

## Do your students really use English to solve their group tasks?

Kazumi Kato

Tokai University Liberal Arts Education Center Shimizu Campus  
kazumilk@tokai-u.jp

### Abstract

This poster presentation will introduce a teaching method aimed at helping Japanese students talk among themselves in English to accomplish their group tasks in classes. This is an attempt to solve the problem that quite often students heavily rely on Japanese in the process of solving tasks and only use English in their final product.

The discussion lessons for the group tasks were conducted in 3 different university classes in Japan with positive results. The authentic video materials, methodology and students' reflections will focus on how to build upon students' illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence. This method will be applicable to any group task activities in ESP courses such as presentation, and interview practice for medical or business purposes.

*Key words:* pragmatics, task-based learning, Teaching English through English, ICT, ESP

### I. Introduction

In this study, the presenter developed a methodology based on pragmatic competence from the Model of Communicative language ability of Bachman & Palmer (1996) (*figure 1*) and also the process of Second Language Acquisition model, Izumi (2009) (*figure 3*). Since task-based learning must be focus on process rather than product (Richards 2001), the presenter recorded and produced authentic video materials showing how native-English-Speaking students (NESs) use English as an action language in task activities.

These activities allow students to notice their weak points and find better English expressions and strategies for task-solving language by themselves.

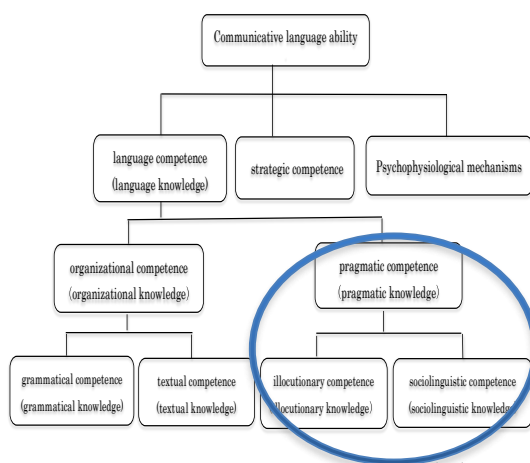


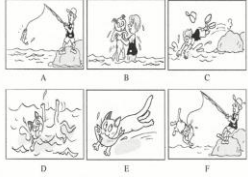
Figure 1: Model of Communicative language ability Bachman & Palmer (1996)

### II. Making materials

#### A. Task

Miura (2006) introduced 3 types of unfocused task-based activities such as problem-solving task, planning task, and completing task. In this study, a completing task called "Picture Story" was used as a simple model task.

*Table 1 : Task-based group learning*

Task	Subtasks
<p>Making a story with 4 pictures</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Choose 4 pictures and write down 1 or 2 sentences for each picture by yourself.</li> <li>2. Make a group of 4</li> <li>3. Read the sentences aloud while the other group members put the pictures in order.</li> <li>4. Check the order.</li> <li>5. Discuss and make a better story in a group.</li> </ol>

**B. Video materials**

The presenter asked NESs to do the “Picture Story” task. They made a group of 4 and created a story with 4 pictures in a group. The students were college students aged 19-20 studying music and perform arts at Worcester College of Technology in the U.K. The presenter recorded NESs’ group discussion with a video camera and then produced authentic video model materials with iMovie using an iMac computer.

The video material was installed on iPad and also put on YouTube and Facebook so that students could watch them outside the classroom.



*Figure 2. Scene of NES students’ group work*

**III. Procedure**

Lessons using these authentic materials with iPads were conducted in different level classes in 3 universities in Japan. The lesson plan was followed by the chart (*figure 3*) which was made by the presenter based on the study of E.Ellis (2008), Izumi (2009) and Martinez-Flor & Uso-Juan (2010).

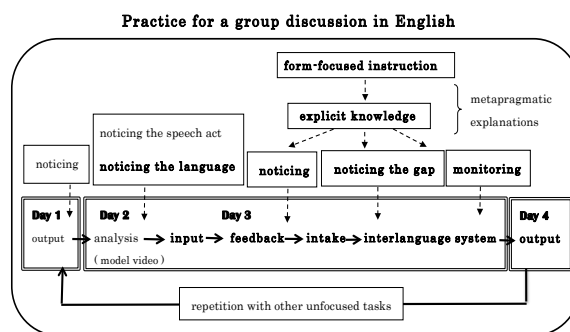
The teaching procedure in this study is as follows;

1. JELs output with their initial knowledge,
2. analyze NESs’ group discussion,
3. input,
4. feedback their activities,
5. intake some expressions,
6. create interlanguage system,
7. final output.

The discussion lessons took 4 days. The first 2 days were focused on developing illocutionary competence of pragmatic aspect. Students first had output opportunities trying group discussion in English. Then students watched NES’ model group discussion using iPad and analyzed how they conducted their discussion.

