Issues and Conditions of English Activities

in Elementary School in Japan:

An Analysis

in Kumamoto City Municipal Elementary Schools

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October 2010

Abstract

This study explores the conditions and issues of English Activities (EA) in municipal elementary schools in Japan.   The overall purposes of this study are (1) to clarify what the Japanese education system requires from EA, (2) to describe how far EA goes in meeting such demands in practice, and (3) to illuminate factors which facilitate or inhibit students' learning within EA.

Firstly, it was found among various theoretical approaches to language learning, that social constructivism best describes the nature of EA.   It was also revealed that EA in practice is related to various educational issues, and we cannot understand what EA is until we view it from a broader perspective.   In particular, it appeared that EA is strongly related to the following key issues on current students in Japan: the lack of communication skills, self-confidence, and unwillingness to study. Therefore, EA actually serves an important role to tackle such issues.

Based on these perspectives towards EA, the empirical research was conducted in municipal elementary schools in Kumamoto City.   The methodological approaches adopted in this research were the survey approach and the case study approach.   Firstly, a postal questionnaire sent to all municipal elementary schools in Kumamoto City, and an interview of the teachers' consultant on EIU at the City Board of Education were undertaken to confirm the general state of EA.   The case study was then undertaken in two schools utilising questionnaires, interviews, and observations. The research revealed that (1) some progress in EA was confirmed and it appeared not only in the classroom, but also outside, and (2) some key educational issues on current students actually appeared in EA in practice which affect students' learning in EA.

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Preface

My first contact with the University of York dates back to 1998, when I met an International Office advisor of York at the British Education Fair in Osaka, Japan. I had just finished my undergraduate degree in that year, and was seeking information on a postgraduate course abroad.

My BA thesis and the following research thesis focused on cultural understanding in the school education system in Japan, and they made me realise that this field is still underdeveloped here.   In this situation, York seemed to be the best institution for me.   Firstly, York had the Centre for Global and International Education in the department of Educational Studies.   Secondly, Professor Ian Lister, the Director of the centre and the Programme Leader of MA in Educational Studies of the time, had known Japanese education well, including the experience of being a panel member of a national symposium in Japan.   Considering these advantages, I moved to York as a MA student one year later.

After completing my MA, I taught English in elementary schools in Japan for two years.   This experience fuelled my interest in how elementary school students learn in these classes, and this eventually led to study in a PhD course.   Teaching English in elementary school was new in Japan, and the class was taught as a part of international understanding.   To serve my research interests well in this context, York seemed the best place for me again.   Although Professor Lister had retired, he introduced a new staff Dr Jean Conteh, my supervisor.   She was an elementary school teacher and a teacher educator in different countries for many years, and one of her research interests was language and culture in the processes of learning.

Thus, my research fields were underdeveloped in Japan, and York was an ideal institution to undertake research projects under careful and supportive supervision.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank all the participants for their kind cooperation throughout this study. Some of the respondents to the questionnaire gave warm words of encouragement on my research, and were kind enough to include useful materials in their contributions. The students from the case study schools always welcomed me; their bright and friendly smiles were a continual source of support and encouragement for me in completing this study.

I would also like to express my thanks to my former elementary school teacher (she appears as CA1 in this study). She assisted me in carrying out the survey, introduced me to the Kumamoto City Board of Education, and assisted me in conducting the case study. I could not have carried out the research without her support. I also appreciate the help given to me by the Teachers' Consultant on EIU at the Kumamoto City Board of Education for his helpful comments on the survey, and his support in conducting the research.

I want to express my appreciation to Professor Ian Davies, a Thesis Advisory Group member. I am thankful for his support and guidance on administrative matters, and for his advice on my research.

Special thanks goes to Ms Anne Brasier, my colleague. She was more than generous with her time in proofreading my draft with great care. Any remaining inadequacies are, of course, my own.

Finally, I am most grateful to my supervisor Dr Jean Conteh for her encouragement and guidance throughout the study. Her gentleness towards her students as a teacher, and her passion to tackle various educational issues as a researcher serve as an ideal in my life.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the university's regulations and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award.   Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is my own original work.

1 October 2010

Yohei Murayama

Introduction

The following three points on English Activities (EA) in Japanese municipal elementary school are explored in this study: (1) What does the Japanese education system require from EA? (2) How far does EA go in meeting such demands in actual classroom context?, and (3) What factors exist that facilitate or inhibit students' learning of EA?

EA was officially introduced in Japanese elementary schools in 2002 as an element of Education for International Understanding (EIU), and I actually taught these type of classes for two years. However, the contents of this class seemed to be simple adaptations of elements from secondary school models or simply superficial game activities. As an example of the former, schools often set a role-play activity practicing what to say when selling or buying goods and asking for discounts.

This seemed a mismatch with students' reality. It is actually hard to imagine elementary students trying to negotiate for discounts even in their daily life in Japan. As to game activities, the Course of Study for Elementary School of that time (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, MEXT 2004a) said that such activities should be the central part in EA. Although the games actually draw students' interest at first, as years went on and as they moved up to upper grades, it gradually became more and more difficult to satisfy their interests with these activities.

While teaching these lessons, I came to wonder whether these contents would actually meet the goals of EIU. This was a question based on my previous research work, and it became the starting point of this study. Before teaching EA in elementary school, I examined the elements of EIU in Japanese upper secondary school for my MA thesis submitted in 2000. I chose this topic because the

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government's guideline at that time, the Course of Study of 1989 (Ministry of Education 1989), emphasised EIU in English class.   In this context, EIU became highlighted in ELT in Japan during that period (Takanashi and Takahashi, 2007).   In the thesis, the contents of ten best selling government approved English textbooks were analysed in light of the reflection of EIU.   Professional opinions on ideal contents of EIU were also collected from university teachers who were teaching ELT methods.

