[FOREWORD]

My Life is JACET

Ikuo Koike, Special Advisor

I joined JACET when I was 34, and did everything in my power to help out whenever and wherever I could. My first priorities when I was not at the university were JACET and JAAL-lang. I tended to neglect my family and myself except for the few years when I studied in the United States. In my spare time, I considered how it would be possible to expand and improve JACET. It has been 35 fulfilling years of service and sacrifice. During most of this time period, including my 10 years as president, I have had the privilege to serve a central role at JACET, and shoulder the various responsibilities entailed in the job. It was a process of building from scratch. My work at JACET has been wide-ranging, and included activities in the Steering Committee, the Board of Directors, the JACET annual convention organizing committee, JACET local chapters, planning and organizing seminars, including the overseas summer seminars, joining the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA), and working as vice-president on the Executive Board, International Committee in that association, setting up applied linguistics exchanges with South Korea, Singapore, Britain, Europe, and Australia, and exchanges with other Japanese associations, building a national research network, compiling the JACET Bulletin, making JACET News, reporting the results of a general survey of present-day conditions at universities, and the problems facing universities, compiling reports and textbooks, making tests, and establishing the JACET Ten Principles.

When JACET was founded, there were 120 members. This membership grew to 3000 by the year 1999 when the 12th AILA World Congress was held in Tokyo. One of Japan's smallest associations became a world-recognized organization. JACET is well known at the Ministry of Education, and is acknowledged by experts in the field of foreign language education. The preparation, implementation, and follow-up activities of AILA 1999 took place under my presidency. AILA 1999 was possible because of the efforts and cooperation of many colleagues who worked and sacrificed their time and energy.

When I retired from the presidency, I seriously
considered the present situation of TEFL. English Education is the foundation of international cooperation without which Japan cannot survive as a competitive. Based on the surveys JACET has been conducting at universities throughout Japan, I have concluded that foreign language education is at a critical turning point. I conveyed this concern to all JACET members, compiled a new platform, and have worked to maintain the spirit upon which this association was first founded. A planning committee to revive JACET was established, and we embarked on a series of reforms within the organization. These reforms are still on-going. I requested the Minister of Education and the Central Education Commission to consider the various issues at hand, and am continuing to work forward toward further reforms within JACET and Japan.

I met with the Minister of Education on January 21st to discuss potential reforms in English Education in Japan at a round-table conference. I am extremely thankful for the Minister’s interest and active participation in this discussion. It will not be possible to carry out reforms in the English education system if our ideas are undeveloped. I handed the Minister a previously submitted proposal to reform university-level foreign language education, and another proposal to reform foreign language education in Japan on behalf of JACET, as the former JACET president and the present special advisor. I also related my personal opinion and proposal to the Minister on this day.

The proficiency of Japan’s English language learners stands at the lowest level of all industrialized nations. This results from the conservatism of the Japanese mentality, its isolated geographical location, research of the natural sciences, social studies, and the humanities being conducted in Japanese, structural gaps between English and Japanese, and Japan’s unique civilization, which is composed of various diverse cultures. Japan’s structure is rigid, and its natural environment inhibits Japan from accepting English, a foreign language. This is reflected in Japan’s policies, which result in a lack of academic reforms, and a deficiency in the English skills needed to remain competitive, internationally. It is an issue of population. Teaching guidelines need to be reviewed, and communication skills need to be improved through a consistent curriculum which runs through elementary, junior, and senior high schools, and universities. In order to increase communicative competence, concrete goals need to be set, such as requiring a score of 550 for the TOEFL, or a passing grade on the pre-first grade of the STEP test. English needs to be used by teachers and students, and textbooks should be written in English. Mandatory English tests should be required in graduate, and to be hired by companies. A series of official meetings focusing on English education will be held with the Minister of Education once a month until May. The Ministry of Education is expected to then issue a proposal for reform. It is up to us to do something in the meantime. My intention is to cooperate in the reform process as a special advisor at JACET.

JACET and TEFL in Japan

Tanabe, Yoji, President

The most recent specific English education guidelines were released in a report issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in January 2001. The report is entitled "Eigo Shishokubutsu no Kaisen no Saishintai ni kansuru Kondanka.,” or Working Group for the Promotion of English Teaching Method Improvement. It covers a wide variety of everyday TEFL problems at all levels of formal education, The 26-page document (Japanese) deals with English competence, the importance of motivation, improving teaching methods, and other issues. A page and a half was allocated to TEFL at the university level.

