

Explorations in Teacher Education

JALT Teacher Education SIG Newsletter

Winter 2007 Volume 15, Issue 1

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And Now a Word from...The Editor

Welcome to Volume 15, Issue 1, the Winter 2007 edition of Explorations in Teacher Education, the newsletter of the JALT Teacher Education Special Interest Group (TE SIG).

I'm writing this on December 31st 2006. On New Year's Eve it seems like an appropriate time to reflect on the year. There was the Pan-SIG conference in May, the EBM in July, the TE Conference in Okayama in October and the JALT National conference in Kita-Kyushu in November. This year I have been the acting co-ordinator and now there is a new coordinator. Tara Weller stepped forward at the TE AGM at the JALT National conference. Michael Crawford has become the new treasurer. Thanks very much to James Venema for his years of good work in that post. Jan Visscher, who founded the TE SIG has also returned to the committee as Member-at-large. Thanks also to Jamie Hall who has been the webmaster for the SIG since the 2005 AGM. Paul Beaufait has continued as the Membership Chair, while I have continued as the Publications Chair. The Okayama Conference was a great success and thanks again to Neil Cowie. Colin Graham is the new Program Chair. Colin is also the TE SIG representative for the Pan-SIG conference. Thank you for all your work Colin. For more information about this year's Pan-SIG conference see page 4. Anthony Robins, our illustrious former coordinator has now become the chair of the JALT Research Grants Committee, but fortunately is still available to provide some help to the current TE SIG officers.

As mentioned in the previous issue the old Yahoo groups list has gone but has been replaced by a new list set up by Tim Knowles. In order to join, navigate to Yahoo Groups and then search for 'tedsig'. The main page has a 'Join Group' button.

This issue we have three articles and a message from Tessa Woodward, editor of the Teacher Trainer journal. The articles are by James Porcaro, Steve Darn and Rennison Whittaker.

Hope you enjoy the issue.

Simon Lees, editor.

Pan-SIG 2007 Conference

12th-13th May 2007

The 6th Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference 2007:
Second Language Acquisition: Theory and
Pedagogy

Tohoku Bunka Gakuen University, Sendai.

The conference will be co-hosted by the Materials Writers (MW), Other Language Educators (OLE), Pragmatics (Prag), Teacher Education (TE) and Testing & Evaluation SIGs (TEval) and the Sendai JALT Chapter.

It will explore the relationship between second language acquisition and the mechanics of the second language classroom.

Nonverbal Communication – An Awareness-raising Session

Steve Darn, Izmir University of Economics, Turkey

This is an outline of a workshop designed to give teachers an insight into the importance of teaching nonverbal communication alongside phonology and speaking skills in order to improve learners' ability to communicate naturally and convey meaning more clearly.

Time: 60 minutes **Audience:** preferably at least one other language/culture group as well as native speakers. A multilingual group would be ideal.

Aims

- 5 Raise awareness of the importance of nonverbal communication.
- 6 Provide information on the nature and functions of nonverbal communication.
- 7 Demonstrate the need to teach aspects of nonverbal communication, particularly gestures.
- 8 Demonstrate the use of nonverbal communication as a teaching tool.

Stage 1

Running (wall) dictation to introduce the topic and emphasize the importance of nonverbal communication.

Text:

Nonverbal communication is the unspoken communication that goes on in every face-to-face encounter with another human being. It tells you their true feelings towards you and how well your words are being received. 90% of our message is communicated nonverbally, and only 10% is actual words. Nonverbal communication consists of many different devices which come naturally to native speakers, but needs to be taught to language students in order to help them to communicate naturally and avoid misunderstandings.

Stage 2

What is nonverbal communication? What are its components?

Show the following chart as an OHT, but cover the right-hand column. Ask participants how many they can guess from the words (give clues – kinaesthetic, proximity, chronometer).

Reveal slowly, leaving time for questions and comments.

Kinesics	body motions (blushes, shrugs, eye movement)
Proxemics	nearness (in relation to people and things)
Haptics	touch
Oculesics	eye contact
Chronemics	use of time
Olfactics	smell
Vocalics	tone of voice, timbre, volume
Sound Symbols	grunts, mmm, er, mumbling
Silence	absence of sound (muteness, stillness, secrecy)
Adornment	clothing, jewellery etc.
Posture	position of the body
Locomotion	walking, running
Expression	frowns, grimaces, smirks, smiles, pouting

Stage 3

Point out that, as with grammatical structures, there is a relationship between form and function in nonverbal communication. As with grammar and lexis, one form may have different functions, while one function may be conveyed by a number of forms.

Put up the following chart on an OHT, covering the right-hand column. Ask participants what each 'form' would mean in their culture. Reveal functions, conclude that functions differ from culture to culture and that the use of nonverbal communication, particularly body language and gestures can either complement meaning or lead to complete misunderstanding.

Form	Function
Any	Managing identity
Any	Defining relationships
Any	Conveying attitudes and feelings
Nod (Yes)	Agreeing
Head shake	Disagreeing, contradicting
Shrug (I don't know)	Showing disinterest
Scratch head, quizzical look	Complementing
Tone of voice, pointing	Emphasising, clarifying
Hand raised	Turn taking
Eye movements	Deceiving
Staring/looking down or away	Dominating/submitting
Raised fist	Showing aggression
Hand-shake	Socialising
Touching, kissing	Arousal
Over-adornment	Boasting

Stage 4

Listening. In pairs, participants take turns speaking to each other (for 30 seconds to 1 minute) without verbal responses, using facial expressions and gestures only.

Stage 5

Focus on gestures. Show the following pictures (OHT or handout). Ask participants to work in pairs, discuss what each gesture would mean in their culture, what the situation might be, and what the expected reaction would be (discuss as many as time permits).