The study concluded that the content of EIU should not be a traditional knowledge oriented cultural understanding, but be an actual communication oriented one:

> As English is a worldwide language, there is a great possibility to communicate with people from unfamiliar cultures.   In this situation, a proper way to teach English would be to introduce not specific cultural knowledge but possible problems in English communication as case studies.   It is highly likely that the process of considering the reasons why such problems occur will allow students to develop skills to communicate with people from various cultural backgrounds, which seems to be the unique role of intercultural education in EFL classes.
>
> Murayama (2000, p. 75)

In my two year EA teaching experience there seemed to be few opportunities to involve such contents.   This might have been because there was no room in this class for introducing elements of EIU, but it still seemed necessary to suggest appropriate contents in light of EIU.   Stern, et al. (1992) suggests that one of the difficulties of teaching EIU is the lack of a standard syllabus and teaching procedure.   One of the university teachers who responded to the questionnaire on my MA thesis also commented that introducing cultural elements in disorder has little effect on pupils' understanding.   Therefore, this study initially aimed to suggest appropriate elements

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for EIU in EA in appropriate grades according to students' development.

The direction of the study subsequently changed in the early stage of the research.   This was firstly because of my misconception about the terms 'EIU' in Japan and 'international understanding', which emerged from the conversations with my supervisor.   It appeared that there existed some differences between the two terms, and it became necessary to clarify the terms of the same kind as EIU.

Secondly, the results of a postal questionnaire, which was also conducted in the earlier stage of this study to grasp a general picture of EA, were beyond my expectations.   What was suggested was that EA might be working well to meet EIU in the respondents' schools.   My assumption that there would be problems in EA, and therefore EA should be changed by introducing appropriate activities was refuted at this stage.

Based on these experiences in the early stages of the research, the purpose of the research was modified, as appears in the beginning of this chapter.   EA is a part of the municipal elementary school education system, and the education system is supervised by governmental bodies.   In this situation, it is likely that EA is affected by various issues that arose from other subjects, the government, and within society. Therefore, initially, the following points were reviewed to clarify the role of EA:

- the national social economy
- the municipal elementary school education system in Japan
- the aims of EIU
- the relationship between EIU and EA
- the aims of EA

With a review of the literature on EA alone, it seemed difficult to see what the Japanese government's and society's demands for teaching EA actually were. Moreover, there is often a gap between theory and practice, so a postal questionnaire

and an interview were prepared by the researcher in this period.   The opinions of teachers and schools from these studies were believed to help to understand the actual role and practice of EA more precisely, and supplement the knowledge base for the literature review.   Thus, it was hoped that the two studies would enable the researcher to conduct the following case study more efficiently.

The case study explored the second and the third research questions: (2) how far does EA in the actual classroom contribute to meet the demands from the Japanese education system?, and (3) what factors exist to facilitate or inhibit students' learning of EA?   Firstly, the literature review and the research conducted prior to the case study clarified that it is the aspect of interaction and understanding about languages and cultures that the current EA mainly aims to develop.   The research was then prepared to obtain evidence of students' progress in light of these aspects.   Secondly, it was also revealed in the literature review and the research prior to the case study, that various social factors were likely to influence EA.   The researcher thus sought to explore in actual practice, what the examples of such factors are, and how these factors affect students' learning in EA.

Investigating these two points, the researcher aimed to explain that EA in actual practice is related to various issues, and we cannot understand what EA is until we view the class in relation to such surroundings of EA.   Therefore, not only the issues of EIU and ELT, but also various issues which link EA were carefully examined. This study will finally clarify what the conditions for EA are in the actual classroom, and why such conditions were formed.

This study is divided into five chapters.   Chapter one explains what Japanese society requires from EA in municipal elementary schools.   Various issues which link EA are carefully outlined, followed by the issues on EIU and ELT.   These reviews will clarify what the aims of EA are, and why they are necessary.   Chapter two

describes the research methodology.   Presentation, analysis of results, and discussions

of the research are introduced in Chapter three and four.   Finally, possible ways to

improve EA and possibilities for further research are suggested in Chapter five.

1. Context/ Literature Review

1.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to clarify what Japanese society requires from EA in municipal elementary schools.   As we see later in this chapter, EA was originally introduced as a part of EIU.   Therefore, it seems that the aims and contents of EA tend to be discussed from the perspectives of EIU or ELT.   Although this seems natural on the surface, the opinion of teachers and schools collated in this study (e.g., 3.2. an analysis of a postal questionnaire to municipal elementary school teachers, 4.3. an analysis of interviews to EIU coordinators) made me realise that there is another viewpoint. They tended to relate EA to other subjects taught in their school, and also linked it with issues that were discussed in society, rather than to view EA as an isolated component separated from other subjects and activities.

On this point, Oka and Kanamori (2007) also point out that there are many other subjects besides EA in the school curriculum, and we should be aware that elementary school education including EA is a part of all-round education:

> Elementary school students are to grow up through 'intellectual education, moral education, and physical education', which is the aim of elementary school education.   Elementary school education has a significant role to play in the development of 'sociality' and of the quality of becoming 'an independent learner'.
>
> Oka and Kanamori (2007, p. 84), Translated by the author

Thus, EA in actual practice is related to various issues, and we cannot understand what the necessary elements of EA are until we see them with a broader perspective.   In this chapter, therefore, various issues which link EA are carefully outlined, followed by the issues on EIU and ELT.   These reviews will finally clarify

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what the aims of EA are, and why they are so vital.

1.2. Municipal Elementary School Education in Japan

1.2.1. The National Social Economy

In the 1980s, Japan received harsh criticism from overseas countries for trade frictions, and the Japanese government began to shift towards expanding domestic demand in the late 80s.   Policies such as housing and city redevelopment were put into practice.   Thanks to this movement, land and stock prices increased dramatically day by day throughout the nation, and Japan experienced an economic boom.

This overheated economy suddenly collapsed in 1990s, however, and many companies including major securities firms and banks went bankrupt.   There has been a serious recession since then, and the unemployment rate jumped to 5.5 percent in 2002 (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications; MIC, 2005), the highest level on record.   Positive economic indicators came to appear in 2005, and the end of the slump seemed to be approaching.   However, the global financial crisis triggered in the US in late 2007 forced the Japanese economy into another economic slowdown.   In November 2008, the Japanese government officially announced that the nation's economy had entered a recession in the July-September period in 2008, as the global slowdown affected Japanese economy (Reuters, 2008).