The report states that universities bear an important role in TEFL in Japan. “Universities are considered to be responsible for equipping their students with the English skills they need to enable them to work as specialists or at the international level, building on the foundations of English learned at junior and senior high schools.” This is one of the fundamental concepts promoting a coherent English teaching system throughout the school system, and it could potentially be accomplished when the general public is informed about primary and secondary education and capable trained professionals are assigned to their specific fields. The report also states that “in the face of internationalization and globalization, it is essential that more people in Japan be able to carry out daily conversations and engage in a
wide-range of communication activities in English. It is also important that more Japanese people acquire the English skills which would enable them to function in special fields, and to function at an international level." The report concludes by saying, "Universities should actively implement the reforms laid out above in order to improve English education."

If we assume that the above concept is essential, we can immediately respond to the ministry request by saying that most English educators would agree with these conclusions, and JACET has been working for years to improve TEFL in Japan at all levels, excluding primary education. JACET is mainly a tertiary education association, and has not traditionally focused on the primary level. However, TEFL is kicking off at elementary schools in the form of conversation beginning this April. English teachers have probably all heard of cases where there are discrepancies between the TEFL presented at the primary level and the secondary level, resulting in conflicts. Skills required at the secondary stage, in terms of communication skills and knowledge skills, tend to focus on entrance examinations. This leads to a significant gap between the proficiency level of the general public and professionals.

Japan needs to broaden the base of its communicative competent speakers—that is, the number of people who are able to carry on daily conversations and engage in a wide range of communication activities in English. This would be a first step in building a solid TEFL base. By introducing TEFL at the primary level, more people would come into contact with English and English conversation, so this move is appropriate and will lead to general improvements in English language education. However, TEFL in primary education is to be incorporated into the integrated study class, called "Sogo-seki-te no gakushu-no jikan" in Japanese. The time allocated to English is not sufficient, and educators will not be able to accomplish the TEFL targets stated in the Ministry of Education report. The integrated study classes will, therefore, not lead to a broadening of the base—that is, people who have the ability to carry out daily conversations and engage in a wide range of communication activities in English. A larger budget needs to be allocated to English, making it a regular subject to resolve these problems. Funding for TEFL is low throughout the school system, resulting in an inability to implement a coherent English education system which is consistent from the primary to tertiary stages. Only a solid base which is strongly supported by the general public would successfully result in an environment where professionals can be raised.

(Waseda University)

Report from the JACET Office
Hiroshi Kobayashi, Secretary General

JACET activities from April, 2001 to March, 2002
Our main activities were as follows:

(1) Annual Convention
The 40th Annual Convention was held from September 14-16 at Fuji Women's College.

(2) Chapter Conventions
Each chapter held its own convention on the following dates and locations: Tohoku: June 9, Tohoku Gakuen University; Hokkaido: June 16 at Fuji Women's College; Chubu: June 2 at Nagoya City University; Kansai: June 9 at Kobe Jogakuen University; Chugoku-Shikoku: June 3 at Hiroshima Kokusai Gakuen University; Kansai-Okinawa: October 13 at Nagasaki Junchi University.

(3) Regular Publications
JACET Bulletin No.34 and JACET News No.128-133 were published.

(4) JACET Summer Seminar
The 29th JACET Summer Seminar was held at Kusatsu Seminar House on August 17-20. The theme was "Language Learning Strategy." The main lecturer was Professor Rebeca Oxford of Maryland University.

(5) JACET English Teaching Seminar
The 11th English Teaching Seminar was held at Toyko University on March 28. The theme was "English Teaching in Elementary Schools: International Understanding and Language Education."
Six regular monthly meetings were held on the following dates at those locations. April 28 at Tokyo Denki University: SLA Research and Foreign Language Education; May 19 at Waseda University: "Critical Thinking as Propaganda Analysis; June 30 at Tokyo Denki University: Reading Multi-model Texts; October 6 at Tokyo Denki University: Flexible Teaching through Computers and World English and English Education for the 21st Century. November 17 at Waseda University: Qualitative Analysis of University Entrance Examinations; January 26 at Tokyo Denki University: Learner Corpus. In addition, two special meetings were held at Tokyo Denki University: "Is there an applied sociolinguistics?" by Dr. Ronald Wadeburn on October 27 and "Task-based Language Teaching and Learning—A sociocultural Perspective" by Dr. Rod Ellis on December 8.

