

The JACET 4th Survey Committee on English Education in Japan

(Summary)

The committee of the 4th JACET *Jittaichosa* (a status-quo survey) conducted the reported survey for the purpose of examining a fundamental question regarding “who teaches English for what purpose and how” at universities in this country. The targets of the survey were English teachers who engage in English education or are currently teaching an English-related subject or subjects at domestic higher educational institutions including universities, junior colleges, and technical colleges.

Having produced a survey form with 34 questions both in Japanese and in English, the committee administered the survey from August 29th until October 16th of 2017, either in a paper format or an online format. As a result, 634 responses in Japanese and 231 responses in English, 865 responses in total, were obtained. After eliminating invalid responses with contradictory answers, a total of 853 responses were yielded to descriptive statistics and/or cross-tabulation, using Microsoft EXCEL and IBM SPSS.

1. Respondent overview

Questions 1 to 13 of the questionnaire asked the respondents about themselves: member of JACET or not, age, gender, native language(s), highest educational qualification, specialization, work experience, employment status, title of current position, and others. The major results are listed in the table below.

Table 56. Respondent overview

Q	Major results		Notes
1	JACET member	Non-JACET member	
	68.9%	30.8%	
2	Female	Male	
	51.3%	48.3%	
3	In their 50s	In their 40s	Respondents in their 20s and 30s account for only 14.4%.
	37.2%	27.5%	
4	Native language: Japanese	Native language: English	
	73.0%	23.3%	

5	Highest educational qualification: Master's degree	Highest educational qualification: Doctor's degree	Universities are split roughly 49:49 between Japan and overseas where respondents got their final degrees.
	61.2%	34.2%	
6	Specialized field of study: English teaching/ Applied linguistics	Specialized field of study: Linguistics	Respondents specialized in English literature account for only 8.6%.
	62.8%	15.6%	
7	Any full-time jobs that do not involve teaching: Teacher at elementary, junior high or high school	Any full-time jobs that do not involve teaching: Teacher at language school or private tutoring school	27.2% of respondents have never had any full-time jobs.
	36.6%	31.5%	
8	Full-time	Part-time	17.6% of respondents is non-tenured full-time.
	55.2%	25.1%	
9	No. of years as a teacher at the tertiary level:	No. of years as a teacher at the tertiary level: 0~19 years	About 37% of respondents have worked for more than 20 years.
	16.3 years (average)	About 61%	
10	No. of years as a tenured full-time teacher:	Mode:	It takes an average of five years to get tenured position.
	9.9 years (average)	Zero (30.6%)	
11	Title of current position: Professor	Title of current position: Part-time lecturer	
	28.6%	24.7%	
12	Want to get a tenured position	Do not want to get a tenured position	Respondents in their 50s tend to avoid getting tenured position.
	67.4%	27.2%	
13	Submitting an article to an internal university publication	Application to "Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI)"	
	67.0%	12.8%	

Compared with the results of the survey conducted in 2003, the background of the respondents has significantly changed.

First, a change in the age of the respondents was observed. For respondents in their 50s, there was a significant increase in the ratio from 28.0% in 2003 to 37.2% in 2017. On the other hand, there was a considerable decrease in the proportions of respondents in their 20s and 30s from 21.3% in 2003 to 14.4% in 2017. Overall, the English teachers are aging and thus the number and the ratio of younger teachers have declined.

From the response to Q5, one of the reasons is a trend toward higher educational qualifications being required of English teachers. A significant increase from 10.1% in 2003 to 46.7% in 2017 was observed in the number of respondents with a doctoral degree or completion of doctoral course work without the submission of a dissertation. This tendency has resulted in a severe and protracted environment for English teachers hoping to obtain a tenured position. Another reason for the rise in teacher age is indicated by the response to Q7, which was asked about their experiences with full-time jobs. The survey results show that about 55% of the respondents had teaching experience(s) in elementary, junior high or high school as well as at language school or private tutoring school^{*1} while 27.2% of the respondents reported having had no full-time job. In most cases, English teachers start their carrier as a part-time teacher after finishing their doctoral course, and try to find a full-time tenured position at the tertiary level. In other words, with many English teachers completing the doctoral course (the youngest being 27 years old), the age of entering a full-time tenured position has become higher. Moreover, the responses to Q9 and Q10 show that it takes some time for younger teachers to get a full-time tenured position at the tertiary level. In fact, the survey results also show that it takes an average of five years for post-doctoral researchers to get a full-time tenured position. Thus, they are already in their early or middle 30s if they are lucky enough to land a position as a full-time tenured teacher.

