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Experimental syllabus design developed as part of the SELHI project:

Writing for 11th graders

【要旨】

SELHI の取り組みの一環として二年生のライティング授業の検定教科書に含まれているシラバスに加えて、エッセイや交換日記を書くことにより学習者が自発的に第二言語で意味を作り出す場をより多く与えました。これは学習者の中間言語の習熟度に合った練習と実験的に第二言語を使う機会を増やすためです。また、こういった授業内容の中に、オンラインソフトを大いに活用しました。学習者のエッセイを評価するオンラインソフトのフィードバックにはいくつかの問題点がありましたが、動機付けという点では機能を果たしました。エッセイライティングの各授業の始めに、次のような事を行いました。プロセスライティングの方法の指導をはじめ、エッセイと同じジャンルの文章やトピックに関連する語彙、頻出構文のインプットによる紹介。また、談話的文法やエッセイの形の説明などです。学習者から得たいくつかの調査結果では、この学習方法はおおむね好評で、1年の間で英語力の向上もみられました。

1. Introduction

The ‘Super English Language High School’ program, or ‘SELHI’ is a program under the auspices of the Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) that promotes research on methodology, syllabus design, and program innovations in high school English language education in by providing special funding to select schools that agree to commit to experimentation and research in an approved area of their choosing. This paper will describe experimental course design changes made in a writing class for 11th graders by this writer and team-teaching partner Masatsugu Higuchi as part of the SELHI program at Ikeda High School Attached to the Osaka University of Education. In our experimental course, timed argumentative or opinion essay writing utilizing an online evaluation software package, journal writing, and original example sentence creation were

added to the standard syllabus. Our aims were to allow individual learner-centered production of written language to be used as a tool for language development, provide a much-needed chance for practice in free production, and foster fluency.

2. Strengths and shortcomings of the standard syllabus.

The typical textbook designed for high school 'writing' classes in Japan consist of units comprised of:

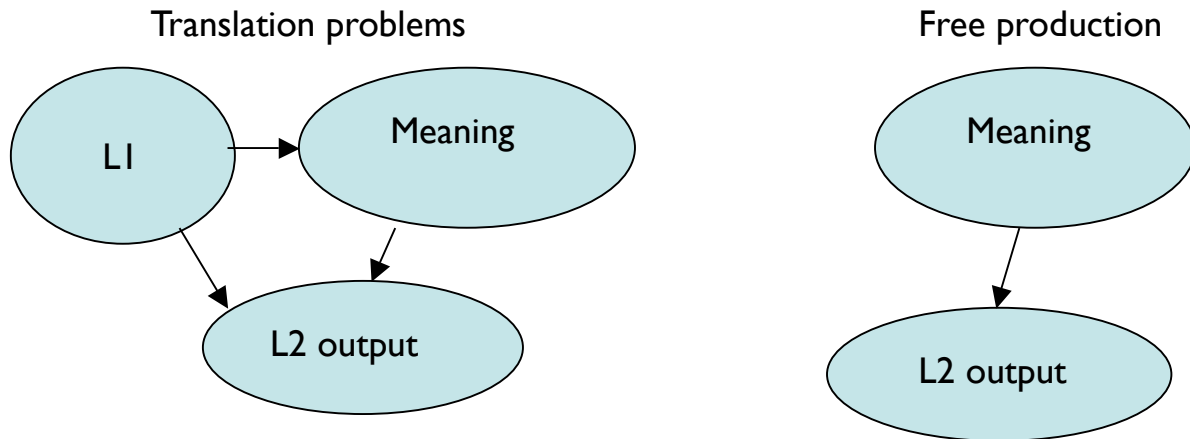
- 1) An explicit presentation, in Japanese, of one or more grammatical items or features.
- 2) Several controlled-practice exercises focusing on them.
- 3) A series of sentence-level translation problems that utilize the focused items or features, some of which are reproduced from past university second level (niji) entrance examinations.

As consciousness-raising tools, these activities are useful in that they may encourage a noticing of targeted features in later input where a more natural acquisition process may ensue (Schmidt 1990) but such limited presentation and practice is not sufficient in and of itself to create a mastery of the features in relation to the rest of the learner's developing interlanguage (Rutherford, 1987) and moreover may be targeted at features outside of the learners 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1934) given that while acquisition of features occur in a somewhat fixed order (Dulay and Burt, 1973), and, at the same time every learner has, to a large extent, a 'built-in' syllabus of what is to be learned next (Skehan, 1996), the individual's learning process is holistic and unpredictable (Willis, forthcoming) and teaching (explicit focus on form) does not and cannot determine the way a learner's interlanguage will develop (Ellis, 1985). In other words, the textbook activities have the danger of being aimed at features of little relevance to the individual learner's current state of interlanguage.

Furthermore, while these activities would appear to be of practical value in preparation for university entrance exams and features targeted in the textbooks do, in general, correspond with features targeted in entrance exams, in actuality, such translation problems are at present, rather rare even in the second-level (niji) university entrance exams they are designed as a preparation for.¹

Lastly, while the translation problems do efficiently create a context that obliges use of target features by using first language (L1) as a starting point, they suffer the flaw of creating (or maintaining) a mental dependency on L1 when creating meaning with the learner's foreign language (L2) and indeed may even complicate the process. This was once pointed out succinctly by a student with the experience of living in an English speaking country when she spontaneously stated, apparently being frustrated by these translation problems, " I could never

make a good English sentence with a Japanese-language head”. By this it is obvious that what she means is that it is actually more difficult to produce language ‘via L1’ than directly from meaning because one tends to make an attempt to transfer the structure and system of L1 along with meaning, even where it doesn’t necessarily correspond. (see diagram below)



3. Proposed solutions

In order to balance out the problems outlined above, it was thought that elements of expressive or creative writing and free production, where the learner creates meaning of their own origin, needed to be added to the syllabus. Activities that ask students to convey a personal message encourage learners to produce language directly from intended meaning to second language bypassing a translation from L1. Learning to do so improves speed of production, or fluency. Also, learners are motivated to produce more communicative texts when the meaning to be conveyed is of their own origin and the level of personal involvement is therefore higher. Finally, creative writing gives learners much needed practice in that it allows them to test hypothesis about recently learned language items by employing them in use. In doing so, they can discover how new features relate to the rest of their bank of usable language by actually creating meaning with them. Such practice is a necessary requirement to push acquisition to the next stage. This experimental use of language will naturally fall exactly within the learner’s unique individual ‘zone of proximal development’ since it is of course the individual who decides what language to deploy or experimentally use in creative writing.

