.

_____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

14. How slowly does the ALT talk to you?

_____VERY SLOWLY _____FAST
_____SLOWLY _____VERY FAST

15. How clearly does the ALT talk to you?

_____VERY CLEARLY _____NOT VERY CLEARLY
_____CLEARLY

APPENDIX D: Questionnaire for JTEs--Continued

16. To what extent do your students seek out, and seem to enjoy talking with the ALT informally?
    _____QUITE A LOT _____NOT MUCH
    _____SOMEWHAT _____NOT AT ALL

17. How slowly does the ALT talk to students?
    _____VERY SLOWLY _____FAST
    _____SLOWLY _____VERY FAST

18. How clearly does the ALT talk to students?
    _____VERY CLEARLY _____NOT VERY CLEARLY
    _____CLEARLY

19. To what extent do you believe the ALT should be able to speak Japanese?
    _____QUITE A LOT _____NOT MUCH
    _____SOMEWHAT _____NOT AT ALL

20. To what extent do you believe that the ALT should know Japan and Japanese culture?
    _____QUITE A LOT _____NOT MUCH
    _____SOMEWHAT _____NOT AT ALL

21. How have you used the ALT within the classes?
    _____
    _____

22. How often does the ALT visit your school?
    _____

23. How often, on average, does the ALT visit one of your classes?
    _____

24. (a) Do you think you fully understand what students expect in English education at junior high school?
    _____YES (Go to "b" and then "c.")
    _____NO

    (b) What do students expect in English education at junior high school?
    _____

APPENDIX D: Questionnaire for JTEs--Continued

24. (c) Do you reflect students' expectation to your lessons?
_____YES
_____NO

25. Check all the tests you have taken.
_____EIKEN _____TOEIC
_____TOEFL _____OTHERS (specify)_____

26. If you do not object, please state the score you received in the examinations taken.
EIKEN_____KYUU TOEIC_____
TOEFL_____ OTHERS_____

27. What is (are) the problem(s) you are facing in teaching English in general at your school?
_____
_____

28. Your gender. _____MALE _____FEMALE

29. How long have you been an English teacher? _____YEARS

30. (a) Have you ever been abroad? _____YES (Go to "b.") _____NO (Go to "c.")

30. (b) Would you explain about your visit(s) abroad?

WHERE	HOW LONG	WHEN(YEAR)	PURPOSE
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

(c) Would you like to visit other countries?
_____YES (specify)_____
_____NO (explain)_____

Thank you very much for your cooperation, and please try to return this by February 20.

APPENDIX E

Questionnaire for ALTs

APPENDIX E: Questionnaire for ALTs

QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERING TEACHING ENGLISH AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
(for an Assistant Language Teacher)

I NEED YOUR HELP! As a member of the JET Program, you have come to Japan to help us improve our English language teaching. I bet you have identified some problems Japan has in English education. I would like you to share them with me so that I may be able to help improve Japanese English education.

In this questionnaire, you can find the term "Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)." By this, we mean the teaching of language for dealing with information gaps (understanding) in authentic like situations in both written and spoken forms.

Because your input is very important, I hope you will take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire. Responses are anonymous and no individual will be identified in the final report. The data collected are confidential. Only the researcher will be able to identify a respondent and even for the researcher there is no reason to do so. The number which appears on the return envelope is only to check off your name when your questionnaire is returned.

One of the Japanese teachers of English with whom you work has also received a questionnaire. Please return your questionnaire in your own prepaid envelope. Please do not put more than one questionnaire in one envelope.

I would be most happy to answer any questions you might have. Please write or call.
Address: 111C Julia Martin Drive Bozeman, MT 59715 TEL: (406) 587-8093 in US
E-mail: Makitok@montana.edu

Please read each question carefully before responding. Thank you very much for your assistance and for helping the children and teachers of my country to learn and teach English better.

Sincerely,

Makito Kuroda

PLEASE TRY TO RETURN THIS NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 20.

