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Notes on An English Language Curriculum¹⁾

For Future Teachers of English in a Teachers' College

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0. Introduction

The English Department of the Faculty of Education of Nagasaki University has almost the same English language curriculum as at most of the teachers' colleges or the Departments of English of the Faculties of Education of Universities in Japan. The subjects are largely divided into four areas: (1) English Linguistics and Philology, (2) English and American Literature, (3) Language Skill Courses such as English composition, English conversation and so on, and (4) Pedagogy including "Teaching Methods of English".

Our students of the Department of English earn credits for their graduation and also the certificate for teachers of English in junior or senior high schools from these four areas. However, even after they have gathered enough credits to earn the certificate for English teachers, they did not have enough ability to express themselves in English. Almost all our graduates belatedly realized that they needed to have more such skill courses as listening comprehension, reading, speaking and writing than they had. This means that our curriculum was not as well organized to train future teachers of English in junior or senior high schools as it might have been. We must recognize that we have paid little attention to providing our students with such training courses as listening, reading (without translation), speaking and writing.

Many years ago we began courses in English composition and English conversation for 2nd year students making them compulsory subjects. These courses were instructed by a native speaker of English. However, in all the other English courses, Japanese was used as the language of instruction. Our students, therefore, were not able to have enough opportunity to use English even in English classrooms. To make matters worse, though our English Department opened many courses for the students, most of them were completely teacher-oriented, and there was a lack of consistency among them.

During the last several years, we have been trying to reconsider these courses from the viewpoint of the learners and to adjust the inconsistency among these courses. The focus for the adjustment has been on the teaching of English as a communicative language. In this paper, I would like to discuss an English language curriculum for English Department of the Faculty of Education of Nagasaki University, which we have been adjusting so far. The main point of

this paper is to show that a curriculum for a teacher training course should be independent of the one of the Faculty of Arts, and that it should be focussed on the training of English.

As I mentioned above that our curriculum includes the four areas, area (1) provides the students with the knoweldge of English, in area (2) the students can learn British or American culture such as the habits, the ways of living and so on as well as English and American Literature, and in area (4) they study the ways of teaching English in junior or senior high schools. Areas (1) (2) (4), therefore, do not aim to give training in English language skills. Rather, each aims to give knowledge of its area. On the other hand, area (3) aims to give training in English itself. Since our main concern in this paper is of an English language curriculum for our students who will become teachers of English in junior or senior high schools, it is natural that the following sections should be discussed from the viewpoint of the area (3).

0. 1. Before we discuss our English Language Curriculum, we will list the classes we presently offer in the Department of English:

1. English Phonetics I, II, III, IV (for 1st & 2nd year students)
 2. English Grammar I, II (for 2nd year students)
 3. English Language Skills I, II, III, IV (for 2nd & 3rd year)
 4. Translation Skill from Japanese into English I, II (for 2nd & 3rd year)
 5. English Linguistics I, II (for 3rd year)
 6. Lecture on English Linguistics I, II (for 3rd & 4th year)
 7. History of English I, II (for 3rd year)
 8. Middle English I, II (for 4th year)
 9. History of English Literature I, II, (for 2nd year)
 10. History of American Literature I, II (for 3rd year)
 11. Lecture on English Literature I, II (for 3rd year)
 12. Lecture on American Literature I, II (for 3rd & 4th year)
 13. Interpretation of Modern English & American Literature I, II, III, IV, V (for 2nd, 3rd & 4th year)
 14. Interpretation of English & American Poems (for 3rd year)
 15. Interpretation of Early Modern English Literature (for 4th year)
 16. English Conversation I, II (for 2nd year)
 17. English Composition I, II, III, IV, V, VI (for 2nd, 3rd & 4th year)
 18. Teaching Methods of English I, II (for 3rd year)
 19. English Linguistics
 - English Philology
 - English Literature
 - American Literature
 - Teaching English as a Foreign Language
- } Seminar (for 2nd & 3rd year students)

20. Graduate Thesis Seminar (for 4th year)

Among these, (1) (3) (12) (16) and (17) give the basic training for such skills as Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing. While (5) (7) and (18)²⁾ can be helpful for reading skill, and (18) can be also helpful for writing, for convenience, we can call classes (1) (3) (12) (16) and (17) *our Foundation Course*, and all the other classes *our Technical and Professional Course*. The latter course aims to provide knowledge of English and English or American Literature, and can be considered to come after the former skill course. We will refer to the Foundation Course in Section 2.1, and the Technical and Professional Course in Section 2.2