One example of a tangible effect of this recession is that as the nation's economy becomes unstable, the number of temporary workers is increasing.   The government's annual report on the condition of employment revealed that 35.5 % of the workers in Japan in 2007 were temporary workers.   The same data in 1987 was 19.7%, and we can say that the number of temporary workers became almost double in 20 years (MIC, 2008).

1.2.2. Changes of Education at Home and in the Local Community

Along with the economic and social changes, the quality of education at home and within the local community appears to be decreasing in Japan. A survey conducted by the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan (2007b) shows that 23.3% of students' fathers have almost no time to communicate with their children. In the same survey, it was found that 59.9% of students' parents believe that education at home including teaching acceptable standards of behaviour is inadequate in Japan.

For example, the Central Council for Education (2005) points out that adults in the local community tend not to care about children in the same community, or cannot communicate with children because they do not know how to build relationships with children. This is because families are becoming more nuclear, and communication in the local community comes to disappear as a result of urbanization (Central Council for Education).

An issue amongst Year one elementary school students, which is often called "*Shou ichi problem*" meaning the Year one problem, also seems to be common these days. According to the Asahi-shimbun (2009), 24% of municipal elementary schools in Tokyo faced this problem in 2008. Typical behaviours seen in these schools were that students wander around the classroom, and sometimes they go out of the classroom without permission (69%), and students do not behave as their teacher tells them to (62%). In this situation, it becomes more and more difficult for a homeroom teacher (HRT) to run a class. Central Council for Education (2005) points out that the background to this is the decline in the educational functions of the home and local community.

1.2.3. Municipal Elementary School Education in Japan: Overview

In this context of economic recession and social changes, how does elementary

school education takes place in Japan?　　Three types of bodies form elementary schools in Japan; private, national, and municipal bodies.　　MEXT (2004b) suggests that most elementary school students in Japan study in municipal schools.　　According to MEXT, there are 23,420 elementary schools, 23,160 schools (98.9%) being municipal schools.　　In municipal schools, students are allocated to the school nearest their homes, and it is usually not possible for parents to select a school by themselves.

It is often pointed out that elementary school teachers tend to work too hard, and do not have enough free time.　　MEXT (2007) conducted a survey in 2008 on school teachers' working conditions.　　It was found that teachers tend to spend much time on meetings and administrative work such as writing reports and contacting government and related offices.　　It also revealed that elementary and secondary school teachers worked overtime an average of 34 hours per month.

In municipal elementary schools and lower-secondary schools, classes are taught approximately for 200 days (40 weeks) a year, and this is the same level as the world standard (Central Council for Education 2007).　　These schools follow the Course of Study, which is introduced by the government.　　It is the national standard of teaching contents, and states required elements to be involved in classes in detail in each subject according to the grade.　　The government approved textbooks should be used in each subject.　　The municipal Board of Education decides which textbooks to use, and therefore the same textbooks are used at every school that the Board controls.

Municipal elementary school teachers regularly need to move into different schools within the same prefecture.　　Therefore it is rare for teachers to stay in the same schools more than ten years.　　The principals in municipal elementary schools tend to　control their teachers under the regulations, while taking full responsibility for faults or accidents in their schools, rather than taking leadership or showing an autonomous vision for their schools.

Thus, we can say that municipal schools in Japan tend to be supervised by governmental bodies.   In this situation, it seems difficult to establish a strong school ethos in municipal elementary schools in Japan.   A school ethos could be a strong factor which would affect pupils' characters.   For example, the 'school character' appears to vary among elementary schools in England.   DFES (2003) discusses school character as follows: "Primary schools are very diverse, each with its own distinct identity.   We intend to help them build on their diversity, and their ethos. Schools should feel empowered to develop their own rich and varied curricula" (p. 15).

The condition of elementary schools in Japan seems very different from the one in England.   What may possibly foster specific characteristics in municipal schools in Japan would be research projects designated by the government.   The government appoints various projects to each Board of Education or individual municipal schools such as "promoting internationalisation in education by studying together with pupils who are from foreign countries or who have come back from foreign countries" and "developing moral education which would get to pupils' hearts." As schools allocate extra time for the projects lasting for a few years, these projects might form some temporary unique qualities in each school.

1.2.4. Revisions in Course of Study of 1998

The Course of Study is revised approximately once a decade to reflect the needs of the times.   When this study was conducted, the elementary school education followed the Course of Study of 1998, which was introduced by the government in April 2002.   MEXT (2001a) suggests the following two elements are the main points of the revisions for the 1998 guidelines; (1) free from pressure and (2) zest for life.

The Central Council for Education (1996a), which the Course of Study of 1998 is based on, describes the reasons for emphasising these two elements.   Firstly,

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it states that today's children are forced to spend rather great amount of time for school, private tutoring schools, and study at home, which tends to shorten children's sleeping hours.   This point seems evident in the survey by NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) in 1992:

Table 1   The Change of Elementary School Students' Living Hours on Weekdays in Japan

	1970	1980	1990
Sleep	9 hours 23 minutes	9.13	9.03
Study	7.03	6.55	7.19
Housework	0.21	0.18	0.16
Going out	0.05	0.03	0.03
Watching TV	2.11	2.32	2.01

Created from NHK Seron Chosabu (1992)

In light of this situation, the Central Council for Education reported that many students display symptoms of stress such as being unable to sleep at night, becoming easily fatigued, being unwilling to have breakfast, having a desire to shout out for some reason, and getting frustrated easily, etc.

Secondly, the Council points out that Japanese education tended to be one-sided teaching deepening knowledge.   In the near future, however, the Central Council for Education (1996b) states that it is expected that we would live in a rapidly changing and indefinable society, and therefore it would be more difficult to live in. In such a situation, the council stresses that it is necessary for children to develop a zest for life.   The council perceives the following two points as a 'zest for life':

- The ability to find out the issues by oneself, think and learn by oneself, make decisions and act independently, and to reach better solutions.