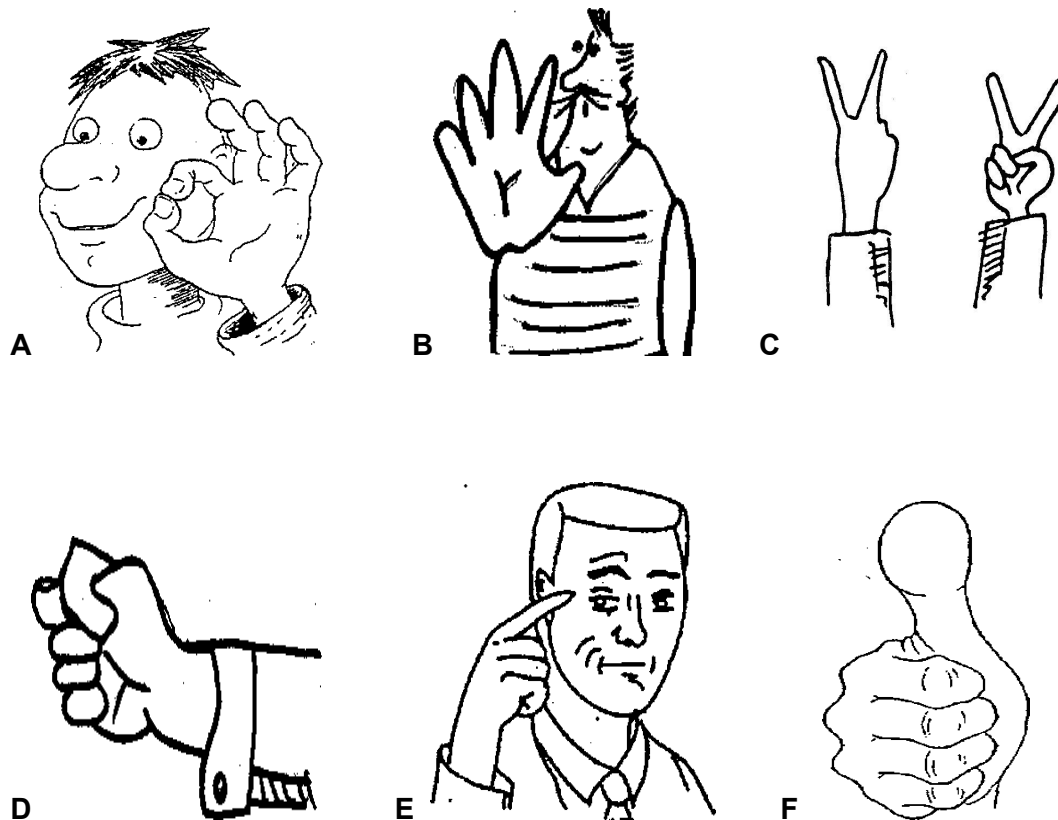


Stage 6

Show the following six gestures as an OHT (this is better done one-by-one). Ask participants to practise the gestures to each other and see what response they get. This can be done in

pairs, or, with a small group, as a mingle activity.

Tell participants what each gesture means in different cultures. Ask them to imagine what inter-cultural misunderstandings might occur.



Key:

A US – everything's all right, France – zero, worthless, Japan – money, Germany –get lost, Malta, Greece, Brazil – obscene gesture, Turkey – homosexual

B Commonly – stop, enough (person, car, action), Turkey – You get nothing from me, W Africa – You have 5 fathers

C Europe, US – peace, victory UK, Australia – rude gesture, Turkey – two

D Turkey, Greece, Tunisia, Holland – obscene, Russia – you get nothing from me, Yugoslavia – nothing, you can't have it, Brazil – good luck

E Turkey, Italy – you're crazy, US – use your head, solve the problem

F US – no problem, all OK Australia, Iran – get lost, Nigeria – very offensive gesture,

Germany – one, Japan – five, Turkey – hitchhiking, political rightist party

Stage 7.

Acting out a short dialogue. Ask participants to ‘read’ the dialogue using gesture, expression and body language only.

Example:

A Excuse me. Can you take a picture of me?

B Yeah, sure.

A Just press that button.

B Er, which one?

A The one on the top.

B OK, right. Er.... can you move back a bit.

A Is this OK?

B Fine, now smile. That’s it. Very nice.

A Thanks.

B Not at all. You’ve got a lovely smile. Er... fancy a drink?

A OK, but I’ve got no money on me.

B That’s OK. I’ll pay.

Stage 8.

Adding drama. Participants work in groups of four (three characters and one responsible for sound effects) to act out a short play including as much body language, gesture and facial expression as possible, noting the stage directions. Give plenty of time to read the script and rehearse.

Script:

A SHORT PLAY

Characters – Robert, Kate, John. Robert and Kate are relaxing at home. It’s 11.00p.m.