(7) International Exchange Programs

Prof. Michiko Nakano and Prof. Hidoshi Murano represented JACET at the Annual RELC Seminar. Prof. Masaki Oda attended the IATEFL Conference. Prof. Ikuo Koike and Prof. Shuhei Kadota attended the International KATE Conference.

(8) Others

The Fortieth Anniversary Overview of the JACET (1992-2002) was compiled in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the JACET foundation.

[Chapter News]

[Holkkaido Chapor Report]
Annual Chapter Convention
On June 16, the 2001 Hokkaido Chapter convention was held at Fuji Women's College. In the general meeting, the financial report for the 2000 fiscal year, and the 2001 schedule and budget were approved. A symposium entitled "English Education in the 21st Century and the Role of JACET" followed as the first lecture meeting of the year. The panelists were Osamu Takai (Daito Univ. of Commerce), Yoshiki Yokoyama (Hokkaido Univ. of Education, Iwamizawa), and Kayoko Machida (Hokkaido Tokai Univ.), and the coordinator was Takefki Kurihara (Hokkaido Univ.). Lecture Meetings and Publications.
In addition to the symposium in the convention, two lecture meetings were held. On August 15 at Hokkaido University International Student Center, Dr. Rebecca L. Oxford (The Univ. of Maryland) gave a lecture entitled "Research on Language Learning Strategies: Crucial Concepts, Methods, and Findings." Table discussions followed the lecture. This was under joint auspices of the International Student Center, the Graduate School of International Media and Communication, and the Hokkaido English Language Education Society. On September 15 at the Hokkaido Study Center of The University of Aizu, Dr. Guy Cook (The Univ. of Reading) presented a lecture entitled "The Philosopher Pulled the Lever Jaw of the Hen." His workshop or language play followed the lecture. This meeting was held under joint auspices of ELTIE, the British Council and the Hokkaido English Language Education Society. The fiftieth issue of The JACET Hokkaido Chapter Newsletter will be published in March.
(Yamashita Kawai, Hokkaido Univ.)

[Tokyo Chapter Report]
Annual Chapter Convention
June 9, 2001, Tokyo Gakushuin Univ., 14:00-17:00
Special Lectures
(1) Hideo Oka (Univ. of Tokyo, Deputy Secretary-General, JACET) "Paradoxes in Vocabulary Teaching" (2) Masaki Ohtuji (Seisen Univ.) "Learning English and Vocabulary" Symposium
Theme: New Trends in Vocabulary Teaching
Chair: Tsuruo Takanashi (Hiroshima Univ.)
Panelists: Tsuruo Takanashi (Hiroshima Univ.), Shosuke Takada (Tokyo Gakushuin Univ.), Maakima (Miyagi National College of Technology), Toru Yoshikawa (ALC Education Inc.)
Special Symposium
December 8, 2001, Tokyo Gakushuin Univ., 14:30-17:00
Theme: Problems of English Education for Young Children
Chair: Hinoi Miharu (Seiwa Women's College)
Panelists: Miharu Miharu (Seiwa Women's College)
College), John Thurlow (Seikei Women's Junior College), Koji Suzuki (Akita City University), and Junko Goto (Yamagata City the Tenth Elementary School)

Study Meetings:
(1) Kiyoshi Takahashi (Miyagi Univ. of Education): "The Japanese Yoroshiku (omegashimassu) and its Corresponding English Expressions: Its meaning and Culture Seen from the Wierzbičkian Semantic Point of View" (April 14, Tohoku Gakuin Univ.)
(2) Totsuko 2003 (Tohoku National College of Technology): "Intonation of Non-Native Speakers" (November 10, Tohoku Gakuin Univ.)
(3) Hidechika Masui (Yonezawa Women's Junior College): "Teaching the Generic Use of Countable Nouns and in their Plural Forms" (November 10, Tohoku Gakuin Univ.)

Executive Committee Meetings:
April 14, 2001; June 9, 2001; December 8, 2001; March 9, 2002

Totsuko-Chapter Newsletter
The Chapter's 23rd newsletter was published in February, 2002. The newsletter commemorates the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Totsuko-Chapter.