0. 3. The starting point in re-designing our curriculum is to recognize the identity of the learner, his initial competence and his expectation.³⁾ Section 1 illustrates these considerations of the identity of the learner. In Section 2, I try to identify in terms of what the learners bring to the learning-teaching process both at the starting point of the English language training course of the English Department...the student's initial competence and expectation...and the finishing point...the competence expected at the time of graduation. The curriculum is aimed at linking the two points. Section 3 looks at the methodology and materials we use to achieve this aim. Finally, in Section 4, I consider an evaluation of the new curriculum.

1. Learner Contributions

1. 1. Identity

Groups of ten male and female students who major in English. They passed highly competitive entrance examination of Nagasaki University. Since they intend to become teachers of English at junior or senior high schools, they are highly motivated to learn English.

1. 2. Learner's Initial Competence

(1) Knowledge: a) Linguistic

For most students, their knowledge of English is from the six year junior and senior high school general English curriculum. A few have a more developed knowledge deriving from their study experience in foreign countries.

b) Technical

The knowledge attained by the end of six year general English curriculum in both junior and senior high schools is rather high, however, it is grammar-translation oriented. Thus most of them have trouble with listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing.

(2) Abilities and Skills:

The abilities to interpret, express and negotiate their native language are assumed, however, the learners are unable to transfer these abilities to the English language.

1. 3. Learner Expectations

(1) Concerning English

English is seen by them as the teaching subject of their future job as well as the medium of communication in an International setting.

(2) Concerning Language Learning

As the result of their previous formal educational experience, the learners are strongly dependent on the teacher. They are unused to taking responsibility for their learning. In other words, they are used to a passive way of learning. This attitude leads to the troubles in speaking and writing English.

(3) Learner Needs, Interests and Motivation

The learners perceive their needs in terms of obtaining a teaching job. Interests in classroom activity and social life (communicating with native speakers of English or peer groups in English) encourage the learners to study English. The main motivation is to have the abilities to interpret, express, negotiate in order to teach English as a communicative language at junior or senior high schools.

1. 4. The learner contributions to the curriculum, as revealed by this analysis, have some obvious implications for the designers:

(1) The learner's interest in the teaching of English as a communicative language should be exploited as a means of maintaining their interest during the teaching-learning process itself.

(2) The learner's communicative competence in his Mother Tongue can be brought to bear on the task of communicating in English.

These implications can be incorporated into the materials design and the methodology for the curriculum.

The most important point we should recognize here is that teachers of English at Colleges or teacher trainers should pay attention not to distract the learner's interest in terms of materials and methodology. In particular, we should remember that cooperation from the learners is one of the most significant factors in teaching English as a communicative language.

In the Japanese education system, both teachers and learners are used to having teacher-oriented teaching situations. Therefore, it is very difficult for us to realize a learner-oriented classroom situation in English classes. However,

a learner-oriented classroom situation is indispensable for teaching-learning processes if we intend to teach English as a communicative language or to activate passive English.

2. Analysis of Target Situation

Since the learners will become teachers of English in junior or senior high schools after finishing this four year course, and teachers of English in Japan are expected to teach not only the use of English but also about the culture carried by English speaking peoples, they should have the abilities to interpret and express themselves in English and also the knowledge of English Linguistics and Philology, English and American Literature and Teaching Methods of English. Thus the whole curriculum of our English Department of the Faculty of Education provides the learners with language skills through the Foundation Course and provides knowledge through the Technical and Professional Course. And both these courses are expected to be inter-related and to continue throughout the four years at the University.

2. 1. Target Competence

The Foundation Course aims to activate the learner's passive English and to give training in acquiring language skills. Thus we provide the learners with such language skill courses as listening comprehension, reading, speaking and writing in the Foundation Course. Though it is very difficult to define the target competence of the learners of our English Department, we can tentatively describe it as follows: As for the listening comprehension of English, we expect them to be able to follow lectures by native speakers of English. On reading, they should be able to easily get information from printed notes, papers and so on without translation. He should be able to express his thoughts in spoken English. And if he can write essays, papers and so on in English, we can assume that he has reached the target competence of writing in English.