Second, significant change is evident from the responses to Q6, which reveals a change in the fields of specialty of the respondents. Of course, many researchers were in English teaching and applied linguistics because the respondents were JACET member(s). However, a significant increase was observed in the number and ratio of respondents in English teaching and applied linguistics, compared to the ratio in the 2003 survey of 34.9%, rose to 62.8% in 2017. In contrast, the number of respondents specializing in English literature and linguistics decreased by 18.8% (8.6% from 27.4%) and 7.9% (15.6% from 23.5%), respectively. These survey results agree with the recent job openings for English teachers, showing the need for specialists in English teaching.

While the committee members of the 4th JACET *Jittai-chosa* (status-quo survey) expected that

there would be more English teachers with substantial practical working experience in the business fields, for Q7 asking about their experience(s) in full-time jobs, only 4.0% of the respondents answered that they had worked in corporations with overseas assignment. In addition, the respondents accounted for less than 10% even with the inclusion of respondents who had worked in corporations in Japan or in national or local government bodies. Since the previous survey did not include the same question, the findings cannot be directly compared with those from 2003. The survey results in 2017 indicate that one out of ten or twenty English teachers report no prior experience in teaching.

In conclusion, the purpose of the 2017 survey was to examine the fundamental question of “who teaches English for what purpose and how” at universities in Japan. We have found that about a half of the English teachers obtained their degrees or completed their doctoral course work at overseas universities and that about 60% are in the fields of English teaching and applied linguistics. The survey results also indicate that over 80% of the respondents are in the fields of English and its related studies and those who are not specialists in English teaching with no experiences in teaching accounted for less than 10%. Moreover, the findings include the fact that the English teachers are aging and are required to have higher educational qualifications. The survey results show that time is required to obtain a full-time tenured position at university; candidates tend to be in their mid-30s on average when they become tenured and that many post-doctoral researchers cannot attain this goal.

*¹ Multiple answers were allowed for this question and 35.3% of the respondents (301/853 respondents) answered “Teaching position in an elementary, a junior high or a high school” and/or “Teaching position in a language school or a private tutoring school.” In addition, 19.0% of the respondents (162/853 respondents) answered “others” including “Corporation(s).” Therefore, 54.3% of the respondents (463/853 respondents) reported having had full-time teaching jobs at schools other than universities.

2. Current working environment

Questions 14 to 17 of the questionnaire ask respondents their current working environment; the type of the school they are working for, the location of the school, the number of students enrolled there, and the type of academic entity they belong to. The major results are listed in the table below.

Table 57. Current working environment

Q	Major results		Notes
14	School: Private	School: National	Junior College: only 2.9%
	68.6%	18.7%	
15	Location: Tokyo	Location: Kansai	Chubu: 13.0%, Kansai (except for Tokyo); 10.8%
	20.4%	18.3%	
16	No. of students: 70,000~10,000	No. of students: 1,000~2,000	5,000~7,000: 10.7% 10,000~20,000: 10.4%
	13.6%	12.7%	
17	Academic entity: Department	Academic entity: (Language) Center	Graduate school: 15.3%
	77.1%	20.3%	

Approximately 70% of the respondents belong to private universities. We obtained answers from 865 English teachers around Japan, yet the largest number of the respondents work in Tokyo. The numbers of students studying in the respondents' institutions are so varied that we cannot find any tendencies among them. These results may reflect the distribution of universities in Japan.