It was decided that adding the following three components the syllabus while simultaneously using the standard textbook would be tried:

- 1) Essay writing.
- 2) Student to student ‘Secret Journals’.
- 3) Student production of example sentences utilizing one or more of the features focused on in the standard textbook.

4. Background: class time.

‘Writing’ for 11th graders at our school is a one credit class and thus meets once a week for 50 minutes. Time was broken up so that on alternate weeks the class met in the computer room for essay writing activities, whereas on the other weeks, class met in the normal homerooms to do the activities in the standard textbook.

5. The textbook

In order to complete all of the material in the standard textbook within the school year, two lessons worth of material was covered in one class session and in-class work was limited to the translation problems found at the end of each unit (see section 2). The presentation and controlled-practice activities were given out as homework and to make up for the traditional blackboard presentation that would accompany such activities, the instructors created a special handout for each lesson that had explanations and problems beyond what was found in the book. For the translation problems, students were first put into groups of four to encourage collaboration and then select students were chosen to write their answer on the board. After the students had written their answers on the board, mistakes or errors were pointed out by the instructor, and when possible corrections were elicited from the students. Corrections and alternative phrases were then written on the board by the instructor, which the students then copied down.

5.1 Language of instruction

For the explanations of the translation problems in the text book based portion of the class as well as for the essay writing, the instructor alternated between English and Japanese according to the level of complexity or specialized language needed to make explanations understood: Japanese for the more complex. Regarding the learners’ attitude to language of instruction, a survey conducted after hearing separate translation problems explained in both languages (appendix 1) showed that while the majority of learners preferred to receive clarification in Japanese, the majority also believed that having it done in English would be better for their studies, and most learners claimed to be able to understand at least 70% of the explanations in English. These results indicate that English could be used for explanations at the discretion of the instructor.

As an activity following the translation problems, student-made original example sentences utilizing target items from that day were gathered and read out loud by the instructor. These original sentences will be explained next.

5.2 Original sentences

An idea borrowed from another instructor at our school, students are asked to make an original sentence on a small sheet sometime during the textbook class using any language item from the lesson with the provision that the sentence be somehow tied to the real world, hopefully a personal opinion or experience. In case students are at a loss as to which language to use for the sentences, the instructor circles features found in the day's translation problems on the board and suggests using them. Students are encouraged to be humorous in writing these sentences as they will be read out loud at the end of class and will be fun to listen to. Since names are not written on the sheets, anonymity is kept, allowing for more humorous sentences and sometimes personal information to arise without the author being revealed or judged. Another activity tried out in this class that hopes to borrow on this idea of anonymity is the 'Secret Journal' project, which will be described next.

6. Peer to peer 'Secret Journals'

This project was very easy to set up and did not take up class time since it was assigned as homework. At the beginning of the year, blank notebooks are handed out along with the following instructions:

We will give you a notebook. Please write a secret name, and your class number on the cover. (All year, never write your real name!) Example: 'Blackjack' (Class 1), or 'Rose' (Class 2)

You will write to a student in another class.

You will not know who they are.

You may write about anything you want.

At the end of your entry, please ask your partner a few questions.

Don't forget to bring the notebook back to class after you've finished your turn!

We will collect the notebooks from you and then take them to the other class.

We will not look in the notebook; It is private.

The only rule is no Japanese, only English.

If you don't understand your partner's English, ask them when you write them back.

Example: *You said that you don't like to (-----). What does (-----) mean? Do you mean you don't like (-----)?*

Since we need time to collect them and give them to the other class, you will write every other week.

Let's have fun writing English about something real!

After explaining the project, the instructor's role is limited to collecting and distributing the notebooks from class to class. Because the journals are peer to peer, it is a much easier project to execute than similar projects often used in university settings where the journal exchanges go from student to teacher because it saves time for the teacher. A related advantage of peer to peer exchange is the high quality of response attained by the author from the peer (Cramer, 2004). Further rationale for doing journal projects as part of a language-teaching program includes fostering fluency, a high level of engagement, and serving language development goals (Casanave, 1995).

6.1 Difficulties with the 'Secret Journal' project.

Although met with enthusiasm initially by the students, within a month or so the problem of the exchange partner not returning the journal started to surface. The journals were being left at home, or the partner hadn't had enough time to write an adequate reply. Between the classes it became a game of pointing the finger at the other person as the number of journals collected by the instructor got lower and lower until by the end of the first semester, it was down to just a few for each class. For exactly these reasons, similar journal projects are usually done as an in-class activity (Cramer, 2004), however because of the time restrictions in this course, the instructors simply decided to let it go rather than set up a system for accountability, or devote in-class time to it. At present (the last weeks of the course), only a few of the students (out of 161) continue the project. Overall however, it was a project worth doing and the students seemed to genuinely enjoy it while it lasted.

The main focus of this course was the essay writing, which will be described next.

7. Essay writing.

Essay writing is becoming more of a required skill in standardized testing such as TOEFL where it is no longer an option, but a component of all tests. While the TOEFL is only necessary for *direct* matriculation into some U.S. and Canadian universities, the typical student from Japan who intends to enter such a university can usually enter the university without having the required TOEFL score by opting to initially enroll in ESL classes that are typically offered by such a university. Nevertheless, essay writing skills in English are becoming more of an advantageous skill to possess for university entrance procedures here in Japan where an essay is often a key part of the recent alternative 'Office of Admissions (OA)' route of entrance that allows a prospective student to apply for admission directly to the faculty of studies s/he is interested in without taking either the nationally conducted 'Senta' scholastic achievement test,

or the particular university's entrance examination.