[Hiroshi Murano, Totsuko Gakuin University]

[Chubu Chapter Report]
Our main activities from February, 2001 to February, 2002 were as follows:
Annual Chapter Convention.
The Chubu Chapter Convention of 2001 was held on June 2 at Nagoya City Univ. At the General Meeting, the accounts for the 2000 fiscal year and the budget for 2001 were submitted and approved. In the morning session, six papers were presented in two different rooms. In the afternoon, Prof. Mamoru Morzumi (Obari Univ.) gave a special lecture entitled "Assignments given to English Teachers in the Early 21st Century," which was followed by a symposium. The panelists were Seiya Matsunoto (Aichi Shukokusai Univ.), Tadashi Shiozawa (Chiba Univ.), Chisato Furuya (The Research Institute of Asama Gakuin Univ.), and Hiroshi Yoshikawa (Chukyo Univ.).

Local Meetings.
Three locorne meetings were held. One was by Hiromi Suzuki (Chiba Univ.), whose talk was on "A Journey of English Education Technology—From Come-Come English to Internet." This lecture was held on March 16 at Chiba Daigaku Techno-Culture College. Another lecture was given by Nobuyuki Honna (Asama Gakuin Univ.) on "Diffusion and Changes of English in Asia," which took place on Oct. 6 at Nanzen Junior College under the auspices of Nanzen College Foreign Language Research Center. The other was presented by Ronald Wardhaugh (Former Prof. at Univ. of Toronto) on Oct. 20 at Chukyo Univ. The title of his lecture was "Is There an Applied Sociolinguistics?"

Study Meetings.
Chubu Univ. hosted two study meetings on Dec. 15. Firstly Keiko Takakawa (Nagoya Bunki Junior College) gave a talk on "Current Situation of ESP and Its Future Development—An Experiment at Nishinomiya Training Facility." Secondly Yosu Nishimura (Chukyo Univ.) talked on "Topic Development in Student's E-mail Writing."

Executive Committee Meetings.
Nine Executive Committee Meetings took place on Feb. 10 at Nagoya Women's Univ., on March 16 at Chuba Daigaku Techno-Culture College, on April 14, 28 and Aug. 10 at Nagoya Women's Univ., on Oct. 6 at Nanzen Junior College, on Nov. 17 and Dec. 15 at Chukyo Univ. and on Feb. 9, 2002 at Nagoya Women's Univ.

Steering Committee Meetings.
Three Steering Committee Meetings were held on March 16 at Chuba Daigaku Techno-Culture College, on April 14 at Nagoya Women's Univ. and on April 28 at Nagoya City Univ.

A Meeting for Selection of Executive Committee for 2002 took place on Nov. 17 at Chukyo Univ.
Newsletter:
JACET Chubu Newsletter, No. 6 (May 7) and No. 7 (Dec. 25) were published.
Biko Goto * Tokai Women's Junior College)

[Kansai Chapter Report]
Our main activities since April 2001 were as follows:
JACET Kansai Chapter Spring Forum
(co-sponsored by The Oxford UP & British Council)
Date: May 12, 2001
Place: British Council in Osaka
Speakers and Topics: Prof. Tom McArthur (Univ. of Exeter) World English: A Blessing or A Curse?; Prof. Masanori Toyota (Kansai Gaidai Univ.) World English: A Japanese Perspective
vocabulary in particular texts" by Hisatsugu Torigoe of Takamay Densho Kosen, and 4) "Language activities in "Theme-based Language Instruction" by Ikeno of Ehime University.

Some were interim reports and others brief introductions. The presentations led to informal but enthusiastic discussions. Of particular interest to the attendees were the first two papers. First, Professor Ikeno talked about a drastic change taking place at Ehime University; all the first-year students have been committed to small-size classes of twenty for oral communication, beginning April 2001. The General Education Center of the university in charge of the new system had to find enough native speakers of English in Matsuyama to teach eighty-plus classes.

More native speakers seem to be taking over English instruction, according to observations made by the participants, including members of Tokai University, Okayama University, and Hiroshima University. One professor cautioned, "It is an illusion to think everything would be resolved if instruction is left up to native speakers. Problems arise from a 'native-speaker-only' approach toward English education." Another participant stated the importance of providing sufficient reading skills to Japanese students.