One of the most conspicuous findings in this survey is the answers to Q17: the type of academic entity they belong to. Since the legislative reforms concerning University Establishment Standards in 1991, in which the regulations for units in general education and in academic education were abolished, the so-called "departments of liberal arts" were also abolished, and therefore the majority of the teachers working for a university came to belong to one of its departments. This survey revealed that about 80% of the respondents belong to a department, while about 20% of them belong to a (language) center, which did not exist in the previous survey. If a teacher belongs to a center, he or she can be responsible for university-level tasks such as organizing integrated syllabi, while their superiors or those responsible for personnel affairs may not be English-education majors. Therefore, teachers belonging to this new type of academic entity face difficulties which are different from those in any other types of academic entity, yet the reality has not yet been revealed.

3. What kind of classes the respondents teach at their schools

Questions 18 to 23 of the current questionnaire are related to the classes the respondents teach at their schools. The major results are listed in the table below.

Table 58. What kind of classes the respondents teach at their schools

Q	Major results		Notes
18	Teaching general English	Teaching specialized English	
	82.6%	46.0%	
19	Number of <i>komas</i> (90 min)		
	6.2 <i>komas</i> /week (=9.3 hours / week)		
20	Teaching four skills	Teaching test preparation	Presentaion:34.2% CLIL:15.2% ESP:14.9%
	62.1%	40.1%	
21	Not using CEFR	Using CEFR	
	70.0%	16.9%	
22	Using unified syllabus	Not using unified syllabus	
	67.8%	28.3%	
23	Proficiency-level classes	Courses for each skill area	E-learning: 49.5% Outsourcing: 4.0%
	61.6%	57.4%	

Q18 asks what kind of classes they teach at their schools, and the results show that more than 80% of the respondents teach English courses offered in the general education curriculum, and 50% of them teach English courses offered in the specialized education curriculum. Considering the high percentage of the latter, it seems that this percentage will be larger in the future.

Q19 asks how many English classes (*komas*) they teach per week, and the results show that they teach 6.2 *komas* (90 min) on average. A further examination has revealed that full-time teachers teach 5.2 *komas* on average and part-time teachers teach 7.6 *komas* at the school where they mainly teach.

As for Q20, more than half of the respondents answered that they teach four skills combined or separately, and more than 30% answered that they teach presentations. These results indicate that contents related to oral skills have become more common than before. Furthermore, with respect to Q22, nearly 70% of the respondents answered that their school has a unified syllabus. The combined results of Qs 20 and 22 suggest that many schools are following the current policies promoted by MEXT. For Q23, more than 60% of the respondents answered the school where they teach provides proficiency-based classes, and nearly 60% answered their school offers courses for each skill area. These results suggest that many schools offer scrupulously designed learning settings for learners.

On the other hand, although CLIL, ESP, and EAP, are currently hot topics among English teachers, it seems that their introduction into the English curriculum is still limited. Only over

10% of the respondents answered that their school had introduced them. Furthermore, as for Q21, only nearly 20% of the respondents answered that their school uses CEFR to set a goal of the English course. CEFR has been attracting attention in English education these days; however, the results show that its use is still limited.

Finally, 4% of the respondents answered that their school outsources English classes to a company/ language school/ organization. This percentage may seem to be rather small; however, it also cannot be disregarded considering the scale of the university which turns to outsourcing. In current English education, class contents are often related to oral skills and test preparation, common syllabuses are widely introduced, and scrupulous instruction such as proficiency-based classes are required. Outsourcing of classes may be likely to occur in this situation.

4. Duties and Request(s) related to English education from school teaching staff members

Questions 24 to 27 of the questionnaire asked the respondents about their duties and request(s) related to English education from school teaching staff members other than the English teachers. The major results are listed in the table below.