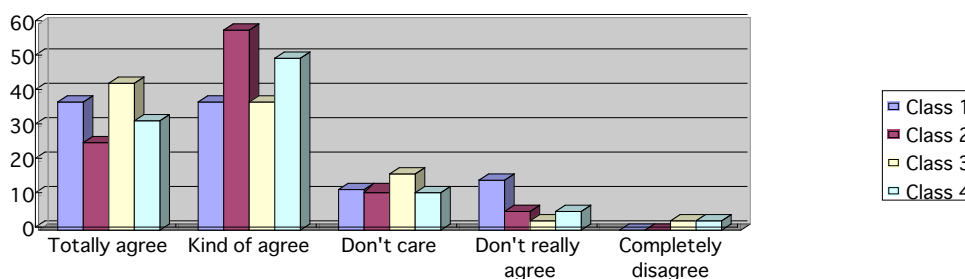
However, as discussed in section 3 of this paper, we were interested in essay writing not only as a sometimes necessary skill for entering college or university, but as a tool for general language development and as a means to provide students with the opportunity to experiment with their foreign language and actually use it for a communicative purpose while developing fluency.

A software package was used as the center-piece of the essay writing part of our course, but with these goals in mind it was necessary to supplement it with other activities as will be described in the following sections.

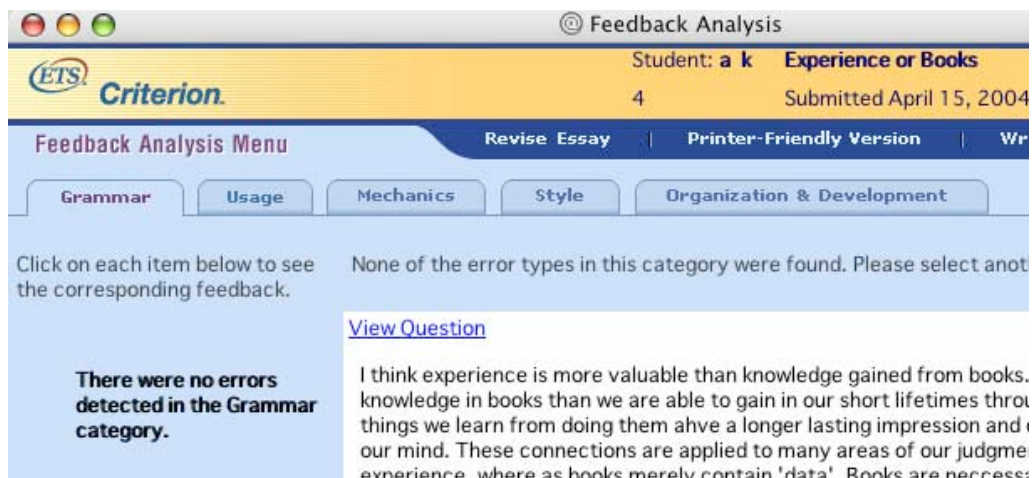
7.1 The 'Criterion' software: features, strengths, and weaknesses.

Recent developments in web-based writing evaluation software allow classes aimed at improving essay-writing skills to be more easily conducted. The software program we used, 'Criterion', offered as a service of TOEFL and TOIEC's Educational Testing Service (ETS), was useful mainly because of two of its features. First, after the students submit their timed essays, they receive a holistic score of 1 to 6 just as on the TOEFL test. The desire to improve this score gives students a concrete goal and motivates them to improve their essays. This feeling among the students was verified by a survey taken by them (see table below).

Q: Having the score of 1,2,3,4,5,6 is important. I always try harder because I want to get a better score.



Secondly, along with that score they receive a ‘feedback analysis’ that points out areas for improvement in five different categories (see picture below).



Although there is also a function that allows the instructor to personally give comment, time constraints may make commenting on each essay difficult whereas this ‘feedback analysis’ can provide a certain amount of useful advice and serve as a justification of their score. In terms of weaknesses of the software, however, it is important to note that the software’s feedback is sometimes erroneous or unintelligible to the learner so a teacher wishing to use this type of software should be aware of its limitations and relay them to the students. We found the ‘style’ section to be particularly troublesome as it tended to simply point out that the same word had been used more than once in an essay. This included words such as pronouns and determiners, which would be very hard not to use more than once. So-called errors of this type were much more numerous than ones in other sections of the feedback analysis leading the students to believe that in order to improve their essays, these were the main problems to be dealt with, a conclusion the instructors did not agree with. To remedy this, the ‘style’ section of the feedback analysis was disabled from the instructors control window and not displayed to the students therein.

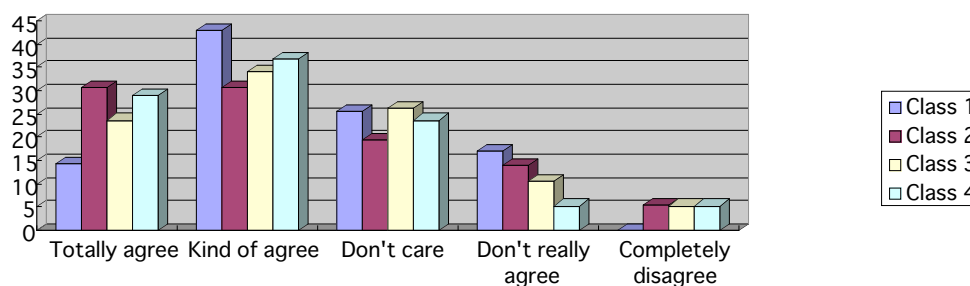
Another broader problem with the software concerns the general nature of the feedback. While the ‘Criterion’ software is able to detect areas of syntax and essay structure to a certain degree, and could be the basis for a rewrite, it is incapable of understanding meaning or clarity of message. There is a danger that by merely focusing on grammar and mechanics during a rewrite, the writer will assume that the message they want to convey is clear barring these superficial problems, or worse even, never know. There needs to be contact between the writer and a reader and the writer needs comment on substance and content which ‘Criterion’ cannot

provide. Research also supports the effectiveness of feedback on content over that of form. Kepner's (1991) study shows written error correction and rule reminders to be ineffective while meaningful commentary is more useful to the learner. A similar study by Fathman and Whally (1990) on feedback on content verses feedback on form shows that of three groups, one receiving grammar and error correction only, one receiving feedback on content only, and one receiving both, the group receiving feedback on content alone actually ended of with better end products in terms of grammar (and content) than the group that received explicit grammar correction alone. Solutions for providing feedback on content will be described in section 8.3 and 8.4 of this paper, but in order to prevent students from getting too caught up in attempting to interpret the feedback they were told not to worry so much about the specifics, but to use the advice if it was easily understandable.