Second, Professor Horibe of Hiroshima Kogaku University submitted a very timely theme, "What is so-called 'Cross-Cultural Understanding' in English education?" He referred to the two observable phenomena in English education: first, the emergence of a neutral, culturally colorless English, or a kind of Morse code (Kumihito 1999), and the second, a localized, acculturated English, such as Indian English (Kachru 1990). These two directions resulted from the proliferation of English throughout the world. Professor Horibe then listed five ways to interpret cross-cultural understanding with regard to English education. 1) English is an inescapable part of Anglo-Saxon culture; its thoughts, values should be taught. 2) Cross-cultural understanding is needed to communicate with Westerners, as English is deeply connected to their communication patterns, customs and behaviour patterns. What is called 'oral communication' falls into this category. 3) English functions as world lingua franca, and this rules out its ties with any particular country or nation. "English is no longer a possession of Britain or America." (Takao Suzuki) 4) As the term 'World Englishes' suggests, each English spoken in the world is linked with its local culture, and so cross-cultural understanding means to learn the culture of the area where the language is spoken. 5) English education in Japan should focus on Japanese culture so that Japan can send messages to the world. (Suzuki 1999) Horibe regards cross-cultural understanding as a 'by-product' of English education, since one cannot learn a foreign language without exposure to a different culture. He admitted that he was using the first and the third stance properly.

(Jim Numano, Hiroshima Kosei Gakushu Gakuen)

[Kyushu/Okinawa Chapter Report]

Executive Committee Meeting
1. January 26, 2002, Chikushi Jogakuen Univ., 14:00-17:00: Discussed plans for the annual conference; discussed newsletter publication, confirmed changes in officers for the 2002 academic year; selected representatives to send to overseas organizations.
2. March 23, 2002, Seinan Gakuen Univ., 13:00-15:00: Reviewed activities and the budget for the 2001 academic year; discussed plans for the 2002 academic year, including the annual conference and the spring lecture.

Recent Chapter Activities
1. Annual Conference Planning
The 17th Annual Chapter Conference will be held at Chikushi Jogakuen Univ. on October 12, 2002. The theme of the conference will be "Reforming University-Level English Education". Tentative panels for the main symposium are Tomoka Tatsuki (Fukuoka International Univ.), Otusu Atsushi (Fukuoka Univ.), Shimotani Hiroshi (Kumamoto Univ.), and Yokoyama Shozo (Civil Aviation College).
2. Representatives to Overseas Organizations Yamashiki Hisako (Kurume Institute of Technology) was selected to attend a conference at RELC (Singapore) in April 2002. She will present a paper entitled "Development of On-Line Software Checking the Level of Vocabulary." Nakano Hidaka (Kyushu Kyoiku Univ.) and Kanamori Tsuyoshi (Nagasaki Wesleyan Univ.) were selected to give represent the Chapter at the spring Yoyogasaki
Reports from Special Interest Groups (SIGS)

Bilingualism

We decided to publish our previous reports on bilingual education in Japan and have been preparing for this publication. Details on the publication— the theoretical frameworks of bilingualism, chapters, glossary, etc.— were discussed monthly. As we finished writing our first drafts in September, we found it necessary to revisit schools to get up-to-date information. Requests for permission were sent out in December, and revisits to schools were made through January and February. We will finish writing by mid-March, and the publication will be presented at the JACET Annual Convention. We also had two workshops on the Oral Proficiency Test for Bilingual Children (OPT) held by Professor Kazuko Nakajima (Univ. of Toyama) in July.

Ruri Ashida (Univ. of the Sacred Heart)

Classroom-Centered English Teaching

Established in 2001, the Classroom-Centered English Teaching group is the newest of the Chapter's four SIGs. The group is devoted to building bridges among teachers of English at all levels and will focus on studying classroom activities, teaching plans, and teaching materials from a practical point of view. On October 14, 2001 the day after the Chapter conference, the group held its first meeting at Nagasaki Junior Women's High School. The meeting included presentations on "The Role of English Phonetics Instruction in Developing Communicative Competence," JACET President Yutaka Yotsy (Waseda Univ.) was invited to give the opening lecture under the title "Making Instruction in English Phonetics Instruction Useful in the Classroom." Takei Takayoshi (Seikan Gakuen Univ.) taught a class entitled "Approaches and Examples for Teaching Practical Communication." The meeting concluded with a forum entitled "How Should English Education Advance in the 21st Century?"

For more information, please contact Kazunori Tsuyoshi (Nagasaki Women's Univ.) at harisakan@danson.ne.jp.

Computers and English Education

The group continued to exchange information about recent developments in the application of computer technology to English education. The group relies mainly on e-mail to exchange information.