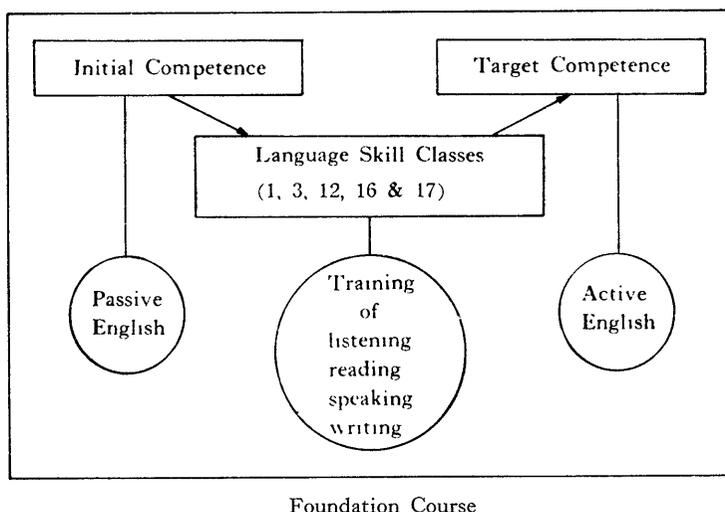
2. 2. Specific Target Competence

The Technical and Professional Course aims to provide the learners with knowledge about the English language, English and American literature, and Pedagogy including Teaching Methods of English. As all these courses require the learners to read English books, they get this knowledge through the English language. In this course, however, Japanese is used as the language of instruction, which is usual English classroom situation in Japan.

If the classes could be given in English and the learners could understand the English lectures, discuss the topics of these classes in English and write term papers in English, we could assume that they would have reached the specific target competence of English in the Department of English of our Faculty of

Education. This is the final and ideal situation of our English Department, however. Our present aim is to reach the target competence through the Foundation Course.

2. 3. We already mentioned the aim of our English Language Curriculum and the Learner Contributions. The next step we have to take is to relate both of them: since our curriculum aims to activate the learners' passive English, the main task in the curriculum is to give the training of English to achieve this aim. The following diagram will show the relation between Learner Contributions and the Language Skill Classes in the Foundation Course.



A curriculum should be a bridge between the learner's Initial Competence and their Target Competence. Thus our English Language Curriculum can be realized in the Language Skill Classes. And whether or not our curriculum can achieve its aim effectively is dependent on the Materials design and Methodology of the classes.

2. 4. We will roughly sketch our Language Skill Classes: I mentioned above that we can choose (1) (3) (12) (16) and (17) as the Fundamental Language Skill Classes for our English Language Curriculum, and for convenience we can call these classes the Foundation Course.

The classes of (1), English Phonetics 1, 11 for 1st year students deal with how to produce English pronunciation scientifically, and the classes III, IV for 2nd year students are for the training of listening comprehension. Though the classes are completely controlled by the instructor, the learners develop a lot of confidence in their English pronunciation, intonation and rhythm and so on throughout the classes. We can say that these are basic training classes of

listening comprehension and speaking.

(12) (16) (17) are instructed by a native speaker of English. In (16), English Conversation, the instructor tries to activate the learners' passive English using the Drama Method or the Silent Way and so on. Also in (17), English Composition, he tries to give a systematically controlled training in composition to 2nd, 3rd and 4th year students. Our students can be exposed to his American English for four years, since he is also the instructor of English Conversation for the first year students at the Liberal Arts Faculty. In (12), Lecture on American Literature I, II for 3rd and 4th year students, the learners are trained in all skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing, and above all the instructor has focussed on the training of rapid reading and free composition.

(3), English Language Skill I, II, III, IV, for 2nd and 3rd year students aim to give training which the learners need as an intermediate step between (1) English Phonetics and (12) (16) (17) by the native speaker of English. In English Phonetics, the learners are trained in listening comprehension in the language laboratory, which means that they have to learn English individually. Of course, at a certain level of language learning they need to have individual practice in English. However, they also need training in two-way communication, which has been completely missed in the training courses of English in Japan so far. On the other hand, in classes (12) (16) (17) by the native speaker of English, the learners are suddenly requested to have two-way communication ability even though they had never received training in this ability. Since they do not have any confidence in using English, they tend to receive practice in listening comprehension from the native English speaker in his classes instead of practice in communication.