In spite of the software's feedback function's limitations at no time did there exist a feeling of distrust among the students towards the software and the holistic score of 1 though 6 continued to motivate the students to improve their essays by revision and to improve their writing in general. They were told the main thing they should be aiming for is volume, structure, and quality of ideas. The latter of which, no machine can judge.

Regardless of this advice however, the students did express a desire to have more time to analyze the feedback as is shown by the survey results below.

Q: We need more time to understand the 'feedback analysis' part of Criterion. I can't understand what my mistakes were.

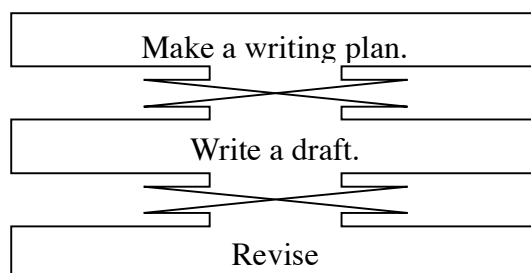


Other useful functions include a pull-down tab that allows them to view other students' completed essays. Students can analyze a peer's work and perhaps offer feedback while also getting input related to the topic they also have written about, (see section 8.3, 8.4) or perhaps even borrow some of the ideas to use themselves in a rewrite. Also, the software can be accessed from home or any computer. Finally, as mentioned before, functions, topics, etc., can be adjusted, added or deleted via the instructor's window.

As outlined above, issues warranting consideration for the teacher using this software are abundant. Overall, there is a danger reading too much into the software and allowing it alone to dictate the goals of the course, rather than using it as a tool subservient to the goals of the syllabus. The holistic score and feedback analysis functions, while serving a function, judge a very specific genre of English writing particular to testing situations. For our purposes however, as mentioned before, we were more interested in utilizing expressive writing as a more general language development tool. For these reasons, we found it useful and necessary to add the following components to the essay-writing portion of the syllabus (sections 8 through 12).

8. Process writing.

‘Process writing’ is a set of strategies that comes from research on how skilled writers actually write. It started being used as a teaching tool in high schools and universities in the U.S. in the 1960’s and has been adapted to EFL/ESL writing courses more recently (Walsh, 2004). It aims at helping learners create a more communicative text of their own origin while actually discovering the message they wish to convey. In a nutshell, process writing consists of three stages, which can be used recursively:



8.1 A planning stage.

A planning stage in process writing typically consists of a ‘brainstorming’ stage where students quickly jot down all the ideas they have on the topic to be written about and then proceed to decide which ideas will be the focus of their essay. Students were given a sheet for this purpose (appendix 2) and a verbal explanation of how to proceed along with a written one on the instructor’s web page ².

After the students got into the habit of doing a planning stage, it was observed that some students had come up with their own techniques for brainstorming. These techniques were then shared by the instructor with the rest of the students and made into a focus of the next class. One such technique involved using word processor software as a scratch book of two or three word notes representing ideas that then could be selected and/or erased and made into full

sentences that would be rearranged and connected into an essay format. Another strategy observed was preparing a list of single sentences on the topic that would later be connected in the same way.

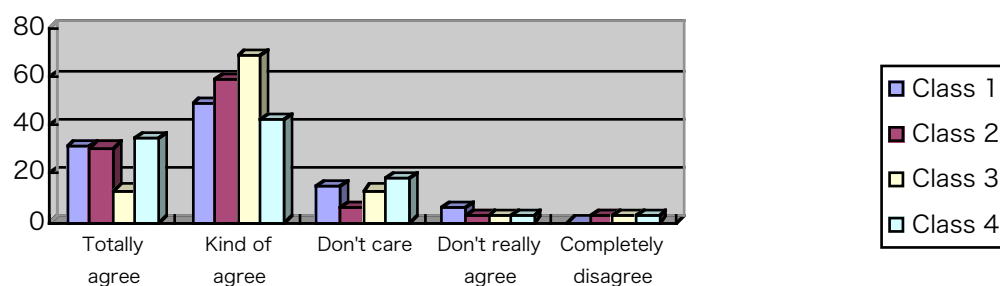
8.2 A first draft.

The students were told that the next class would be devoted to a rewrite, and so for this class, they should not worry about accuracy but just push forward and produce as much language as possible. This would later be used as stock for a revision, so they were told, "Don't think. Just write!"

8.3 Revision.

In process writing, typically the revision, or rewriting of the essay is considered to be the most important stage. It is here where the student discovers their new focus and the language used goes through a transformation from the approximation of the draft to a much more refined and accurate vehicle for transmitting the learner's emergent message. With the focus on intent and meaning clearer, language choices become more apparent, attention to details is heightened, and accuracy improves. The students also perceive a need for revision as they expressed in the survey results below.

Q: We can make a lot of progress when we have time to rewrite our essay. I think rewriting is necessary.



After completing a first draft, students were asked to rewrite, this time trying to make the best essay possible. In order to revise however, basis for a revision was necessary.