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- Well-rounded character that is able to control oneself, cooperative, thoughtful, and amazed, with good health and physical strength.

Central Council for Education (1996b), translated by the author
http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chuuou/toushin/960701/960701a.htm

Based on the suggestions on 'free from pressure' and 'a zest for life' by the council, Takashina (1999) explains that several new policies were introduced in the guidelines.   Firstly, classes on Saturday mornings were cancelled to introduce a five-day-school system and in addition to this measure, the overall teaching content of subjects was reduced by 30%.   Secondly, *the Period for Integrated Stud*y, which stresses involving activities such as learning about local food with guest teachers or communicating with people from foreign countries, was introduced to meet the criteria of 'zest for life'.

1.2.5. Issues in the Course of Study of 1998

Since the inception of this course of study, many people became concerned over the possibility that these changes would lower students' academic performance. For example, the number of students who chose independent schools significantly increased in the Tokyo area, due to the perception that the difference between the content that students learn in municipal schools and independent schools had become greater.   According to the Asahi Shimbun (2002), most independent schools in Tokyo area do not follow the government's guidelines, and were teaching more classes than municipal schools.   The guidelines received a fair amount of criticism, and were revised in December 2003 stating that the policies are the minimum standard, and therefore it is possible to teach longer hours.

In addition, Japanese students' results in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) dropped down in 2003, and people tended to

criticise this as an indication of the effect of the new guidelines (Asahi Shimbun 2004,

Fujii 2005).　The aims of the PISA are described as follows:

> …(PISA) aims to measure how far students approaching the end of
> compulsory education have acquired some of the knowledge and skills
> essential for full participation in the knowledge society.
>
> OECD (2007, p. 4)

> …The first three PISA surveys each focused on a particular subject area:
> reading (in 2000), mathematics (in 2003) and science (in 2006). The
> programme will conduct a further set of surveys in 2009, 2012 and 2015.
>
> (OECD, p. 4)

In 2005, the then education minister apologised to the students who were taught

in the curriculum of 1998 when he had a school visit.　There, he admitted that it was a

mistake to reduce the total teaching hours at school (Sankei Shimbun 2005).　In 2007,

the Central Council for Education released the summary documentation of discussions

on the curriculum of 1998, and various problems of the curriculum were pointed out.

The Council admitted that there are five issues in the Course of Study of 1998:

- The necessity of 'zest for life' for current school students is not understood well
- Activities in the Period for Integrated Study are not taught well
- The Period for Integrated Study tends not be related to other subjects
- The total hours of study is not adequate
- Schools are not aware that the quality of education at home and in local community has decreased

Created from Central Council for Education (2007, pp. 17-19)

Based on the issues that arose with this curriculum, various changes will be made in

the next Course of Study introduced as early as 2011.

The council suggests that the government needs to explain what the term 'zest for life' means, and why it is necessary to emphasise it now. As for the Period for Integrated Study, the Central Council for Education (2003) also points out that schools tend to teach this class without carefully considering the quality and ability to develop. It goes on to say that in the lessons for the Period for Integrated Study, EA are taught in this class, the lessons place more emphasis on students' interests and less on educational effects, and it appears that teachers do not provide needed and appropriate teaching. In this situation, it seems natural that the Period for Integrated Study lacks any relationship with other subjects, as the Central Council for Education (2007) points out.

The Central Council for Education (2007) also argues that current students in Japan tend to lack the following points which the 'zest for life' concept aims to develop:

- Problem-solving skills, sound judgement, and expression skills
- The willingness to study
- Study habit and lifestyle habit
- Self-confidence and interest in their future
- Physical strength

Created from Central Council for Education (2007, p. 16)

Among the issues above, it seems that the government reports and educators refer to these three points in particular; the willingness to study, expression skills, and self-confidence. In the following sections, therefore, each point is outlined in more detail.

1.2.6. Inactive Attitude for Study

According to the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) (2003), Japan ranked the bottom among participating countries on the total hours to do homework.   On the other hand, the total hours spent watching TV or videos is the longest, and the total hours to help with the housework ranked in the middle (Central Council for Education (2007).   The National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER) (2007) also revealed that 39.3% of the secondary school students in Japan do not study at all or rarely study outside of classes.

The result of PISA in 2003 revealed that Japanese students' mean value of reading literacy dropped down sharply from 522 (8th in the world) in year 2000 to 498 (14th) (Asahi Shimbun 2004, MEXT 2004c).   Japanese students' correct answers in this field tend to be multiple choice questions, with wrong answers or no comments being free description questions (Asahi Shimbun, 2004).

The Central Council for Education (2007) suggests that these trends are related to issues on the willingness to study and the attitude to tackle tasks, and such attitudes are also likely to be associated with the uncertain atmosphere in the nation.   In Japan, the number of university-age students is sharply declining, while the number of universities is increasing.   Therefore, it is said that anyone will be able to enter a university in the near future (Kyoto Shimbun 2007, Asahi Shimbun 2007).   Even if a student could enter a university without great effort, as the national economy becomes weaker every year, it could be difficult to find a stable job after graduating university. In this situation, the current social trend is to enjoy now rather than to prepare for the future (Cabinet Office, Government of Japan 2007a).

In this social context, MEXT (2003a) explains that today's students cannot find a clear relationship between their study and their future career, which decreases motivation for learning and prevents them from developing a positive study habit.

Thus, we can say that a chaotic social environment is likely to affect current students' attitude toward their study.

1.2.7. The Ability to Exchange Thoughts

The skills of expression also seem to be focused on in elementary school education in Japan.   In the *Course of Study* of 1998 for Japanese language class (for Japanese), the importance of the development of "the ability to exchange thoughts" is especially stressed (Ikuta, 2000).   It was the first time the *Course of Study* included this point (Moriyama, 2009).   The goal of Japanese for elementary school is as follows:

> The development of the ability to express and understand in Japanese, to exchange thoughts, to enhance intellect and imagination for enriching the sense of language, to develop the attitude to respect our language while deepening the awareness towards it.