	Speaker	Directions	Lines
		Sound effects – 3 knocks on the door	
1	Robert	<i>puzzled</i>	Who on earth can that be at this time of night?
2	Kate		I'll go and see
		Sound effects – 3 more knocks on the door	
3	Kate	<i>loudly, angrily</i>	All right! Alright! I'm coming!
		Sound effects – sound of door opening	
4	Kate	<i>angrily, then surprised</i>	There's no need to knock so....John! What on earth are you...?
5	John	<i>interrupting, loudly</i>	Darling! I couldn't stand it! I had to come!
6	Kate	<i>urgently</i>	Keep your voice down. Robert's in there
7	John	<i>quietly</i>	I know. That's why I've....
8	Robert	<i>shouting from a distance</i>	Kate! Who is it?
9	Kate	<i>loudly, hesitating</i>	Oh!....it's.....it's only John!
10	Robert	<i>sternly</i>	Well don't keep him out in the cold. Ask him to come in.
11	Kate	<i>whispering</i>	Oh, John.....we can't
12	Robert	<i>reassuringly</i>	Don't worry darling. Leave it to me. Everything's going to be all right.
		Sound effects – sounds of a drink being poured and a door opening	
13	Robert	<i>friendly</i>	Ah! Hello John! Just in time for a drink.
14	Kate	<i>sharply</i>	He's not staying.
15	Robert	<i>laughing</i>	Of course he is! Since when has John refused a drink? Whisky all right?
		Sound effects – another drink being poured	
16	Robert	<i>shocked</i>	Here you are...what! A gun?! What on earth!
17	Kate	<i>shouting</i>	John! Are you mad?!
18	John	<i>very calmly</i>	No Kate, I'm perfectly sane.
19	Robert	<i>anxiously</i>	Now John....come along....put that gun away, eh?
20	Kate	<i>pleadingly</i>	John, please!
21	John	<i>calmly</i>	No Kate. I love you and there's only one person stopping us being together.
22	Kate	<i>desperately</i>	John! Don't!
23	John	<i>loudly</i>	I must! Sorry Robert, but you must see that....
24	Robert	<i>hysterically</i>	For God's sake Kate! Do something!
25	Kate	<i>pleadingly</i>	John! Please! This won't get us anywhere.
		Sound effects – loud gunshot, a scream, a body falling, breaking glass	
26	John	<i>calmly</i>	Now there's no-one between us.
27	Kate	<i>angrily</i>	Oh you fool! You stupid....stupid....stupid fool
		Sound effects – loud crying (Kate)	

Stage 9

Gestures for the teacher. Remind participants that gestures and use of the hands can save talking time and add clarity, particularly when giving instructions and correcting spoken errors. Most teachers already have a repertoire of gestures, but it is important to start using gestures early on with a class and, as with all classroom language, to teach the learners what they mean.

Ask participants to show what gesture they would use when instructing learners to:

- Listen
- Write
- Open their books
- Get into groups
- Work in pairs
- Continue
- Past, present or future?

Any others?

Remind participants about 'finger correction' techniques and the use of facial expressions to indicate an error and encourage the learner to self-correct. Ask participants to use their fingers to show:

- A wrong word
- A missing word
- An unnecessary word
- Wrong word order
- A contraction

Any others?

Ask participants to think of or write a sentence with one mistake in it, then mingle, saying their sentence to other participants who should try to correct without speaking.

Stage 10

Summary.

Implications for the classroom:

- Creating classroom atmosphere
- Improving classroom management
- Giving feedback/correction

- Peer correction
- Learning to listen
- Reducing fear of silence
- Reducing unnecessary TTT
- Increasing student participation
- Confidence building
- Effective pair and group work
- Increasing intercultural competence
- Avoiding misunderstandings

Major considerations:

- Communication is 75-90% nonverbal.
- Nonverbal communication is a transferable but not translatable skill.
- Culture and gender may be affecting factors.
- Kinaesthetic learners and teachers may be most adept

Given that nonverbal communication is an important component of natural language and adds so much meaning to spoken language, it seems reasonable that it should be taught. Although there is unlikely to be a nonverbal communication syllabus, the suggestion is that, like phonology, aspects of nonverbal communication should be integrated into both language and skills lessons whenever possible.

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The Error of English in Elementary Education in Japan

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Introduction

In 2002, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Monkasho) initiated “a strategic plan to cultivate 'Japanese with English abilities'” (MEXT, 2002). It recognized: “With the progress of globalization in the economy and in society, it is essential that our children acquire communication skills in English... in order for living in the 21st century. This has become an extremely important issue both in terms of the future of our children and the further development of Japan as a nation.” The Ministry acknowledged the inadequacy of the English-speaking abilities of a large percentage of the population and undertook a concrete plan of action “with the aim of drastically improving the English education of Japanese people.” One part of the plan was the designation of 100 Super English Language High Schools (SELHi’s) by 2005 and this program has demonstrated some success (see Porcaro, 2006a). However, the promotion of English language instruction in elementary schools in Japan is a misguided venture, to say the least, which ultimately will fail to meet the expectations of parents and education officials while consuming enormous amounts of fruitless time and effort on the part of teachers and students who will bear disappointment with the results in the end.

Findings from research studies

Fundamentally, the notion that younger learners, at elementary school level, acquire a foreign language faster and better than older learners is incorrect and can not and must not serve as the foundation for promoting English language instruction in elementary schools. Hard data from numerous empirical studies over the past forty years provide overwhelming and sound evidence that younger children, in fact, are slower and less efficient language learners than junior high school students and older adolescents (see Yu, 2006, and Marinova-Todd, Marshall, & Snow, 2000, for thorough reviews of these studies). The research results, summarized by Yu, found: “Older children were faster and better learners than younger children in every aspect of language acquisition” (p. 52) and “high school students will have better proficiency outcomes in every aspect of L2 [second language] instruction than primary graders” (p. 53), while “there is no evidence that the latter ultimately outperform the former” (p. 55).

Compulsory English in Japan’s primary schools

Yet Japan’s Ministry of Education Central Council for Education has recommended making

English a required subject from the fifth grade of elementary school, seemingly based on the false belief that the younger children start to learn English, the greater the level of proficiency they will attain. Furthermore, ministry officials seem to have based this proposal on a simplistic comparison with other Asian countries such as South Korea and China that have included English as a compulsory subject in elementary schools, and the fear of falling behind these and other countries.