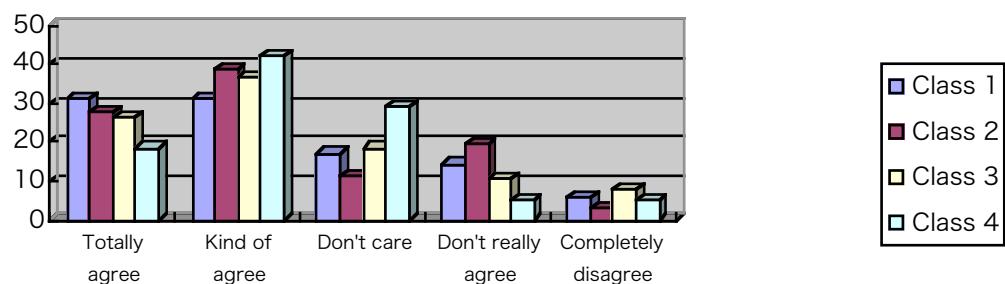
As mentioned before, although the software's 'feedback analysis' window does offer some advice, it was thought that advice from a genuine reader would also be necessary. Peer-review

was tried as a method, and students were asked to give advice to the person sitting next to them about their essay. A sheet to fill out about the partner's essay was given to them to make it easier to offer advice (see appendix 3). The students filled out the sheets and proceeded to rewrite their essays but some difficulties were observed.

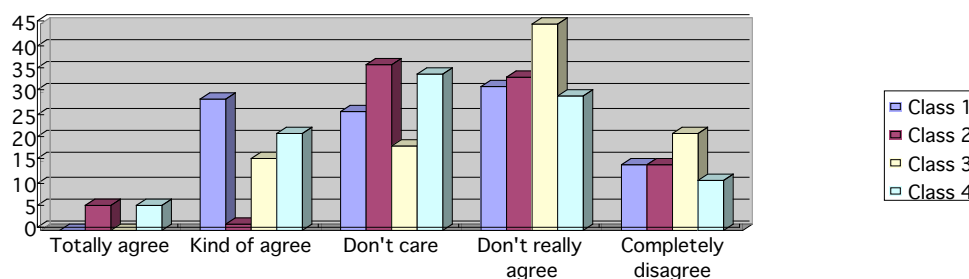
8.4. Difficulties with peer feedback

There were two main problems with using peer-review. One was that it took quite a long time for the students to fill in the sheets and in a 50-minute class period, this ended up shortening the time for the rewrite. Another problem, more on an affective level was a perceived feeling of nervousness about this process. A survey discovered that while the students perceived a value in reading their partner's essay, they did not like having their essay read by their classmate. (see below)

Q: It is important for us to read our classmates' essays. It gives us a chance to read something very close to what we have written.



Q: I want one of my classmates to read my essay. I need a reader to tell me what they think.



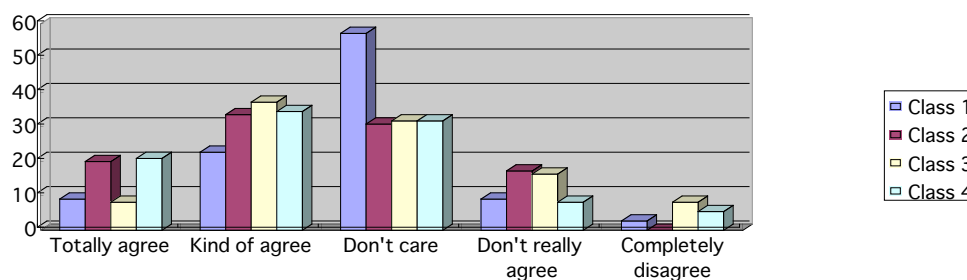
Another problem with peer feedback, possibly particular to Japanese learners for some reason, and perhaps the reason it took so long in class and is the apparent unwillingness or inability of learners to provide substantial criticism to their peers. Scott Armstrong of

Hiroshima University in his study (Armstrong, 2004) finds similar difficulty and lists possible causes as social dynamics, informal verbal feedback pre-empting the written feedback, and beliefs about the teacher’s role in the classroom. He classifies the type of non-critical feedback Japanese learners often give peers as ‘rubber-stamp’ feedback, meaning generic comments like “very nice”, or “ good essay”. These types of comments were also common in the feedback our students provided to their partners.

9. Knowledge of essay structure in English.

A typical problem for Japanese learners when writing an essay in English is the structure of an essay in English. While texts in Japanese typically have the main point stated towards the end of the essay, in English it is found in the ‘thesis statement’ near the beginning, which is then restated again in the conclusion. In order to focus on these features, we focused on them by having the students read short essays on the instructors website with the features highlighted using font and color adjustments. Instructors also verbally explained these features as a lead-in to the day’s essay assignment. Focus on these aspects of English essay writing was done early in the school year and observing the quality of essays currently being produced, seems to have been satisfactorily understood. The students themselves also seem not to perceive a great necessity for further instruction as is reflected by the survey below.

Q: We need to spend more time learning about things like 'introduction', 'thesis', 'supporting ideas', and 'conclusion'.



10. Grammar beyond the sentence level

Spawned by the software’s noticing of errors of redundancy, or using the same word twice within an essay, it was decided to focus on cohesive linking between sentences. One type of cohesion focused on was the use of pronouns, substitute words, general terms, or specific

examples to refer to the same thing within more than one sentence. An example of this type of cohesive linking would be the following:



Being a leader has many **advantages**. **One of them** is learning how to make decisions for yourself.