> Ministry of Education (1998), Translated by the author

The government explains what the ability to exchange thoughts means, as follows:

> "The ability to exchange thoughts" is to develop expressing oneself appropriately using language, and to understand things accurately in person to person relations respecting each other's positions and thoughts.   This is the Japanese language ability to live and work in the coming era of the information-intensive and international society, and is also an important content in Japanese education to build students' character.

> Ministry of Education (1999, p.9), Translated by the author

As Moriyama (2009) points out, this explanation suggests that "the ability to exchange thoughts" means what is described in English classes as "communication skills".

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This ability is also stressed in Japanese textbooks.   The ability to read stories tended to be highlighted in the previous Course of Study (Asahi Shimbun, 2001).   On the other hand, current textbooks focus on communication skills such as the ability to express one's own thoughts logically, and to use different reading strategies in different reading materials (Asahi Shimbun, Benesse 2005).

The ability to exchange thought draws more attention as a social issue after a shocking incident in 2004.   In that year, an eleven-year-old girl slashed a girl classmate to death with a knife in a study room in an elementary school in Nagasaki, Japan.   The girl reportedly told police that she was annoyed by comments the victim made about her appearance during their exchanges in internet chat rooms a few days before the incident.   Then, she called the victim to a study room at school (BBC, 2004).

Youth crime dramatically increased during that period.   According to BBC (2004), the number of youth under 14 committing serious crimes in Japan in 2003 rose to 212, a 47% increase on the previous year.   In 2003, a 12-year-old boy pushed a four-year-old boy to death from a roof in Nagasaki.   The same month, a boy of 13 was arrested in connection with the beating to death of a classmate in Okinawa. Similar violent incidents followed one after another throughout the nation after the case in Nagasaki in 2004, which had enormous impact on Japanese society.

The incident in Nagasaki in 2004 prompted the government to take measures to stop any more youth crimes.   The report stresses the ability to exchange thoughts, and to establish a good personal relationship as follows:

It is necessary to teach students not to solve trouble among their peers through the use of violence as in the case in Nagasaki.   The ability to express one's own feelings and thoughts should be developed to solve a problem through communication with words in their daily life.   The ability to respect each other

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should be also taught to make a good personal relationship.

MEXT (2004d) Translated by the author
Available from
http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/16/10/04100501/001.htm

Thus, the ability to exchange thoughts seems to be an important element to teach in current elementary school.

1.2.8. Lack of Self-confidence

As to the issue of students' self-confidence, firstly, compared to school students in other countries, Japanese students tend to lack confidence.   Japan Youth Research Institute (2009) conducted a survey in 2008 to secondary school students in four countries: Japan, China, South Korea, and US.   In this survey, Japanese students tend to agree with 'I am a poor person', and disagree with 'I can act on my own will' and 'I have decent ability like other people.' more than students in other countries.

Secondly, the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan (2007) reports that the percentage of students who answered 'I have confidence.' decreased in 2006 compared to the same survey conducted in 1999.   In the same way, the percentage of students with no worries decreased dramatically.

These figures suggest that it could be difficult for current school students to be confident because they tend to have various worries about school and their future career.   It is often said that recently school students are not very good at keeping good relationships with friends, and the figures seem to support this point.

Table 2　Survey on Japanese Students' Lifestyle and Attitude (2007)

Students who Answered:	Year	Elementary school students (%)	Lower secondary school students (%)
'I have confidence'	1999	56.4	41.1
	2006	47.4	29.0
'I have no worries'	1999		43.7
	2006		29.1
'I am worried about my current study and study in the future'	1999		46.7
	2006		61.2
'I am worried about my friendships'	1999		8.1
	2006		20.0

Created from Cabinet Office, Government of Japan (2007)

Note: There is no comparative data for elementary school students for these questions about worries.　These questions were asked to lower secondary school students only in 1999.

　　The Central Council for Education (2007) states that it is very important in contemporary school education to deal with self-confidence:

> …given the fact that current students are worried about their future and human relationship, it is necessary to develop self-confidence through interaction with other people, involvement in society, nature, and the environment.
> 　　To develop this point, it is necessary to develop linguistic ability including Japanese.　Japanese is the base of communication and emotion for students, and today's students appear to lack self-expression skills and the vocabulary to put their own or other people's feelings and thoughts into words. This is one reason why they cannot have smooth communication and easily get angry.　We need to enhance guidance to deal with these issues.
> 　　Furthermore, it is extremely important to have experiential activities such as communication with adults other than parents and teachers in the local community, cross-age interaction among students, an overnight stay in a large group in natural surroundings, learning through work experience, and volunteer activities.　This is because these are direct experiences with other people,

society, nature, and the environment.   Experiential activities should be provided at home or local community.   Given the fact that education at home and local community is decreasing, the school also needs to facilitate experiential activities.   It means little if no follow-up is done after having experiential activities.   We need to be aware that students will have broader understanding through writing and communicating to share experiences.

The development of self-confidence does not mean to instil too much confidence or to allow selfish behaviour.   An important outlook is not a 'closed self' such as someone who tries to escape from reality or who cares only about oneself, but an 'open self' who tries to understand oneself by answering their own questions, and who cares about others relating to other people, society, nature, and environment.   Self-confidence would be developed through realising and feeling achievement to live with others, society, nature, and environment.

Council for Education (2007, pp. 28-29) Translated by the author

In this report, all the three points, the willingness to study, expression skills, and self-confidence are mentioned, and it suggests that they are interrelated, that is to say that active communication with other people will develop self-confidence, and the confidence will develop willingness to study.

1.2.9. Self-confidence

As we have seen, self-confidence is one of the key words in the current school education in Japan.   These days, it is sometimes called 'self-esteem'.   In the academic world, it seems that every researcher has a different definition of self-esteem (Bednar and Peterson 1989, Carlock 1998).   Wells and Marwell (1976) classified ways of defining the term, and their landmark work stands today (Guindon, 2010). They studied the existing works on self-esteem up to that time and came to the conclusion that definitions fall into four different categories:

- The object/ attitudinal approach:
  The self is an object of attention just like any other thing.   We can have thoughts, feelings, and behaviours toward anything that is an object.   Thus, we can also have these reactions toward ourselves, in this case toward that part of ourselves we call self-esteem.