English Education in East Asia

During the 2001 academic year, the English Education in East Asia continued to hold monthly or bimonthly presentations, Topics of presentations during the 2001 academic year included: Elementary and Junior High School English Classes in Posan (Takei Takeyoshi, Seikan Gakuen Univ.); New Junior High School Textbooks in Korea (Kiyotaka Katsumi, Izuka Nishin Junior High School); English Education in North Korea (Robert J. Fouser, Kagoshima Univ.); Taiwan's "Foreign Language Proficiency Test" (Ohtsu Akiyoshi, Fukuoka Univ.); English Learners' Dictionaries (Takubo Kazuyuki, Kanome Univ. Fukuoka Pref. School); English Education in Malaysia and Indonesia (Jim Stewar, Chibaisha Jogakuan Univ.); Junior high school textbooks in Hong Kong (Yamashita Tomi, Fukuoka Univ. of Education). Since it began in 1999, the group has held 27 meetings. Plans for the 2002 academic year include monthly or bimonthly presentations and a research visit to an Asian country. For further information, please visit the group's Website (http://yuldol.net/asian-eng/index-e.html) or contact Kinoshita Masayoshi (Fukuoka International Univ.) at kinoshita@fukuoka-int.ac.jp.

ESP

During the 2001 academic year, the ESP group held a symposium entitled "ESP Materials Design" at the national JACET Conference in Hakodate in September 2001. The group's first research bulletin entitled "ESP: its research and practice" was published in March 2002. The group held an annual meeting in March 2002. For further information on the group's activities, please contact Yokozauma Shingo (Civil Aviation College) at yoko@kouki-du.ac.jp.
Report on JACET Lecture

Lecturer: Rod Ellis (University of Auckland)
Title: Task-based Teaching and Learning: A Sociocultural Perspective
Date: December 8, 2001

On December 8, 2001, JACET held a special lecture by the eminent Professor Rod Ellis of Auckland University. It was during the busy end-of-the-year season, but we had the privilege of hosting a large audience. Professor Ellis updated us on task-based teaching and learning.

The presentation started with a comparison of two commonly-held notions of task-based language learning. The dominant concept is represented by 'the computational metaphor', and features 1) interaction as a source of 'input', 2) the role of 'output' (production), and 3) a 'focus on form'. Based on the notion that language learning is administered by human beings who live in socio-cultural environments, Prof. Ellis presented an alternative approach of 'Sociocultural SLA', drawing from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, and emphasizing 'participation' rather than 'acquisition'. He then provided a detailed analysis of how new linguistic forms arise out of interpersonal activity.

Next, Prof. Ellis described the key constructs in Sociocultural Theory, such as mediated learning, verbal interaction and learning, private speech, the zone of proximal development, scaffolding, collaborative dialogue and instructional conversations. Ellis again emphasized the importance of learners actually performing new functions when engaged in language learning tasks. In this sense, motives, which are the central factor to consider in any activity, can be deconstructed into three levels of cognition: 1) motives (why something is done), 2) goals (what is done), and 3) operations (how it is done).

After detailing evidence of 'mediated learning' through a socio-cultural view of task-based language learning/teaching, Prof. Ellis summarized a socio-cultural view of tasks. The central ideas are:

1) Tasks cannot be externally defined.
2) The setting in which the task is performed is crucial.
3) Task designers need to establish how learners become oriented with a task.
4) The role of 'scaffolding' needs to be acknowledged.

Although there are some limitations to the socio-cultural view of tasks, such as a loose construct of ZPD and a lack of longitudinal studies, Prof. Ellis concluded that the socio-cultural view of tasks is as an efficient alternative in language learning/teaching, and has offered these implications for task-based research.

1) The importance of examining the setting in which tasks are performed.
2) The importance of establishing what the 'activity' consists of.
3) An emphasis on process as opposed to product.
4) Recognition that 'products' are dialogically constructed.
5) An examination of how individuals (as opposed to groups) perform tasks, and
6) A methodology for the qualitative analysis of how tasks are performed.