Another type of cohesive linking focused on was the movement of constituents within a sentence, or the ‘given-new principle’ (Rutherford, 1987). An example of this type of linking would be the following:



My father lives in an old **house**. There is a large garden in front of the **house**. (Somewhat awkward)



My father lives in an old **house**. In front of the **house**, there is a large garden. (Not awkward)

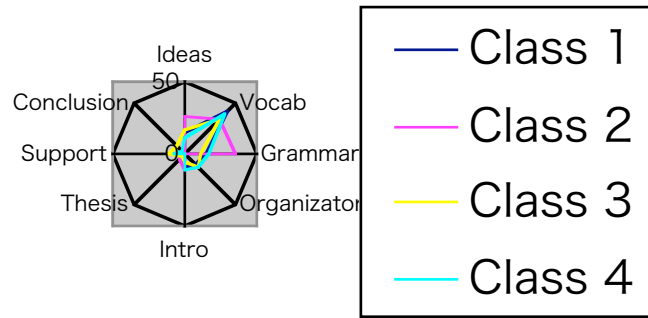
These aspects were focused on utilizing an online quiz software called ‘Quizlab’³. After reading the explanation page on the instructors webpage (http://www.geocities.jp/walsh_sensei/cohesion.html) each student logs on to the software and takes a quiz (see appendix 4) that consists of a list of sentences that form a paragraph when re-ordered in a specific way. The linking devices determine the order. Another area focused on was words of transition used to show the relation of ideas within a sentence or between them such as *furthermore*, *however*, or *firstly*.

Quizzes such as this also served a different purpose. The paragraphs or sentences used for the quiz could be related the topic the students would be writing about. In this way, the students could be exposed to vocabulary and language that would become useful when they commenced writing.

11. Language associated with the topic / exposure to this genre of writing.

It was felt that exposure to language or input closely related to the type of text the students would be expected to produce had to be a part of the syllabus for several reasons. One was that students consistently expressed that vocabulary was the area they had most difficulty with when writing their essays (see table below).

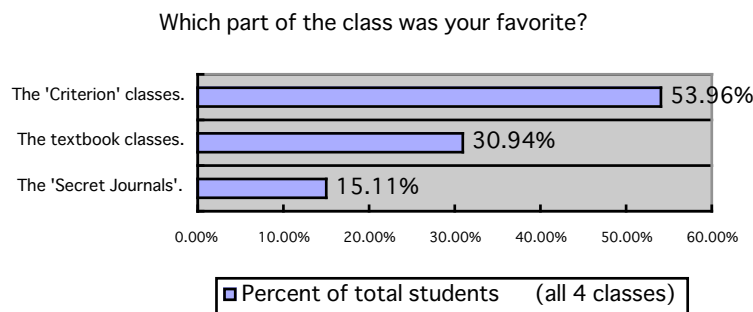
Q: When writing, which area do you find most difficult?

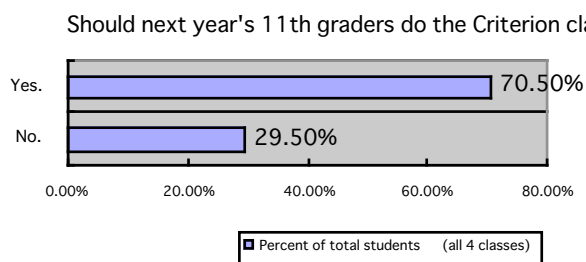
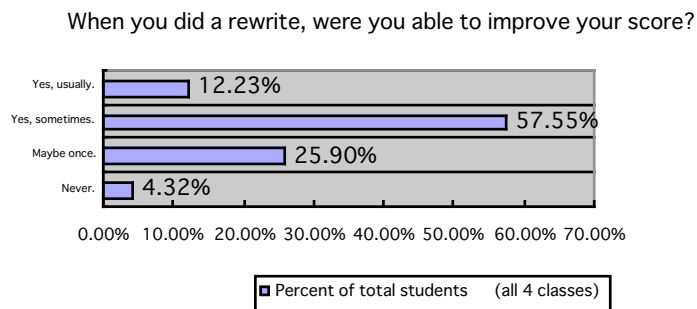
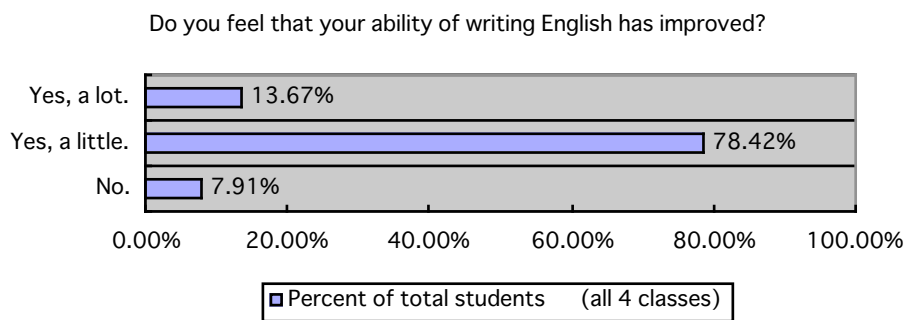
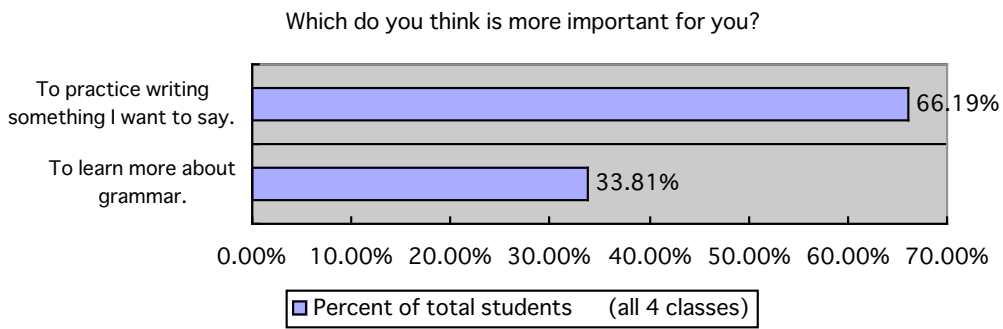


Perhaps more importantly though, students need to see *in action* how essays like these are formed in English. Structural issues such as thesis, linking between sentences, and the organization of ideas to express a certain viewpoint can all be understood more efficiently if seen in action and understood on a more implicit level, as opposed to whatever abstractions the teacher may provide as explanation. For this reason a majority of the explanation pages on the instructors website as well as the content of the quizzes were designed to contain the same genre of writing as expected of the students and at the same time, be on the same topic so as to contain vocabulary and grammar usages relevant to the next assignment.