At least 94% of public primary schools have already implemented English language instruction or activities in some manner and to some degree. Parents who send their children to public schools widely support these programs. A ministry survey shows that more than 70% of such parents agree that English education at primary schools should be compulsory, for the principal reason, and widely held but erroneous assumption, that children are more receptive and capable of foreign language learning if they begin at an early age (*The Daily Yomiuri*, 2006, March 29). There is a profound disconnect between these stakeholders' notions of English language learning and reality, which surely will lead to disillusionment and upset when outcomes become apparent. As Marinova-Todd et al. (2000, p. 28) caution on the introduction of foreign language teaching in the early grades: "Administrators and parents should not proceed on the assumption that only early foreign language teaching will be effective, and they need furthermore to be realistic about what can be expected from younger learners."

While there may be value in the high cost of an excellent foreign language instructional program for younger learners, Marinova-Todd et al. (2000, pp. 28-29) add: "Investment in elementary foreign language instruction may well be worth it, but only if the teachers are themselves native or native-like speakers and well trained in the needs of younger learners; if the early learning opportunities are built upon with consistent, well-planned, ongoing instruction in the higher grades; and if the learners are given some opportunities for authentic communicative experiences in the target language."

Mistaken policy

It is precisely in all these areas of English language instruction and learning that Japan's educational system is severely lacking. Junior high school and high school Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) receive very little, if any, training. Only 10% of public junior high school and 20% of public senior high school JTEs have demonstrated their English language proficiency at the required levels on the Eiken, TOEIC or TOEFL tests, and only 4% of public middle school JTEs use English for a good part of their classroom instruction (*The Daily Yomiuri*, 2005, July 19). How much more so are homeroom teachers at primary schools, who

are in charge of English instruction, untrained and incapable of providing the level of English language teaching that is needed for young learners. Indeed, it is no surprise that a Ministry of Education survey indicates that less than 30% of primary school teachers support mandatory English in their schools (*The Daily Yomiuri*, 2005, June 20). Such a low level of motivation and enthusiasm among teachers for newly imposed English language programs points further to their ultimate failure. Furthermore, the idea or plan that native-speaker Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) from other countries, nearly all of whom are untrained and inexperienced as teachers of anything and have little or no knowledge or experience of the Japanese school environment and culture, somehow will fill the gap as primary school English language instructors is tragically laughable (see Porcaro, 2006b).

In addition, there appears to be little or no provision by the Ministry of Education on a nationwide scale, or within individual schools on even a regional scale, of appropriately devised programs and well-designed teaching materials to implement effective English language education at elementary level. Indeed, one experienced specialist in teaching English to young learners has expressed her “fear that the present fad of teaching English to have fun and play games inadvertently sends the message to students that English activities are not serious exercises” (Uchida, 2006, March 10). The profound failings of Japanese junior and senior high school English language instruction have been noted for more than a hundred years. “The careful combination of early language instruction with higher levels of study”, as called for by Yu (2006), simply does not exist within Japan’s educational system.

Japanese critics of elementary English education

There are many Japanese specialists who believe the imposition of mandatory English instruction in Japan’s elementary schools is a serious mistake. In February 2006 a group of about 100 researchers issued a petition to the Minister of Education opposing the policy (*The Daily Yomiuri*, 2006, March 29). Echoing the results of empirical research over recent decades reported earlier in this article, the petition stated there were no persuasive data to support the alleged merits of the policy. Professor Yoshifumi Saito of Tokyo University, speaking at a 2005 symposium, pointed out accurately that the recent upsurge in early English language instruction in Japan stems from “the general public’s dissatisfaction with the nation’s English teaching [but that such sentiments] are based on uninformed opinions, and should not be reflected in education policies” (quoted in Matsuzawa, 2005, January 18).

Opponents of the Ministry of Education policy include the prominent and outspoken Professor Yukio Otsu of Keio University. He points out further the fact of the lack of qualified English language teachers for elementary schools and that “students taught in such a chaotic

situation would ultimately become the victims” (interview in Nakanishi, 2006, March 25). Along with many other critics, Otsu states that “it is crucial that children first establish a firm foundation in Japanese as their mother tongue” and in other basic subjects such as math and science. The already reduced instructional time for these curriculum components would be further limited by the hours taken for fruitless English language lessons according to the Ministry of Education plan. Rather than that, Otsu responds wisely with the proposal “to bolster English education at the middle school and higher levels, giving it much more support, for example, in terms of the number of class hours allocated for English, training for teachers, class sizes, and so on.”

All of these compelling and valid objections are supported by the caution expressed by Marinova-Todd et al. (2000, p. 29) in the conclusion of their research report. “Decisions to introduce foreign language instruction in the elementary grades should be weighed against the costs to other components of the school curriculum; as far as we know, there are no good studies showing that foreign language instruction is worth more than additional time invested in math, science, music, art, or even basic L1 instruction.”

Conclusion

Until Japan makes a thorough overhaul of English language education at secondary and tertiary levels, assumes a much more mature national attitude toward English language education and its place in people’s lives, and formulates and implements English language education policies efficiently and effectively on sound foundations, it is an egregious error for English to enter elementary education in this country. At stake, indeed, is nothing less than “the future of our children and the further development of Japan as a nation.” All stakeholders – government officials, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students themselves, along with private enterprises and civic associations – must address the insistent issue of English language education with imperative resolve.

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James W. Porcaro is a professor of English as a foreign language at Toyama University of International Studies where he has worked since 1999. Previously, from 1985, he was an instructor of English and the academic supervisor at a foreign language college in Osaka. He holds masters degrees in TESOL and African Area Studies. For the past few years he has been directly involved in the SELHi program in Toyama prefecture.

Resourcing Strategies of Language Learners

Rennison Whittaker, Kinjo Gakuin University, <rennisonwhittaker(at)yahoo.com.au>

A true engagement with the issues surrounding second language acquisition only really began in the 1970s. During the flood of research that has been produced since that time, researchers and teachers alike have begun to realise that there is no foolproof method of teaching a second language that will result in perfect acquisition of the second language by the learner (Brown, 1994, p. 114).