- The relational approach:
  The relationship or difference between sets of attitudes.   It is also reactive. For example, we can have varying and different thoughts, feelings, and behaviours when comparing our ideal self with our real self, or between our ambitions and our achievements.   Wells and Marwell found that this is the most common type of definition.

- The psychological responses approach:
  This approach concerns psychological or emotional reactions toward the self.   We can feel either positive or negative about some element of ourselves, such as our behaviour or our appearance.   Self-esteem defined this way is affective in nature.

- The personality function/ component approach:
  Self-esteem is seen as being a part of personality (a construct itself), the self, or self-system, which is that part of personality concerned with motivation and self-regulation.   For example, individuals evaluate themselves according to how they behave to socially acceptable standards.

Created from Guindon (2010, p. 5)

Wells and Marwell concluded that nearly all definitions of self-esteem consist of two primary aspects: evaluation and its emotional experience or affect (Guindon 2010).   Smelser (1989, quoted by Guindon 2010) suggests that cognitive, affective, and evaluative elements are the universally accepted components of self-esteem:

- The cognitive element:
  A part of the self in descriptive terms.   It answers the question of what kind of person one is, such as secure, outgoing, or smart.

- The affective element:
  The positive or negative aspect of each of these characteristics, or its valence.   It determines whether self-esteem is high or low.

- The evaluative element:
  The level of worthiness assigned to each attribution.   It is based on an ideal social standard.

<div align="right">Created from Guindon (2010, p. 5)</div>

Finally, the following are examples of current definitions of self-esteem in our daily life, and in the professional literature:

Self-esteem is:

- the feeling of being satisfied with your own abilities, and that you deserve to be liked or respected.

<div align="right">Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (5th edn.) (2009)</div>

- The attitudinal, evaluative component of the self: the affective judgements placed on the self-concept consisting of feelings of worth and acceptance which are developed and maintained as a consequence of awareness of competence and feedback from the external world.

<div align="right">Guindon (2002, p. 207)</div>

These definitions and studies suggest that feedback from others and society is an important component of self-esteem.   To have feedback, the willingness to communicate should be necessary.   Thus, we can say that the viewpoint of self-esteem also explains that the three elements, willingness to study, and expression skills, and self-confidence are interrelated with each other.

1.2.10. Conclusion

So far we have outlined the current condition of municipal elementary school education in Japan.　Most students in Japan go to municipal elementary school.　In municipal elementary schools and lower-secondary schools, classes are taught for approximately 200 days (40 weeks) a year, which is in the same level to the world standard.

Municipal elementary schools in Japan follow the Course of Study, the national standard of teaching contents.　The guidelines show required elements in detail in each subject according to the grades.　Municipal elementary schools also use the government approved textbooks in each subject.　The government's strong control and teachers' frequent transfers make it difficult to develop a strong school character in the municipal school education system in Japan.

The current Course of Study, which was introduced in 2002, stresses the following two points: 'free from pressure' and a 'zest for life'.　Several measures were taken to correspond to these goals.　Firstly, classes on Saturday mornings were cancelled to introduce five-day-school system, and the overall teaching content of the subjects was reduced by 30%.　Secondly, *the Period for Integrated Study* was introduced.

However, many people were concerned over the possibility that these changes would lower students' academic performance.　One example was that the number of students who chose independent schools significantly increased in Tokyo areas.　This is because independent schools do not follow the government's guidelines, and teach more hours than municipal schools.　Moreover, Japanese students' result of the PISA dropped down in 2003, and people tended to infer that this was because of the new guidelines.

In 2003 and 2007, the government admitted that there are problems in the

Course of Study.　　The government's reports suggest that the intent and purpose of 'free from pressure' and 'zest for life' were not understood well in school.　　The government admitted that although the Period for Integrated Study was introduced to foster a 'zest for life', it has only stayed in doing activities that catches students' interest.　　In addition, combinations with other subjects and consideration of educative effects have been put off.

　　　　Thus, it seems that the current Course of Study has caused confusion for school and home, and it has also been criticised by the society.　　However, it should be noted that 'free from pressure' and 'zest for life' were emphasised because they were regarded as fundamental issues on the current school students.　　Specifically, as we have reviewed, the following three points were likely to be the key to foster the two qualities needed for school students:

Table 3　Key Points to Foster Sound Young People

(1) To have active attitude towards their studies.

Issue:	Background:
Japan ranked the bottom among participating countries on the total hours spent doing homework (TIMSS, 2003).	The current social trend is to enjoy now rather than to prepare for the future (Central Council for Education, 2007) (Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, 2007a).
The total hours to watch TV or videos was the longest among TIMSS countries in 2003, and the total hours to help with the housework ranked in the middle (Central Council for Education, 2007).	
In Japan, 39.3% of secondary school students do not study at all or rarely study out of classes (NIER, 2007).	
Today's students tend to have low motivation for learning, which prevents them from developing study habit (The Central Council for Education, 2007).	Current students cannot find a clear relationship between their study and their future career.
Japanese students' correct answers in reading literacy in PISA 2003 tend to be multiple choice questions, with wrong answers or no comments being free description questions (The Central Council for Education, 2007).	Current Japanese students tend to lack determination to think about unfamiliar questions and issues, and express their thoughts.
"*Shou ichi problem*" (the Year 1 problem) seems to be especially common these days (Central Council for Education, 2005) (Asahi-shimbun, 2009).	The decline in the educational functions of the home and local community.

Table 3 (continued)

(2) To develop communication skills in Japanese.