12. Students' reactions to the course: further survey results.

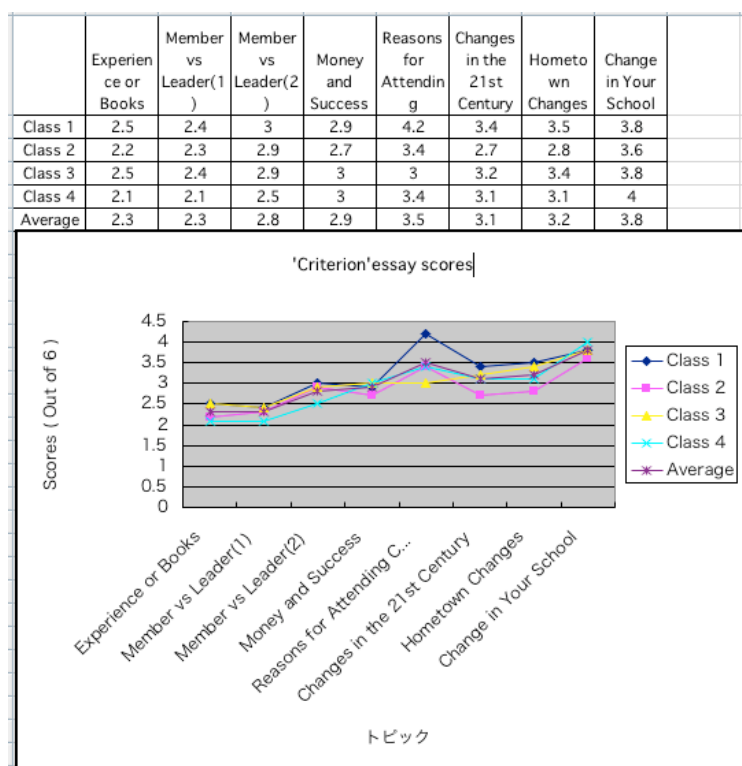
The survey results presented up to this point were from a survey taken mid-year with the purpose of using them as a basis to make adjustments to the syllabus where necessary. The following survey results were from a survey taken at the end of the year as a means of gauging the success of the course design changes from the learners' point of view. The results were as follows:





As is apparent, the course seems to have been successful in terms of motivation, usefulness, and improvement perceived by the learner.

An analysis of scores given by the software reinforces the fact that improvement did occur over the span of the course (See below). It is interesting to note that although the table and graph reflect only the highest score attained on a given essay topic by the students, all of the essays with the exception of ‘Changes in the 21st Century’ and ‘Hometown Changes’ were written twice, with a draft and a subsequent revision. This explains the apparent dip in progress in the 2 topics that were written only once. At the time the instructors wished to add variety by challenging the students to a different topic every essay writing class, but then reverted back to devoting a whole period to revision. As mentioned before (8.3), the students also preferred this.



13. Conclusion

In our experiment we added chances for learner-centered production to the standard syllabus of a writing class at a Japanese high school. Our aim was to allow the learner to experiment with language, improve fluency, and use writing as a means of language development and the exploration of their own ideas. This language practice, by nature will occur exactly at the level of the individual learner’s level of interlanguage development. The activities centered on essay writing, but also included journal exchanges and original sentence production using a target grammar feature. Although we utilized an online evaluation system developed for the instruction of essay writing, we found it necessary to use it as a tool rather than a dictator of

priorities. We augmented the evaluation software with the strategies of process writing, instruction on essay structure, grammar beyond the sentence level, and input related to topic and essay genre. The software's main advantage was that in providing an evaluation of student writing, it provided the key element of a goal to work towards (the holistic score), and this effect lasted all year. In general, the students seemed to enjoy all of the additions we made to the course, and were particularly engaged in the essay writing classes. Comparing the quality and volume of writing produced at the beginning of the year to the same of the end of the year, it would be safe to say that considerable progress was achieved. We feel that we can recommend these types of writing activities for use with students at the high school level in Japan and humbly invite our fellow language teachers to further research writing classes of this type, borrowing any ideas, activities, or advice from this paper that may be useful.

Note 1: The claim that translation problems are rare on second level (niji) entrance exams comes from an informal examination of yearly published collections of examinations and from an inquiry made to Michael Guest of Miyazaki University, an author of the subject of the 'center' scholastic aptitude test, and second-level (niji) exams on English used as entrance procedures in Universities in Japan. Below is an email response to an enquiry as to whether such translation problems were in fact rare.

Hi Matthew.

I agree with you. If high schools are using sentences from actual niji-shiken texts as practice materials, I feel confident in saying that most of the actual questions on the niji tests do not demand such skills. I have the collected tests in book form and it seems that what you wrote is accurate.

Cheers,

Mike Guest

Note 2: The entire syllabus for the essay part of the course can be found on the instructor's page for that class at: http://www.geocities.jp/walsh_sensei/writinghead.html

The front pages of the instructors are: http://www.geocities.jp/walsh_sensei/index.html

and <http://www.ikedo.osaka-kyoiku.ac.jp/~higuchim/index-j.html>

Note 3: 'Quizlab' is an online quiz service offered by Pearson Education that allows you to make and assign quizzes to up to 100 classes of up to 100 students. The price of the service is about 30 dollars U.S. a year and average scores of all the quizzes for each student are automatically calculated. The downside is that you must craft the quizzes yourself. This, however, can be easily done from any internet browser window.

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Appendix 1: Attitude Survey on language of instruction for translation problem procedures.

Immediately after having translation problems explained, in both English and Japanese, students were asked the following questions, answered by a raise of hands.

Which do you prefer, explanations in Japanese, or English?

Class	English	Japanese
2	6	30
4	4	17
1	7	26
3	17	15
Total*	34	92

*35/161= no response or missed in count.

Which do you think is better for your studies?