This research did, however, lead to the careful definition of several learning strategies. These learning strategies are usually divided into three types, as shown in the diagram below:

type	example strategy
metacognitive strategies	directed attention e.g ignoring unknown vocabulary items
cognitive strategies	inferring / translation / resourcing e.g. checking an L2-to-L2 learner's dictionary for an unknown word
socioaffective strategies	asking a native speaker

(based on Brown, 1994, p.115-117)

A full assessment of the different types of learning strategies, metacognitive, cognitive and socioaffective, would be beyond the scope of this study. This survey does, however, include questions that provide a preliminary indication as to which type of learning strategy is employed by and preferred by the multilingual persons surveyed. The responses to these questions could indicate interesting avenues for future research.

Methodology

The survey was carefully designed, using both closed and open ended questions (see the survey and the explanatory statement and consent form in Appendix A). It was very carefully worded, and a balance between clarity and simplicity was sought. There was some trouble wording the questions simply enough to be understood by L2/L3 speakers of English, while still retaining structural simplicity and clarity of the intended meaning of the questions.

The survey was designed for administration to a wide variety of second language learners, including both people whose second language was English or a language other than English. The survey was also designed to permit more than one answer for second language learning strategies, as it was assumed in the survey design process that at least some of the respondents would speak more than two languages, and might employ different strategies

for each of these languages. This possibility was provided for in the design of the survey instrument.

While the aim of the survey was to assess how second language learners deal with unknown words when reading in their second language, the survey instrument was also designed to capture how respondents deal with unknown words when reading or listening in each of the languages they possess some competence in. Respondents were asked to give information on all the languages they possessed any competence in, as it is possible that they may use a different strategy when trying to understand spoken language as opposed to written language, or when trying to understand unknown words in a language they had lesser competence in than their primary language(s).

The participants in this survey were from several different groups: some were friends, some were colleagues and some were students of the researcher. The survey was pilot tested on 5 colleagues, and subsequently administered to 18 others from the aforementioned groups. Most of the friends surveyed were L1 speakers of English, while most of the colleagues and all of the students were L2/L3 speakers of English.

While the survey sample was partly governed by convenience, a deliberate attempt was made to survey individuals of different L1 backgrounds to see if there were any difference between the strategies most commonly utilised by L1 speakers of English and L2/L3 speakers of English. All of the participants surveyed, whatever their L1, were multilingual, and therefore qualified to participate in a study of L2 learning strategies. A certain minimal-level of English ability was dictated by the fact that the survey itself was written in English. All participants were university-age or older.

The pilot survey was conducted with colleagues, and they were used as the pilot study subjects purely because they constituted an accessible and diverse group of L1 and L2/L3 speakers of English. Since the intention was to use both L1 and L2/L3 speakers of English as the survey population, it was incumbent on the researcher to pilot test the survey on a group of speakers which loosely resembled the target population.

In each case, the colleague was asked if they would be willing to help the researcher by pilot testing a survey. If the colleague acquiesced, the colleague would be handed the survey with the explanatory statement and the consent form attached. The researcher would then wait nearby as the respondent read through the explanatory statement, signed the consent form and began the survey. During the survey, the respondent would read each question to

him/herself, and the researcher would only intervene if asked for clarification.

Once the respondent had completed the survey, the researcher would thank the respondent for their time, make sure that they had their copy of the explanatory statement, and ask for feedback about the ease of comprehension of the survey questions and the general structure of the survey.

It became immediately apparent that native speakers had no difficulty understanding the survey questions, but that they often did not understand that they were expected to tick each of the questions on the consent form to indicate their consent and willingness to participate in the survey. While the L1 speakers of English in the pilot study preferred to work through it without assistance, the L2/L3 English speakers frequently asked clarification questions about the pilot survey. While they generally understood the questions themselves, they sometimes wanted clarification as to the format their responses ought to take. Many of the L2/L3 English speakers looked to the researcher for classification of their English level. They were reminded that the survey classification called for subjective self-classification, not an “objective” classification.

Through the pilot testing of the survey instrument, the survey instrument was deemed adequate for use. The only modification necessary was the addition of an extra age category (<20), and the additional instruction on the consent form that participants who granted their consent ought to tick the boxes indicating their assent beside each stipulation. Though the L2/L3 English speakers sometimes required some assistance and clarification as to how they ought to respond to the questions, they understood the questions themselves, and their hesitation was usually symptomatic of a fear of making mistakes. The presence of the researcher alleviated this difficulty, since she was always present to provide guidance when the participant asked for clarification.

The survey instrument was then used to survey a wider range of participants, including friends and students. The approach was basically the same: the researcher approached the individual, soliciting their participation in a short survey. If the individual acquiesced, they would be handed the survey with the explanatory statement and the consent form attached. The researcher would then wait nearby as the respondent read through the explanatory statement, signed the consent form and began the survey. During the survey, the respondent would read each question to him/herself, and the researcher would only intervene if asked for clarification.

Once the respondent had filled out the survey, the researcher thanked them for their time,

and reminded them to keep the explanatory statement.

Since the changes made to the survey after the pilot testing did not mean changes in the data collected in the actual survey, the results from the pilot survey have been included with those from the actual survey for analysis.

Results

The first step in analysing the results of the survey was coding the resulting information. The variables examined were all measured on a nominal scale, with the exception of proficiency in language, which could not be coded randomly because it was a variable measured on an ordinal scale, containing information about the rank order of participant responses, and this rank order had to be preserved (see the code book for this survey in Appendix B) (Judd, Smith & Kidder, 1980, p. 357).

After the data had been properly coded, it was tabulated (see Appendix C). From this tabulation, the following results became clear.