This is where classes (3), English Language Skills I, II, III, IV come in. In these classes, a Japanese teacher of English provides them with special training⁴⁾ of listening, reading, speaking and writing for two years in order to activate their passive English. The key-point of this training is that the learners themselves can learn the use of English by themselves, and that the instructor uses English in the class to encourage the learners and to give them the opportunity to use English with a friend or in a group, since the intent is to give training in two-way communication.

3. Methodology and Materials Design

Since the present writer has been teaching (3), English Language Skills, in the Foundation Course, the methodology and the materials in this section will be concerned with these classes only.

Example One⁵⁾

Pictography and Ideography

(Work in Groups of 3 or 4)

Activity One

Each member of the group has reading material. Read the material carefully. (You have 10 minutes).

Activity Two

- a) In your groups, discuss and write a negotiated definition of:
 - pictography
 - ideography (10 minutes)
- b) Present your definition of each to the class (15 minutes).

Activity Three

- a) Many ideographic messages are used around us today. Quote some examples.
- b) In the third paragraph, there is an example of ideographic communication. Follow the description and draw a picture that fits the description. When you have finished, exchange your drawing with other members of the class. (10 minutes)

Activity Four

- a) In your group, discuss advantages of the ideographic communication.
- b) Present the result of your discussion to the class. (10 minutes)

Activity Five: Feedback

- a) Assesment of Activities 1, 2, 3 & 4.
- b) Feedback from Teacher.

The Reading Material For These Activities:

Pictography & Ideography

The basis of all writing is the picture. Among primitives, a picture satisfies, in a crude way, the needs fulfilled among literate people by writing. In the course of [time the picture developed in two directions: 1) toward pictorial art, in which pictures continued to reproduce more or less faithfully] the objects of the surrounding world in a way independent of language; and 2) toward writing, in which signs, whether they retained their pictorial character or not, ultimately became symbols for linguistic elements. Ideography represents an intermediate stage between pictorial art and writing.

The term ideography includes the various forerunners of writing, which

convey ideas or meanings directly and have a very loose connection with the elements of language. Both ideography and pictography are applied to the same kinds of forerunners of writing, but while pictography refers to the pictorial character of the symbols, the term ideography denotes inner, structural characteristics of the system, such as the fact that the individual symbols, called ideographs (or ideograms) stand for certain ideas or meaning.

A simple example of ideography is the communication “no thoroughfare”, in a rock drawing near a precipitous trail in New Mexico. The design, representing a mountain goat standing upright and a horse and rider upside down, is intended to warn horsemen that, while a mountain goat could climb up the rocky trail, a horse would tumble down. This drawing employs no more detail than is necessary to indicate the two animals and the rider, and there is no indication whatever of a background.

The ideographic communication is somewhat different from a work of art and is completely independent of language. A person who is only slightly acquainted with the communication habits of American Indians is able to understand the message just described, even though he is ignorant of the language of the person who drew it. This stage of the forerunners of writing is called the descriptive-representational stage.

(From *Encyclopedia Britannica*)

Example Two

Activity One

- a) Form five pairs. Each pair has a pictograph. Your job as a pair is to figure out the “Kanji” that might have been derived from the pictograph. Be prepared to tell the class how and why you have come to the decision. You have 10 minutes in which to work.
- b) Report your answer to the class.
- c) Discussion and feedback.

Activity Two

- a) Form five pairs, but with a different partner. Each pair is given a “Kanji”, but only one person is allowed to see it. The person who has the picture describes the shape of the “Kanji”, and the other has to identify it. The job might be made easier if the other person draws, step by step, on a piece of paper. Reverse the role.
- b) Report the result of your task to the class.
- c) Feedback.

Activity Three

- a) You all know the “Kanji” 明 and its meaning. A “Kanji” such as this is called a “compound ideograph” because it consists of more than two components. How many components does 明 consist of and what are they? Make an intelligent guess at how this “Kanji” has been formed to mean what it does. Work in small groups.
- b) Report the result of your discussion to the class.
- c) Discussion and feed back.

Activity Four: Self-Assessment

- a) Work in groups. Discuss what aspects of the tasks have caused you trouble and for what reason and how you might be able to overcome these difficulties.
- b) Report what you have discussed to the class.
- c) Feedback.

The Examples of Pictographs for *Activity One*:



The Examples of “Kanji” for *Activity Two*:⁶⁾

羊, 犬, 田, 本, 子, 上, 林, 王, 目, 四, etc.