Class	English	Japanese
2	24	9
4	30	3
1	26	11
3	31	3
Total*	111	26

*24/161= no response or missed in count

What percent of the explanations in English do you feel you were able to understand?

class	100%	90%	80%	70%	60%	50%	40%	30%	10%
2	1	7	10	8	0	0	5	0	0
4	2	1	1	2	6	5	0	0	3
1	1	0	6	11	8	7	0	1	0
3	3	5	11	5	3	4	0	3	0
Total*	7	13	28	26	17	16	5	4	3

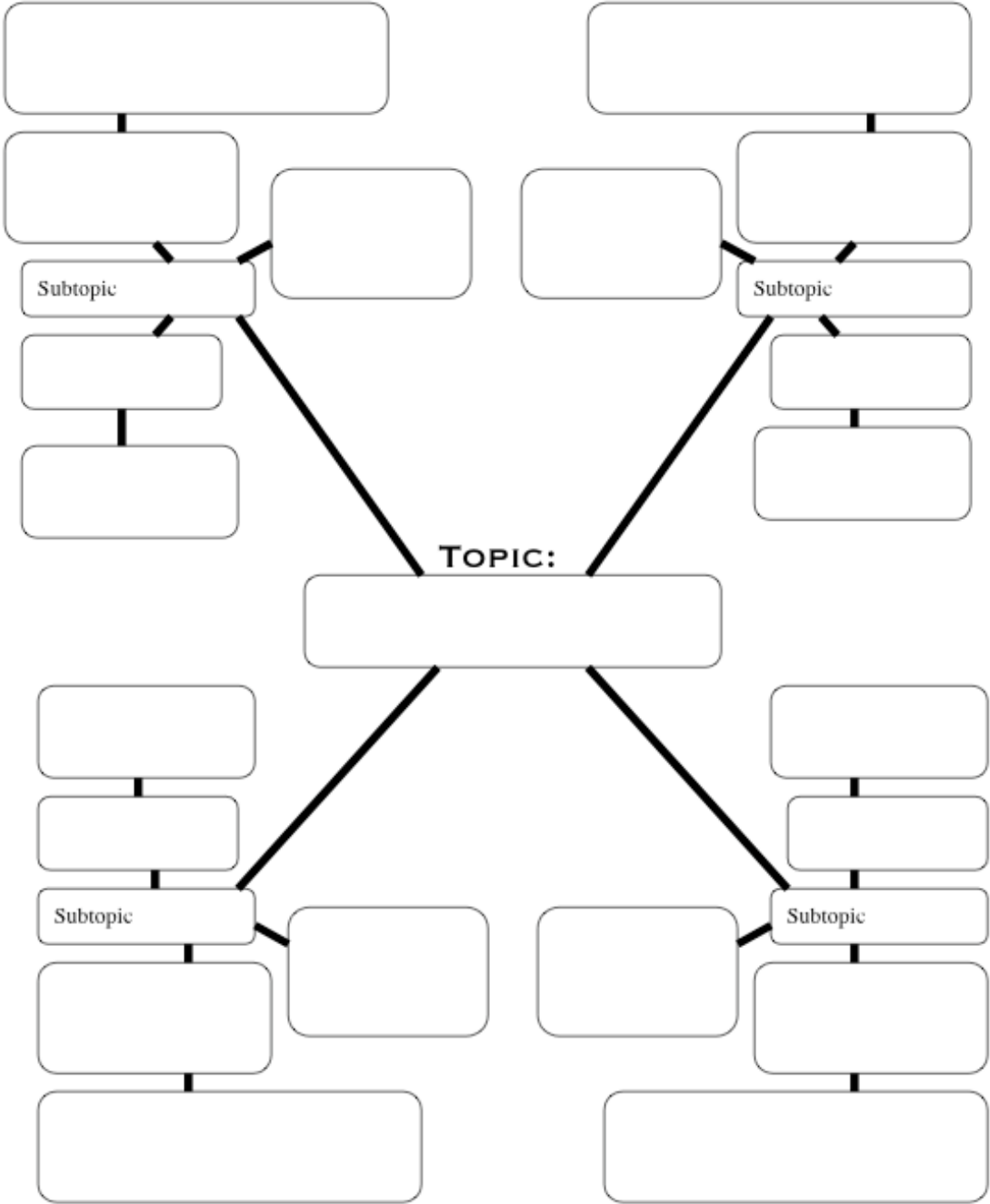
*42/161=no response or missed in count

Conclusion: Although the Ss prefer the explanations in Japanese, they feel that hearing them in English will have a better effect on their studies. Since the majority of the students felt they were able to understand at least 70 percent of the explanations in English, it would be difficult to say the explanations were ineffective because they were in English. Considering the explanations themselves as useful L2 input, using English is a viable option with this group.

Appendix 2 (brainstorming organizer)

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

Don't worry, just write.



Appendix 3 (Format for peer review) (adapted from White & Arndt, 1991)

*Please read your partner's first draft and give them some advice.
After you receive the advice from your partner, use it to re-write your essay.
Change your essay as much as possible
If you have any questions for your partner, please ask them*

1) What is the main point of your partner's essay?
Please find the following things:
(A) Something that you liked
(B) Something you disliked or found unnecessary.
(C) Something you found unclear.
(D) Something you would like to know more about.
Do you have any general advice for your partner?

Appendix 4 (sample question from the quiz on cohesion)

Question 1: This is a paragraph of connected sentences. What is the real order?

- 1) Japan is home to many of these sites.
- 2) In mid-May many students from this school visited these places and carried out mini-research projects on them.
- 3) The organization, which is branch of the United Nations, collects information and makes a list of places of special interest to humanity.
- 4) Through this experience, the students were able to understand the message of UNESCO's project and will be able to share this with other people in the future.
- 5) The World Heritage List is a project of UNESCO.
- 6)The majority of the ones here are temples or buildings of historical or religious importance.

Circle Your Answer

5-6-4-2-1-3

5-3-1-6-2-4

5-6-3-4-1-2

5-3-2-4-1-6