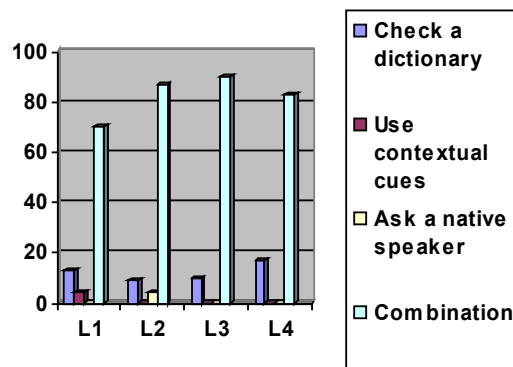


Figure 1: Percentage of respondents using various strategies to deal with unknown words in written language.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the vast majority of respondents claim to use a combination of strategies when they are faced with an unknown word in written language. Very few respondents used only a single method.

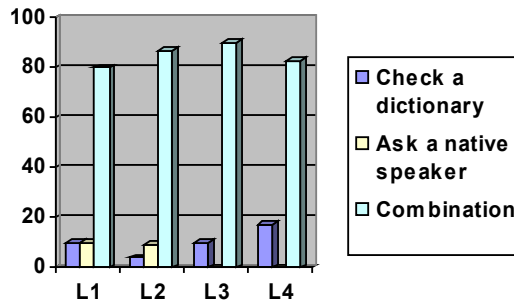


Figure 2: Percentage of respondents using various strategies to deal with unknown words in spoken language.

As can be seen from Figure 2, there was little difference between the strategies respondents claimed to use for spoken or written language, with the exception of the fact that none of the respondents was willing to try and glean the meaning of unknown words from context when the word was an unknown one they had heard as opposed to read. In contrast, they were willing to try and derive meaning from contextual clues when the unknown word was encountered in written form.

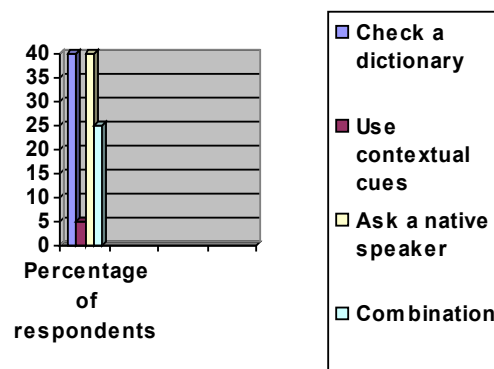


Figure 3: Overall preferred strategy indicated by respondents for dealing with unknown words.

As can be seen in Figure 3, when asked which strategy they preferred as the best for dealing with unknown words, respondents were equally divided between checking their dictionaries for the meaning of the word, or asking a native speaker. A high percentage of participants were still committed to a combination of strategies.

The interesting thing to come out of the actual survey that was not evident in the pilot survey was that there were other methods used by respondents to deal with unknown words that had not been accounted for in the survey itself, nor named by the respondents in the pilot

survey.

Several students in the study reported asking other non-native speakers, namely other students, when they had difficulty understanding a word in their second or subsequent language(s). This is another example of a socioaffective learning strategy. This strategy involves second language learners working with one or more of their peers, pooling their information about and knowledge of the second language (Brown, 1994, p. 117).

Further analyses of this data would involve examining the relationship, if any, between strategy choice and demographic variables such as age, gender and occupation via a chi-square test. Chi-square tests involve two nominal variables, such as strategy choice and age. They are used only when there are no measurable characteristics involved at all (Fasold, 1984, p. 97). Chi-square tests could be used to examine the possible relationships between strategy choice and the demographic variables, albeit one at a time.

Discussion

The choice of language that the survey was administered in may have biased the results, since the L2/L3 speakers of English who were surveyed may have been disadvantaged, in that the survey instrument was not written in their L1, their language of greatest competence, and their answers may have been limited or inhibited by the language medium the survey was conducted in.

To overcome this limitation, future studies could have the survey instrument professionally translated in order to maximise the comparability of results of all participants in the study.

To assess the relative effectiveness of these particular strategies, future studies could attempt to correlate the type of learning strategy to the theoretical framework of metacognitive, cognitive and socioaffective strategies, and examine whether these factors correlate significantly with scores on personality tests and language aptitude tests. It may be that certain personality types are more likely to use certain learning strategies, and that successful second language learners are those people of a particular personality type who use a particular learning strategy. If this were the case, then people who did not tend to use this particular learning strategy could be encouraged to try it and see if it improved their ability to acquire a second language. At very least it might indicate why certain strategies seem to be so effective for some people, and may provide some indication for why the same strategy used by a person of a different personality type turns out to be less effective. There may emerge certain optimal conditions for second language acquisition.

These and similar considerations are beyond the intended scope of this paper. However, this paper could be used as a starting point for developing a methodology and a theoretical framework for examining these issues.

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Appendix A

Explanatory Statement

24 March 2006

I am carrying out a small research project. The aim of the research is to gain insights into language strategies in second language learning. The information will contribute to my understanding and knowledge of language learning strategies.

I am seeking members of the local community who are willing to complete a short questionnaire. You don't have to answer all the questions. The questionnaire should take about 20-30 minutes.

No findings that could identify an individual participant will be published. The anonymity of your participation is assured by our procedure, in which the interviews and conversations are anonymous and only the combined results of all participants will be published.

You do not have to answer every question and I will cease the interview if you ask me.

Thank you.

Rennison Whittaker

Consent Form

Please tick or cross inside the [] if you consent to the stipulations below.