1. Have you already completed this questionnaire at another school?
   (Check one response.)
   _____YES (Please answer only questions 2 through 17.)
   _____NO (Please answer all the questions.)

APPENDIX E: Questionnaire for ALTs--Continued

2. (a) Do you think Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) are always well-prepared for a class when they teach?
   _____YES
   _____NO (Go to "b.")
   (b) What prevents them from preparing for a class?
   _____
   _____

3. (a) Do you think JTEs are trying to teach English for communication?
   _____YES
   _____NO (Go to "b.")

   (b) What prevents them from teaching English for communication?
   _____
   _____

Please use the following scale to answer questions 4 and 5:
1=ALWAYS, 2=OFTEN, 3=RARELY, and 4=NEVER.

4. How often do JTEs talk about English language cultures and people?
   _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

5. How often do JTEs use any teaching materials besides textbooks?
   _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

6. Do JTEs do something to improve themselves as English teachers?
   _____YES (specify)_____
   _____NO (explain)_____
   _____I DO NOT KNOW

Please use the following scale to answer questions 7, 8 and 9:
1=ALWAYS, 2=OFTEN, 3=RARELY, and 4=NEVER.

7. I discuss how to conduct lessons with my JTEs.
   _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

8. I can understand what these JTEs tell me about how to conduct English lessons.
   _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

APPENDIX E: Questionnaire for ALTs--Continued

9. I believe that the JTEs understand what I say about how to conduct English lessons.
_____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

10. How slowly do you usually talk to JTEs? (Check one response.)
_____AT NORMAL SPEECH RATE
_____SLOWLY
_____VERY SLOWLY

11. How clearly do you usually articulate when you talk to JTEs?
_____AS I TALK TO NATIVES
_____CLEARLY
_____VERY CLEARLY

12. To what extent do your students seek out, and seem to enjoy talking with you informally?
_____QUITE A LOT
_____SOMEWHAT
_____NOT MUCH
_____NOT AT ALL

13. How slowly do you usually talk to your students?
_____AT NORMAL SPEECH RATE
_____SLOWLY
_____VERY SLOWLY

14. How clearly do you usually articulate when you talk to your students?
_____AS I TALK TO NATIVES
_____CLEARLY
_____VERY CLEARLY

15. To what extent do you believe you should be able to speak Japanese?
_____QUITE A LOT
_____SOMEWHAT
_____NOT MUCH
_____NOT AT ALL

APPENDIX E: Questionnaire for ALTs--Continued

16. To what extent do you know Japan and Japanese culture?
    _____QUITE A LOT
    _____SOMEWHAT
    _____NOT MUCH
    _____NOT AT ALL

17. How has your assigned JTEs used you as an ALT within the classes?
    _____
    _____

18. What do you believe is the greatest problem in teaching English as a foreign language in Japan?
    _____
    _____

19. Your gender. _____MALE _____FEMALE

20. Your present age. _____20~24 _____25~29 _____30~34 _____35 AND OVER

21. What is your nationality? _____

22. How many month(s) have you been an ALT? _____MONTH(S)

23. How many junior high school(s) do you work at? _____SCHOOL(S)

24. Indicate the highest degree earned. (Check one response.)
    _____BACHELORS (field)_____
    _____MASTERS (field)_____
    _____DOCTORATE (field)_____

25. Is teaching English in Japan interesting to you?
    _____YES
    _____NO

26. Did you have any teaching experiences before you came to Japan?
    _____YES (explain)_____
    _____NO

APPENDIX E: Questionnaire for ALTs--Continued

27. What was the main reason you come to Japan as an ALT? (Check one response.)
_____MONEY
_____INTEREST IN JOB
_____CULTURE
_____JOB AVAILABILITY
_____OTHERS (specify)_____

28. If you have other things to state related to EFL in Japan, please write them down below.

_____
_____
_____

Thank you very much for your cooperation, and please try to return this no later than February 20.

Factors Which Impede Teaching of...

M. Kuroda