Table 59. Duties and Request(s) related to English education from school teaching staff members other than the English teachers

Q	Major results		Notes
24	Duties: End-of-semester exams	Duties: Committee work(s)	Curriculum building: 55.3% Employment of full-time teacher(s): 38.3%.
	Over 60%	57.2%	
25	Most important factor to hire new full-time teacher: Academic achievements (Publications and conference presentations)	Most important factor to hire new full-time teacher: Qualification for the subjects to be taught	English proficiency: 54.6% Academic career/degree: 52.2%, Personality: 47.5%.
	68.5%	56.8%	
26	Request(s) related to English education from school teaching staff members other than the English teachers: High	Request(s) related to English education from school teaching staff members other than the English teachers: Never	
	30.8%	27.7%	
27	Nature of the request: Effects of teaching	Nature of the request: Curriculum/Contents	
	59.0%	46.4%	

The responses to Q24 show that over 60% of the respondents are responsible for end-of-semester exams and perform committee work. This finding agrees with the results of the open-ended question, showing that college English teachers have to bear a heavy burden because there is an increasing demand on handling non-teaching tasks such as administrative and clerical work.

Q25 asked the respondents about the most important factor in hiring new full-time teacher(s). About 70% of the respondents answered that an applicant’s academic achievement, including his/her publications and conference presentations, is the most important factor. Since college English teachers and candidates are going on to higher levels of education and they are required to achieve superior performance to show that s/he is good qualified for his/her prospective position, it is understandable that it takes time to secure a tenured position at university. Such a highly skilled professional is required and s/he is expected to be an agreeable person having proficiency in English. Thus, it must be difficult to find a candidate with good qualifications for the subjects to be taught with classes of general English and four skills being offered to students. The survey results reveal that well-qualified teachers with a wide range of skills are needed in Japan.

As many English teachers belong to an undergraduate faculty/school or a language center, Q26 and Q27 asked the respondents whether or not they had received request(s) related to English education from school teaching staff members other than the English teachers. About 30% answered “yes.” The top three requests were related to the effects of teaching, curriculum, and the content of instruction. Many people believe that there is a need for practical English and appropriate evaluation. Therefore, judging from the social environment and the survey results, it seems that school teaching staff members do not place too many demands on English teachers and education.

5. Ideal goals of English education in Japan

Questions 28 to 33 of the questionnaire ask respondents their ideas for English education in Japan. The major results are listed in the table below.

Table 60. Ideal goals of English education in Japan

Q	Major results		Notes
28	Current levels: STEP pre-level 2/CEFR A2	Current levels: STEP level 2/CEFR B1	STEP level 3/CEFR A1 22.6%
	38.3%	25.6%	STEP pre-level 1/CEFR B2 25.3%

29	Target levels: STEP pre-level 1 CEFR B2	Target levels: STEP level 2 CEFR B1	STEP level 1/CEFR C1 5.3% Targets are unnecessary. 4.9%
	50.2%	32.0%	
30	A course taught in English is preferable.	A course taught in English is not preferable.	
	41.4%	28.4%	
31	Purpose: acquiring English basics	Purpose: acquiring skills of collecting or transmitting data at a global scale	Diversity 4.2 (5-point scale) Professional or cultivated capacity 4.1 (5-point scale) Leadership 3.6 (5-point scale)
	4.4 (5-point scale)	4.3 (5-point scale)	
32	Required backgrounds: knowledge of English education or applied linguistics	Required backgrounds: English proficiency for Japanese English teachers	Experiences of using English on the job 3.02 (5-point scale)
	4.27 (5-point scale)	3.89 (5-point scale)	
33	Items necessary to reform entrance examinations: admission policies	Items necessary to reform entrance examinations: 4 skills	Specialty 34.5% Making use of external examinations
	53.2%	48.8%	30.7%

Fifty percent of respondents to Q29 put the goals of English education at CEFR B2 level (STEP pre-level 1). On the other hand, as is shown in Q28, the current levels remain at CEFR A2 level (STEP level 2), and there is deviation with the two scales from the targets. Q31 asks the purpose of English education, among which "to train students in basic English skills" shows the highest ratings of 83.5%. This result offers us many important issues to discuss. The deviation of the current level from the target one could be caused by the fact that many respondents feel their students lack English basic skills.