Issue:	Background:
To develop self-confidence, it is necessary to develop linguistic ability including Japanese (Council for Education, 2007).	Today's students are worried about their future and human relationships.
Students cannot have smooth communication and easily get angry (Council for Education, 2007).	Today's students lack self-expression skills and adequate vocabulary to put their own or other people's feelings and thoughts into words.
The phrase "the ability to exchange thoughts" became known when the current *Course of Study* for Japanese language class (for Japanese) in elementary school included it as one of the goals to develop for the first time.	
After 2004, "the ability to exchange thoughts" is further stressed (MEXT, 2004c) (Benesse, 2005).	An eleven-year-old girl slashed a girl classmate to death. Youth crime dramatically increased at that period. Students' inadequate communication skills using language was pointed out.

(3) To build confidence

Issue:	Background:
It is necessary to develop self-confidence through interaction with other people, involvement in society, nature, and the environment (Council for Education, 2007).	Current students are worried about their future and human relationships.
Japanese students tend to agree with 'I am a poor person', and disagree with 'I can act on my own will' and 'I have decent ability like other people.' more than students in other countries (Japan Youth Research Institute, 2009).	
The percentage of students who answered 'I have confidence.' decreased in 2006 compared to the same survey conducted in 1999 (Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, 2007).	

As summarised above, there are various issues on current school students in Japan. In this situation, the government's perspective to emphasise 'free from pressure' and 'zest for life' to tackle these issues seems to make a point. What is necessary for the government would be to explain the purposes of the two points clearly to schools, home, and a society to guide teachers to implement suitable education programmes for their students.

1.3. Municipal Elementary School Education in Kumamoto City

1.3.1. Introduction

The empirical research in this study was conducted in municipal elementary schools in Kumamoto City.　Therefore, this section aims to introduce an overview of the city, and its municipal elementary school education system.

1.3.2. Overview of Kumamoto City

Japan consists of four major islands that lie from north to south named Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. Kumamoto City is in the central region of Kyushu Island and it is the capital of Kumamoto prefecture.　It is about a one and a half hour flight from Tokyo (1,072km), and from Seoul in Korea (631km).

Most of the city is a plain, surrounded by mountain ranges which feature an active volcano.　Thanks to these mountains and the many rivers running through the city, it is often called the city of forests and water.　The population of the city is about 670,000.　The service industry and agricultural industries are the major regional industries in fact, and the city is ranked among the nation's top ten local municipalities for gross agricultural production (Kumamoto City 2001).

The people of Kumamoto are often described as inflexible and conservative. There is a well known phrase which means that in Kumamoto, when someone tries to introduce a new idea, the rest of the people try to beat the person to make the person withdraw the idea (Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun, 1982).

1.3.3. Municipal Elementary Schools in Kumamoto City

There are 80 municipal elementary schools in Kumamoto City with about 40,000 students (Kumamoto City Board of Education 2006).　The Kumamoto City Board of Education controls these schools.　The Board sets the basic policies on

elementary school education and guidelines for each subject.   It also selects the government approved textbooks for each subject, and all the municipal schools in Kumamoto City use the same textbooks.

According to the Board, the goal of the school education is "to develop students' zest for life through various educational activities in school, home, and school community" (Kumamoto City Board of Education, 2006 pp. 8-9, translated by the author).   To achieve this goal, the following points are stressed:

Development of students' health and physical strength, and academic ability by:

- enhancing the development of academic ability and individual personalities
- enhancing learning through experience
- promoting food education
  (other examples are omitted)

Improvement of school facilities for creating a comfortable educational environment
    (examples omitted)

Promotion of education to respond to the social changes by:

- promoting EIU, IT education, and environmental education

Promotion of a close partnership between school, home, and school community by:

- making the most of local talent
  (other examples are omitted)

Based on these goals, each school creates its own curriculum.

Thus, the phrase "zest for life" in the goal, and the points for achieving the goal suggest that it is likely that the Kumamoto City Board of Education aims to

develop the points that are specifically stressed in the Japanese government's current Course of Study.

1.3.4. Conclusion

So far we have introduced Kumamoto City and its municipal education system. Kumamoto City, where this study was conducted, is located in the south of Japan. There are 80 elementary schools in the city.　These schools aim to develop the points that are specifically stressed in the Japanese government's current Course of Study.

1.4. The Goals of Education for International Understanding

1.4.1. Introduction

In the late 1990s, it was often pointed out that the concept of EIU was difficult to understand clearly.　Various academic societies presented different definitions of EIU, and this seemed a major source of confusion amongst school teachers when dealing with EIU.　It was for these reasons that I decided to study in a PhD course in the UK, because it seemed that the UK was pioneering in this field.

When I began my PhD in the UK in 2004, however, I often found that there was a gap about my research plan in the conversations I had with my supervisor.　For example, my supervisor often suggested focusing on Japanese students' attitude towards students from other countries.　It is not common in ordinary elementary schools to have a non-Japanese student, however, and therefore her suggestions confused me.　The disparity became more obvious as time passed, and I finally realised that I might have used an incorrect term to describe the targeted education in Japan.

I had used "intercultural understanding" as the translation of *Kokusai Rikai Kyoiku* since I started my MA study.　One day, an idea flashed into my mind that this

could be the reason why we had not reached a common understanding on what this meant. *Kokusai Rikai Kyoiku* might have a unique nature in various countries including intercultural understanding, which is widely used in the UK.

This realisation became a trigger for me to determine the direction of the study. In this section, therefore, firstly, I have investigated the equivalent terms to *Kokusai Rikai Kyoiku*, which means "Education for International Understanding (EIU)" in English. Comparisons with these terms would show whether EIU is essentially different, and help to understand its goals clearly.

Next, examinations of the definition of EIU, and its appropriate English translation will be presented. School education in Japan is provided in line with the Course of Study, which is introduced by the government. People seemed confused about EIU because the meaning was not clearly stated in the guidelines. The guidelines have been revised approximately every ten years, based on the government's council reports. Therefore, the arguments presented in the councils and the changes about EIU which appeared in reports are focused on to clarify the goals of EIU, as they seemed the most reliable sources.

Finally, the relationship between EIU and EA is discussed, based on the comparison of the findings on the goals of EIU and the Course of Study.