In the class both the teacher and the learners have to use English and also in these activities the learners have to discuss in groups and to express their opinions to the class. These activities are very helpful for activating their passive English; the learners enjoy learning and speaking English actively. So these materials are useful for training of the two-way communication as well as for activating their passive English.

4. Evaluation

In order to check their language skill objectively, it is recommended that they take the Test of English as a Foreign Language, which is given at the Department of English of Nagasaki University every November. Every year our 2nd and 3rd year students take the test, and most of them receive a score of around 550. Since the students who get more than 500 of TOEFL can be admitted to almost all the universities in the United States, we can assume that our students have received the target competence of the Foundation Course by the end of

the 3rd year.

We can show one more example which supports our self-evaluation: We have sent one of our 4th year students to the University of Hawaii this year. According to her academic advisor, she got a rather high score on their English Test, which is used to classify foreign students for the English Language Program. Because of her high score she will not need to attend the Listening Comprehension or the Reading classes of the English Language Program. This means that our English Language Curriculum has been gradually developing over the last several years.

5. Conclusion

In this paper we have discussed our Curriculum from the viewpoint of a teacher trainer. First of all, we divided the curriculum into two parts: the Foundation Course and the Technical and Professional Course. The classes which belong to the Foundation Course aim to give the learners the training of English language skills, and the classes which belong to the Technical and Professional course aim to give knowledge of English, English and American Literature and so on. We could say that the classes in the Foundation Course are already well organized for the training of language skills, and some of the classes in the Technical and Professional Course supplement and strengthen these skills as well as providing knowledge of these subjects. Thus the next step we have to consider for our Curriculum is how to combine the Foundation Course with the Technical and Professional Course.

Notes:

- 1) In this paper I tried to reconsider our Curriculum from the viewpoint of a teacher trainer. I attended the ESOL Teacher Trainers Program of the East-West Center in Hawaii from September 1, 1975 to March 31, 1976, and also the In-Service Courses A & B (The Advanced Courses for Experienced Teachers of English) of the University of Lancaster in England from July 5, 1979 to August 31, 1979, and I got many ideas on the teaching of English as a communicative language.

While attending these programs, I noticed that there are some difference between the teaching of English in these countries and ours. That is, in these countries, "Teaching of English" is to teach the use of English itself because the learners need English in everyday life. In our country, however, we do not need English in our daily life. In other words, we only study English as a school subject. And teachers of English have to teach the use of English and the culture of English speaking peoples as a school subject. Because of this our curriculum is too complicated to master the use of English. It seems to me that learning or teaching the use of English itself is one job and learning or teaching the culture is another job.

I have come to realize that we must divide our curriculum into two parts: classes for the training of English itself and classes for knowledge. After finishing the

training classes, the learners can take the knowledge classes. In this paper I will try to apply this idea to our complicated curriculum and to rearrange the courses in a proper way.

- 2) Although (5) (7) and (18) belong to the Technical and Professional Course, and the aim of these courses is to give knowledge, the instructors of these courses pay attention to giving training in language skills as well as knowledge. The attitude of the instructors should be evaluated, since they try to incorporate the effects of the training of the Foundation Course into the Technical and Professional Course: In (5) and (7), the instructors have paid attention to reading skill and in (18), the instructor has given the learners the training of reading and writing. We could say that our whole curriculum of the Department of English will become well organized when the instructors of all the other classes try to make the same efforts in their classes of the Technical and Professional Course.
- 3) The way of analysis here was borrowed from "An English Language Curriculum for Technical Students" by Tom Hutchenson, Allen Waters and Michel Breen.
- 4) The writer got an idea for this class from the ESOL Teacher Trainers Program at the East-West Center, and has adjusted the idea to the Japanese students' situation. She opened the training class for 2nd year students soon after returning from the ESOL Teacher Trainers Program, and she has been trying to find the proper way of training her students.
- 5) These materials were made by Prof. Yuko Kobayashi and me as the one of the activities in the In-Service Courses A & B at the University of Lancaster. We intended to use the materials in our language skill courses in order to activate our students' passive English and are presently using them in our classes. Incidentally, it seems to me that the idea of the training courses of the University of Lancaster was almost the same as the ESOL Teacher Trainers Program at the East-West Center in Hawaii.
- 6) In Activity Two, we can ask the learners to make some examples by themselves if there is spare time. Allow them to enjoy speaking by themselves.

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