- [] I agree to take part in the above project. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my own records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to complete a short questionnaire. The questionnaire should take about 20-30 minutes.
- [] I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.
- [] I also understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Name:

Signature:

Survey of Language Learner Strategies: Resourcing

1. How old are you? (Please circle) <20 20-29 30-39 40+

2. What is your gender? M F

3. What is your job?

4. What languages do you speak?

5. How well do you speak these languages? (please circle)

Language 1 (.....)	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Native
Language 2 (.....)	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Native
Language 3 (.....)	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Native
Language 4 (.....)	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Native

6. Can you read/write/speak/understand each language? (please circle)

Language 1 (.....)	Read	Write	Speak	Understand
Language 2 (.....)	Read	Write	Speak	Understand
Language 3 (.....)	Read	Write	Speak	Understand
Language 4 (.....)	Read	Write	Speak	Understand

7. If you don't understand a word you read, what do you do?

(Please put an **O** or an **X**)

	Ask a native speaker	Check a dictionary	Try to understand it from the words nearby	Ignore it	Other (please write below)
Language 1					
Language 2					
Language 3					
Language 4					

If you put an **O** in the Other box above, what is the other method that you use?

.....
.....

8. If you don't understand a word you hear, what do you do?

(Please put an **O** or an **X**)

	Ask a native speaker	Check a dictionary	Try to understand it from the words nearby	Ignore it	Other (please write below)
Language 1					
Language 2					
Language 3					
Language 4					

If you put an **O** in the Other box above, what is the other method that you use?

.....
.....

9. Which is the best method(s) for you? Why?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

10. Do you use this method in your first/native language? Why or why not?

.....
.....

.....
.....
.....

11. Do you own a dictionary written in your first/native language?
(please circle)

Yes No

12. Do you own a dictionary written in any other language?
(please circle)

Yes No

If yes, in what language(s)?

.....
.....

If yes, does your foreign language dictionary give meanings in your first/native language, or in the foreign language?

.....
.....

13. Do you understand the meaning of a new word better if it is explained in your first/native language, or if it is explained in the same language?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you very much for your help. This is the end of the survey.

Appendix C

Tabulation of Results

Ss	SX	AG	O	LgS	LP1	LP2	LP3	LP4	Ls1	Ls2	Ls3	Ls4	RS1
1	2	2	1	3	4	2	1	1	9	9	5	5	6
2	1	2	1	2	4	3	1	5	9	9	8	10	9
3	1	4	1	4	4	3	5	5	9	9	10	10	2
4	1	2	1	4	4	2	5	5	9	9	10	10	2
5	1	3	3	4	4	3	3	2	9	9	9	9	3
6	1	2	1	1	4	3	5	5	9	9	10	10	6
7	1	2	1	1	4	3	5	5	9	9	10	10	6
8	1	3	3	1	4	1	5	5	9	7	10	10	6
9	2	3	3	1	4	1	5	5	9	7	10	10	6
10	2	3	3	3	4	2	1	5	9	9	8	10	6
11	2	3	3	1	4	3	5	5	9	9	10	10	6
12	1	3	1	2	4	3	2	5	9	6	9	10	6
13	2	3	1	1	4	2	5	5	9	7	10	10	6
14	1	1	2	3	4	2	1	1	9	5	5	5	7
15	1	1	2	3	4	2	1	1	9	5	5	5	7
16	1	1	2	3	4	2	1	1	9	7	7	7	6
17	1	2	2	2	4	1	1	5	9	9	8	10	6
18	1	2	2	3	4	2	2	1	9	9	3	3	6
19	1	2	2	1	4	1	5	5	9	9	10	10	6
20	1	1	2	1	4	1	5	5	9	9	10	10	6
21	1	1	2	1	4	1	5	5	9	9	10	10	2
22	1	1	2	1	4	2	5	5	9	9	10	10	6
23	1	2	2	1	4	1	5	5	9	9	10	10	6

Ss	RS	RS	RS	LS1	LS2	LS3	LS4	PS	PS	D1	DF	LD	LPE
	2	3	4						1		L		
1	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	1	3	1	1	3	3
2	6	6	8	9	6	6	8	1	1	1	1	1	3
3	6	8	8	2	6	8	8	2	1	1	1	3	1
4	2	8	8	2	2	8	8	7	1	1	1	1	1
5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	3	2	1	3	1
6	6	8	8	6	6	8	8	7	2	1	1	3	1
7	6	8	8	6	6	8	8	1	1	1	1	3	2
8	6	8	8	6	6	8	8	2	2	1	1	3	1
9	6	8	8	6	6	8	8	1	2	1	1	1	1
10	6	6	8	6	6	6	8	3	1	1	2	4	2
11	6	8	8	6	6	8	8	7	1	1	1	2	2
12	1	6	8	1	1	6	8	1	1	1	1	3	1
13	6	8	8	6	6	8	8	1	2	1	1	2	3
14	6	6	6	7	6	6	6	1	3	1	1	1	1
15	6	2	2	7	6	2	2	2	3	1	1	1	1
16	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	2	1	1	1	2	4
17	6	6	8	6	6	6	8	2	1	1	1	2	4
18	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	1	1	1	1	1
19	6	8	8	6	6	8	8	1	1	1	1	5	4
20	6	8	8	6	6	8	8	2	1	1	2	4	1

21	2	8	8	1	1	8	8	2	1	1	1	1	1
22	6	8	8	6	6	8	8	9	4	1	2	4	4
23	6	8	8	6	6	8	8	2	1	1	2	4	1

Note from editor. Appendix B, containing the codebook to explain the values assigned to the various answers has not been included due to space considerations. Appendix B is available from Rennison <rennisonwhittaker@yahoo.com.au>.

The Teacher Trainer

Dear ETE Readers,

Hello! It's Tessa Woodward here!

I have a special message for you about **The Teacher Trainer** journal. Can I tell you about it?

Who is it for?

I am sure this journal will help you in your work. Are you a mentor, a teacher trainer, a teacher educator or director of studies...or ...

a senior or experienced teacher who sometimes has to observe language teachers and give feedback on their work? Or perhaps you give workshops, design courses, set up resource rooms or network with teachers? If so, then this journal is designed to be really useful to you.