(Reported by SaNO Fujiko of Surugadai University)

Learner Corpus Research - State of the Art - Yukio Tono

Learner Corpus Compilation and Its Application to SLA Research, Megumi Aoki

Dr. Yukio Tono's presentation consisted of three parts. In the first part, Dr. Tono offered a general overview of learner corpus (LC) research, explaining how learner data have been treated in the historical development of SLA studies (Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis, and Performance Analysis, and classroom process research), as well as corpus linguistics beginning with SEU in the UK and the Brown Corpus in the US. He then pointed out several features of LC and introduced recent LC-based projects conducted both overseas and in Japan, such as the JFEFL Corpus Project, where Dr. Tono has been playing an active role.

In the final section, he explained some technical devices involved in LC building such as "mark-up" and "annotations." He also introduced some instances of LC studies that can be conducted both with and without annotations. Actual samples of tagged LC data were shown to facilitate the audience's understanding.

The second speaker, Dr. Megumi Aoki, first
explained the JELFL Corpus and introduced several instances of LC-based SLA studies related to vocabulary, morpheme, syntax, and semantics acquisition. Focusing on syntax, she presented the findings of the study she conducted in Lancaster entitled "A Learner Corpus-based Approach to Japanese EFL Learners' Interlanguage Construction: Describing the Process of Noun Phrase Development." Ms. Aoki analyzed written data produced by Japanese EFL students with different grade levels. She measured both the length of the noun phrase and type of the syntactic construction that appeared in the LC she tagged. One of her findings is that there is a considerable jump between the first-year and second-year senior high students in terms of the length of the noun phrases. A significant increase was also observed in the use of the construction that consists of a head noun and a post-positioned modifier as the students become more mature writers.

In the final section of the presentation, Dr. Tono suggested several directions for possible future studies in which LC can be utilized to promote the development of the SLA research field. The meeting attracted a large audience. Dr. Tono gave the audience a general view of LC, and Ms. Aoki presented a concrete example of LC-based studies. Consequently, the meeting met the needs of both the teachers/researchers who are already familiar with LC research and those who are new to this area. (Takao Kaminuma, Senshu Univ.)

An Appeal to the Education Ministry

An appeal was made by Prof. Korke, Special Advice to the JACET, to the Ministry of Education and Science in compliance with the request of the Ministry. Due to space limitations, it is only possible to cite the items covered in the appeal:

Get

Premises of our proposal

1. Why do we propose to reform a foreign language education policy in Japan?
   a. A request made to the Education and Science Minister—the role of politicians
   b. Foreign language education in crisis in Japan

2. Comparison with other countries and other problems
   a. The foreign language education system in Japan for the last fifty years is the primary cause of a weak foreign language education system, in contrast to the foreign language education policies adopted in many other countries.
   b. What has foreign language education in Japan lagged behind?
      a. Parents tend to teach younger children foreign languages abroad.
      b. It is appropriate to teach a second foreign language.
      c. Class has been downsized in many countries, whereas Japan has had very large classes when teaching children a foreign language.
   c. Why is the TOEFL score for Japanese so low?
   d. What foreign language education policies have been adopted at the Ministry of Education in Japan?
      a. Problems with foreign language education among Japanese teachers of English
      b. Reforming foreign language education will not be an easy task.
      c. Policies need to assume strong leadership.
   e. What has the Japan Association of College English Teachers (JACET) done to reform English

Notice and Announcements

Improving Learning Strategies for Literacy:
Research and Practice
An International Research Conference on First and Second Language (L1 and L2) Literacy Strategies
November 1 - 3, 2002
The Inn and Conference Center University of Maryland University College Campus, Maryland

Improving Learning Strategies for Literacy:
Research and Practice
For more information, please contact Kara Figueredo, Conference Coordinator, at le104@umd.edu

A panel discussion on Extensive Reading will be held on June 2nd this year. The panelists are Beniko Mason of International Baptist University and Sukai Kunibide of Denki-Tsushin University. They will talk about some extraordinary
Results that are being observed in their classrooms where adolescents and adults, after only a few months of Expository Reading mainly in graded readers, have started to enjoy full-blown paperbacks, including Harry Potter books, The Lord of the Rings trilogy, and Sidney Sheldon tomes. Discussion will be conducted mainly in Japanese. Anyone is welcome if they are not happy with conventional teaching and/or simply looking for a refreshing idea for their classroom. Please note the details below.

Date: Saturday, June 2nd, 2002
Time: 2 P.M. to 5 P.M.
Place: S.E.G. main building in Shinjuku, Tokyo

For maps, registration and other details, please send an e-mail to: sosossgp.co.jp

Editors: T. Kayo, R.J. Fossier, Y. Watanabe, & J. Masui

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