The last 2 days were focused on the development of sociolinguistic competence. Students individually wrote down Japanese phrases they wanted to say in English while they were conducting the task in Day 1. The presenter worked out with a native English teacher translated from Japanese expressions to English expressions and gave them back to the students. They found grammar rules in these expressions in a group and

**Proceedings of the 2nd International Symposium on  
Innovative Teaching and Research in ESP, IGTEE UEC Tokyo 2015**



*Figure 3: Based on E. Ellis (1993,1997,2003,2008),*

Izumi (2009), Martinez-Flor & Uso-Juan(2010)

memorize them. Finally students tried their discussion again with new members using the strategies they acquired by the video materials and translated expressions.

*Table 2*

Day	Style	Activities
Day 1	Individual Group Group Group  Group Group Individual	1. Write down 1 or 2 sentences for each picture by yourself. 2. Make a group of 4 3. Start iPad recording. 4. Read the sentences aloud while the other group members put the pictures in order. 5. Check the order. 6. Discuss and make a better story. * Write down phrases you want to say in English while you are discussing in a group.
Day 2	Group  Class Individual  Group Group	1. Watch the video of English students' discussion without subtitles and analyze how they conduct their discussion including gestures. 2. Present in a class and share group's ideas. 3. Watch the video of English students' discussion again and fill in the blanks on the handout. -Listening practice. 4. Watch the video with subtitles. 5. Read the script and understand the English students' conversation.
Day 3	Group Group Group Class Group  Group Group Class	1. Watch your group discussion which was recorded on Day 1. 2. Compare your group discussion with that of the English students. 3. Discuss in a group what should we do to make a group discussion in English better. 4. Present in a class. 5. Read English expressions which were translated by a native English teacher. 6. Read the handout and find the grammar rule. Write the rule with a red pen. 7. Think how you can memorize these rules easily. 8. Present in a class.
Day 4	Group	1. Make a new group of 4 and try the group discussion again with new group members.

#### IV. Findings

From the handout of their group discussion, we can see that both class A and class B seemed to develop their illocutional competence and speech acts noticing the differences of turn taking and gestures by analyzing NESs' discussion. There were no big illocutional competence differences in development from the level of their English. However, the numbers and the content of the English expressions which students think were useful were different depending on their level. Class A in which students were not such a high level class want to know more expressions of confirmation or request (see Table 3). On the other hand, class B wanted to know the expressions which express their ideas or opinions and compliment (see Table 4). From these result, teachers shouldn't just give them a pile of phrase lists but should require students to collect expressions which they think were useful. That raises their motivation and willingness to know the expressions they actually need.

*Table 3: Class A, unique expressions*

Japanese	English
何してんの? Nani shitenno?	What are you doing?
今なんの時間? Ima nan no jikan?	What are we doing now?
その単語の意味は何? Sono tango no imi ha nani?	What does that word mean?
2人で決めて Hutari de kimete.	You two decide.
君から先に話していいよ kimi kara sakini hanashite iiyo	You go first.

*Table 4: Class B, unique expressions*

Japanese	English
あなたの話しの方がいい! Anata no hanashinohouga ii	Your story is better!
すごいですね、その考え。 Sugoi desune sono kangae	That's a good idea.
つながりがおかしくなるよ。 Tunagari ga okashiku naruyo	The transitions are becoming strange.
あわてたような表現のほう が猫の心境っぽい。 Awatetayouna hyougen no houga neko no shinkyouppoi	The expression "hurry" seems like a cat's feeling.
君から先に話していいよ kimi kara sakini hanashite iiyo	You go first.

#### V. Conclusion

In this presentation, I introduced authentic video materials, methodology and students' reflections focusing on how to build upon students' illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence.

Since the students experienced using English in a group discussion first, they are curious about how NESs' conduct the same activities. The order of teaching procedure is quite important to motivate students. Requiring students to think about useful expressions and analyze the patterns of expressions are also useful teaching skills. In this teaching method, students have more chance to watch authentic activities, especially the same task, and to think of their English skills.

Thus the procedure will be applicable to any group activities in ESP courses with authentic video and methodology with a task in a real-world situation, and teachers need to provide opportunities for students.

**Proceedings of the 2nd International Symposium on  
Innovative Teaching and Research in ESP, IGTEE UEC Tokyo 2015**

**References**

- Bachman, L.F., & Palmer, A.S. (1996) *Language testing in practice* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1, 1-47.
- Canale, M. (1983) From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In J. C. Richards & R. W. Schmidt (Eds.), *Language and communication* (pp. 2-27). London: Longman
- Ellis, R. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Izumi Shinichi (2009). *Focus on Form wo toriireta atarashii eigo kyouiku* Tokyo: Taishukan shoten
- Kasper, G. (1996). Introduction: Interlanguage pragmatics in SLA. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 18, 145-148.
- Martinez-Flor, A. (2010). Suggestions. In A. Martinez-Flor & E. Usó-Juan (Eds.), How social norms affect pragmatic behavior *Speech act performance* (pp. 257-274). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Miura Takashi (2006). *Hyuman na eigokyouikuga shitai* Tokyo: Kenkyusha
- Richards, J. and T. Rodgers. (2001, 2013) *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shimizu Takafumi (2009). *Chuukanngengo goyouonngairon* Tokyo: Three A network