The journal comes out three times a year and we are always looking for readers, subscribers and contributors. It costs £25 per year including postage to anywhere in the world. This is incredibly cheap for a dedicated, specialist worldwide journal.

What's in it?

The Teacher Trainer contains practical ideas that you can use in your work with teachers tomorrow, as well as thought-provoking accounts of a more long-term benefit. It's written by fellow professionals, often working in tightly prescribed circumstances and doing their very best to engage in an interesting, balanced and humane way with the teachers and students they work with. The voices of the teachers and trainees themselves are, of course, also included as are trainer conference reports, descriptions of useful books, ideas for running sessions and making observation and feedback more fruitful, and ideas brought in from parallel fields. The journal is written in a clear, accessible and non-academic style and with plenty of dashes of humour.

What's new?

As this is our 20th year, we've relaunched The Teacher Trainer giving a new look to both the journal and the website.

After running a reader survey, we've brought in some new series. We have instituted some new columns this year too. One is on information technology, called 'It's a Wired World', written regularly by Nicky Hockly. Another new column is 'Article Watch', where we

summarise relevant articles that have appeared in other journals. Last issue we started 'News from our Field' with a regular columnist, Susan Barduhn. Susan keeps us all up to date with information on courses, new facilities, upcoming conferences especially for teacher educators, changes in the law, centres of excellence...anything that affects the world of teacher trainers/educators and mentors.

This time we have another new column. It's written by Andy Caswell and is called "Practical Training Session". Just as starter teachers like to see sample lesson plans, so new and inexperienced Teacher Trainers and workshop leaders may find it interesting to see a sample session plan on a useful topic! So, these plans will deal with topics like "Ways of reviewing and recycling vocabulary" and may help you if you have to run a session for teachers on that topic.

To whet your appetite, here is the 'Contents' list for the current issue!

Contents

Practical Training Session

Reviewing and recycling vocabulary

Andy Caswell

Interviewing candidates for pre-service training courses

Rebecca Belchamber

Language Matters

Chunks in the classroom: Let's not go overboard

Michael Swan

New in our Field

Susan Barduhn

Training around the World

The revival of BELTA

Rubina Khan and Steve Cornwell

Metaphors in action

Teresa Thiel

People who train People

A ranger trainer

The role of teacher talk in task based learning

Linda Taylor

10 things I hate about Powerpoint

Jeremy Harmer

Jargon generator

Tessa Woodward

Q and A

What is ACTDEC?

Brian Winn-Smith

Article Watch

Publications Received

What we keep the same as ever in all issues is our concern to include in our journal both newcomer writers and big names, content for the starter teacher trainer and for the more experienced, and the nitty gritty of real life problems and the solutions presented by professional teacher trainers/educators and mentors all around the world.

What is the web site good for?

www.tttjournal.co.uk

The site is pleasant to look at and is refreshed three times a year. It has an internal search engine and a very, very special archive called "The Story so Far".

The Story So Far

There are no special issues of The Teacher Trainer. So there is never a whole issue on, say, "Evaluating teaching". Instead, there are a number of specialised series. These keep popping up at regular intervals.

In our informal index 'The Story So Far', you will see the main series. Examples are: 'Process Options', 'Interviews', 'People who Train People' and so on. Our online archive is a collection of classics from the pages of The Teacher Trainer journal, 1986 onwards. The early issues

are getting rather scarce now but since the ideas in their pages are as robust and interesting as ever, we'd like you to be able to access them.

Starting from Volume One, I'm gradually reading through past issues filleting out the articles that have stood the test of time and reproducing them on the web site. This way, good articles from this genuinely specialised and dedicated journal will still have the readership and influence they deserve.

The author pool we are drawing from includes:

Jean Aitchison, James Asher, Rod Bolitho, Deborah Cameron, John Fanselow, Natalie Hess, Mario Rinvoluceri, Earl Stevick, Bonnie Tsai, Penny Ur, Marion Williams, Tessa Woodward, Andrew Wright and many more.

You can download and print off articles in the archive itself.

On the web site you can also learn about the most recent issue and get information on contributing, subscribing and advertising.

Who is the Editor?

The journal is edited by me, Tessa Woodward. I am a working language teacher and teacher trainer so I have my feet on the ground and in the classroom! I also regularly write books and articles and present at conferences so you can tell I am interested in ideas too.

For further information please visit the web site or contact:

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Book Reviews – have you recently read an interesting book related to teaching, teacher education, language acquisition, or education? Up to 2000 words.

Font: Arial 11 point, single spaced, one line between paragraphs, SINGLE space between sentences.

Notes: Please include a catchy title, your name and professional affiliation, an e-mail address to go at the top of the article, and a 75-100 word bio-data for the end.

Deadlines: ongoing. Submit by e-mail to Simon Lees <simich(at)gol.com>. Attach as a Word document, titled with your surname, such as 'croker.doc' or 'robins.doc'.

Also, please cut and paste your article into the body of the e-mail, in case the Word document does not open.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Editor if you have any questions or ideas.

What is the Teacher Education SIG?

A network of foreign language instructors dedicated to becoming better teachers and helping each other teach more effectively, the TE SIG has been active since 1993.

Our members teach at universities, high schools, and language centres both in Japan and other countries. The TE SIG focuses on five areas: action research, teacher reflection, peer-based development, teacher motivation, and teacher training and supervision.

If you would like further information about the TE SIG, please contact:

TE SIG Coordinator, Tara Waller < twaller(at)kanda.kuis.ac.jp >

Explorations in Teacher Education

Newsletter of the Japan Association of Language Teachers

Teacher Education Special Interest Group (TE SIG)

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