General approaches to training students in the four skills are adopted, among which remedial lessons are conducted for that purpose only at 10%. The results that collecting or transmitting data or responding to intercultural issues in the global society comes after attaining basic proficiency reflect the current social situations. The relatively low importance put on liberal arts and expertise is consistent with the fact that CLIL, EAP or ESP is not penetrated. The importance of leadership remains at only 3.0 on a 5-point scale, which indicates that while importance is attached to basic proficiency, collecting or transmitting data, responding to intercultural issues or attaining global leadership is not emphasized in English education.

Japanese students' lack of global leadership often causes problems but English education at universities has not adapted a serious stance to the issue.

As for the item of conducting classes in English asked in Q30, 40% is in favor and 30% is in opposition. EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction) is now a hot topic, but both pros and cons are divided equally. Question 32 that asks "academic experiences and language ability" required for English faculty members of the university shows "English proficiency" for Japanese English teachers is required, preceded by "studies on English education / applied linguistics". English proficiency is believed to be essential for English teachers as it is also in the third priority for hiring in personnel affairs. Despite this emphasis on English proficiency, the figures for "experience of actually using English on the job" are low. Although this committee predicted that the number of people who had come from the commercial enterprises and involved in English education for university was increasing, the percentage of respondents who answered that they really transferred from "the commercial enterprises (other than universities, overseas workers)" is only 4.0%. Furthermore the fact that it is about 10%, if the number of people who has experienced public government offices or commercial enterprises are put together, shows the condition for accepting people from enterprises is not cultivated.

Question 33 concerns entrance examinations. The responses that put emphasis on the necessity of improving entrance examinations hold a large number. The opinion, "it is not necessary to change" or "I want to get rid of English tests from entrance examinations", account for only about 5% respectively.

In this section, we briefly summarized the entire questionnaire survey, listed major findings, and discussed implications of notable issues. The results indicate that classroom situations that we face every day are undergoing constant and significant changes, as the circumstances of university English education are. In particular, the realities of English education are changing in various ways, compared to the previous survey. It was notably revealed that teachers, whose profession is now highly specialized, are struggling with various challenges and limitations in diverse classrooms. In the next section, based upon such realities, we will reexamine the results of the current survey and further propose suggestions from the 4th Status Survey Committee.

6. Open-Ended Questions

The final section of the questionnaire was an open-ended item, "Please write down about what you think about your situation at school as an English teacher and your classes freely". The answers were analyzed using by *NVivo Plus*, a software. As a result of the analysis, the following six key words and phrases were identified; (a) teachers, (b) classes, (c) students, (d)

purpose of English education, (e) English education policy of Japan, and (f) opinions to JACET. Opinions regarding teachers focused on teacher qualities, the necessity of knowing applied linguistics, the lack of English proficiency, the lack of full-time English teachers, the limited research budget, the increasingly demanding teaching environment, and the unstable position of English teachers. There were also complaints about the treatment of the teachers because they cannot get a position or income commensurate with the amount of money they spent on their education abroad. Some teachers also pointed out that there is a lack of communication between full-time and part-time teachers or non-native speaking teachers and native speaking teachers. As a result, they are unable to discuss the management of the English program.

As for classes, there were diverse opinions concerning the kind of English skills and the types of teaching methods to adopt. For example, regarding the teaching content, basic English, grammar, oral English, English as a Lingua Franca, ESP, and English as a liberal art were suggested. Some teachers pointed out that English as the preparation for achievement tests such as TOEIC and TOEFL should not be taught and that it would be preferable to develop students' critical thinking through the teaching of English. In addition, there were opinions about material's selection, the use of ICT, the importance of appropriate evaluation, and the use of small-sized classes.

Many teachers indicated that students had limited Japanese language ability and academic ability as well as were demotivated. Some teachers stated that students had diverse abilities and thus it was difficult to accommodate their needs. On the other hand, other teachers were enthusiastic about fostering autonomous learners, developing the English ability of motivated students, and assisting learners to live in a globalized society.

With regard to the purpose of English education, some teachers maintained that universities differ from language schools. Therefore, teachers should have a different purpose for English education.

Referring to policy issues, the national education policy was criticized. For instance, teachers were critical about the emphasis on oral English communication, the stress due to university reforms, and the limited education budget.

Concerning JACET, some teachers claimed the association should state its views about the national English education policy more decisively.

Finally, in the feedback about the questionnaire, some teachers indicated that there were a number of difficult questions to answer.

7. Summary

In this section, we briefly summarized the entire questionnaire survey, listed major findings, and discussed implications of notable issues. The results indicate that classroom situations that we face every day are undergoing constant and significant changes, as the circumstances of university English education are. In particular, the realities of English education are changing in various ways, compared to the previous survey. It was notably revealed that teachers, whose profession is now highly specialized, are struggling with various challenges and limitations in diverse classrooms. In the next section, based upon such realities, we will reexamine the results of the current survey and further propose suggestions from the 4th Status Survey Committee.

Seven Proposals about the Future of English Education at University

Based on the results, we would like to make the following seven proposals about the future of English Education at university

1. English Education to respond to social diversity

Entering the 21st century, we are faced with rapid progress of Information Communication Technology (ICT), and our society has been changing dramatically. With the advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the ways of using Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and e-learning are also expected to change. We should consider possibilities and limitations of ICT. We also should consider English education, which can foster learners' socialities such as communication abilities through dialogues, intercultural communications with people from various backgrounds such as gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, social rank and religion.

2. English Education to respond to borderlessness of people exchanges

Considering the present situations where exchanges between people have become borderless, and education and research activities across multiple areas have been conducted on a global scale, beyond university frameworks, we should increase efforts to promote cooperation with teachers with different academic, nationality and language backgrounds, cooperation with primary and secondary education, regional cooperation, industry-academia-government cooperation, and international cooperation. We should enrich our view of English as a Lingua Franca, as well as improve our English ability. We also should foster human resources who can provide leadership in international situations.

3. English Education to response to changes in educational environment

We are faced with various changes in English Education such as the introduction of external English tests to university entrance exams and the outsourcing of skill-based English education. In this situation, we should hold a comprehensive viewpoint for setting and managing educational principles in university-wide English education, acquire the ability to manage whole courses and programs, and to plan and develop curricula and syllabi at the university.

4. English Education emphasizing specialty

Considering the situation where society is highly specialized and the level of expertise of

teachers involved in English education become high, we should examine what is necessary to accomplish the ideal English level, the Grade Pre-1 Test in Practical English Proficiency (EIKEN), which is equivalent to B2 level in the Common European Framework of References for languages (CEFR) at the university English education from an expertise viewpoint. We should utilize our expertise in English education through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), English as Medium of Instruction (EMI), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). We should consider, propose and practice the way of instruction to improve motivation of learners who are not good at English or at low proficiency levels of English from the expertise viewpoint.

5. Environmental arrangement for young scholars being active and human resource development

To respond to today's social needs, we should focus on fostering young scholars. Considering recruitment of young scholars who represent the next generation in changing the employment system dramatically, we should arrange the educational and research environment as a working place where the young scholars feel attractive and inviting.

6. Providing references for university English teachers

Young researchers and teachers at universities need highly specialized knowledge to accumulate achievements, at the same time they are expected to teach in the diversified environments of English education and engage in various administration-related tasks. In order for young researchers and teachers to start jobs in English education at university smoothly, we should provide them with comprehensive references to learn basic knowledge and skills to engage in English education.

7. Arranging the research environment to solve problems in education

Reforms of the curriculum guidelines for English education and entrance examination systems have been carried out continuously in response to globalization and falling birthrates. Education at primary, junior high and senior high schools has been changing. These influence university education. We should assess what problems these changes cause and improve the quality of English education through solving these problems. For this purpose, we should continue to examine the changes in English education at university through fixed-point observation.