1.4.2. Intercultural Education and Multicultural Education

According to Perotti (1994), intercultural education in Europe originated in the issue of the great wave of immigrants who settled down in Western Europe in the late 1960s and 1980s. He suggests that the schooling of the children of immigrant workers was the main concern of intercultural education at first, and the education gradually included teaching about human rights, and the prevention of intolerance, and racism.

According to Banks (1995), in the United States, multicultural education emerged out of the civil rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s initiated by African Americans.   In response to their demands, schools, colleges, and universities in the nation established ethnic studies courses and programmes.   As ethnic studies developed, it appeared that the framework of the study was not sufficient to bring about structural changes in education to create equal opportunities for low-income students and students of colour (Banks).   To meet this goal, multicultural education was introduced.

Thus, intercultural education in Europe and multicultural education in the United States seem to have very different historical contexts.   However, both intercultural education and multicultural education originally focused on minority people in their societies.   Then both types gradually covered education for 'majority groups' towards developing their understanding of minorities, to the extent that it consciously involved issues for all people within their societies.

1.4.3. Global Education

Yoneda (1998) suggests that global education began in the US in the1970s, and it became popular as the process of regional economies, societies, and cultures became integrated through the global network of communication and trade.   In this situation, a single issue originating in one region can affect people all over the world, and it is becoming difficult to deal with such global issues with country-to-country relations (Yoneda).

It seems that the goals for Global Education vary amongst societies, but Yoneda implies that general view of this education is to raise active people outside the framework of state to deal with global issues such as environment, peace, and human rights.   Among various definitions of global education, the Council of Europe's

North-South Centre (2002) (as cited in the Global Education Guidelines Working Group

2008, p. 66) defined Global Education as follows:

- Global Education is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all.

- Global Education is understood to encompass Development Education, Human Rights Education, Education for Sustainability, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention and Intercultural Education; being the global dimensions of Education for Citizenship.

Global Education Guidelines Working Group, (2008, p. 66)

1.4.4. The Elements of EIU

The current Course of Study for Elementary School is based on the

deliberations of the Central Council for Education (1996).　According to this report,

EIU consists of the following three elements:

(1) Open-mindedness and understanding regarding other cultures, and the development of an attitude that is respectful of these cultures and qualities, and the development of the abilities necessary for living together with people from different cultures.

(2) Establishment of a strong sense of self and sense of being Japanese to better appreciate the concept of international understanding.

(3) Development of basic foreign language skills, the ability for self-expression, and other communication skills for the purpose of expressing one's own thoughts and intentions, while respecting the positions of others in an international society.

English Translation by MEXT (2001b, p.121)

The government's council reports and arguments related to EIU in school

education since World War II suggest that each aim of EIU came to be stressed in a

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different educational period, and the current EIU includes all three elements.   To

understand the goals of EIU more clearly, we will review the background of each of

these three elements next.

1.4.5. Central Council for Education (1974)

        Although it was mentioned often in previous reports, the Central Council for

Education (1974) seems the most influential in promoting element (1) of EIU in school

education.   Sato (2003) suggests that EIU was strongly influenced by UNESCO until

the 1970s, which promoted education of human rights, understanding different

countries, and understanding of the roles of the United Nations (Yoneda 1998).

However, Minei (1994) suggests that the council report changed the direction of EIU

from education promoted by UNESCO to education for Japanese students who live and

return from abroad.   With the era of high economic growth from the mid-1950s to the

mid-70s, Japan improved its international status dramatically, and Japanese companies

began to establish overseas branches.   However, at the same time, the unwillingness

of Japanese people to communicate with local people abroad came into focus.

        The report points out that the closed nature of Japanese society came to cause

public misunderstanding and distrust towards Japan in foreign countries.   Therefore,

the report adds that it should be necessary to promote the spirit of harmony, and to

educate Japanese to be reliable and respectable in the international society.   To meet

these aims, the report recommends both teaching target languages and cultures, and

organising opportunities to communicate with local students in Japanese schools

overseas.   This seems to be the first real issue of EIU in school education in Japan.

        Since then, recommendations regarding element (1) have often appeared in

the council reports (e.g., Ad Hoc Council on Education 1987, Central Council for

Education 1996), which suggests that the education of this element has not greatly

improved.   In fact, Sato (1999) states that Japanese students overseas still tend to stay in narrow relationships in Japanese communities there, without having close communication with local people.   According to him, they simply commute between Japanese schools and their homes every day, and therefore their lifestyle is very similar regardless of country.

Today, element (1) of EIU does not necessarily refer to the conditions of Japanese students in foreign countries.   MEXT (2005) argues that the situation of Japan and Japanese people has changed, and every student today needs to develop attitudes and abilities to live together with people who have different cultural backgrounds.   This is because the number of Japanese people who go abroad is increasing, and opportunities to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds in Japan are also increasing.

1.4.6. Ad Hoc Council on Education (1987)

Element (2) is stressed in the Ad Hoc Council on Education (1987) report. MEXT (2004e) states that one of the most important elements in this reform was the promotion of the education in response to internationalization.   In this period, Japan experienced an oil shock in the late 1970s, and trade frictions emerged in the 1980s. The phrases "foreign pressure" and "Japan bashing" could be often seen in the newspapers.   In this context, the council report describes that it is normal to have cultural conflicts in international society, and that Japan has to convert such conflicts to energies to create a better situation of internationalization for Japanese society.

As goals for education for the 21st century, the 1987 report sets three most important points to address, one of them being education for "the position of Japanese people in the world" (*sekai no naka no nihonjin*).   The report explains that as we live in an increasingly interdependent world, it is impossible to be a good member of

international society until Japanese people become trusted in the world.   To reach this

goal, the following elements were stressed:

- The ability to make the world understand the uniqueness of Japanese culture in international society, and to understand various unique aspects of other cultures.

- The attitude to appreciate Japan as Japanese people, and the development of broad viewpoints in the context of international society while avoiding one-sided judgment of issues based only on Japan's possible gains and losses.

The report also points out another element of internationalization as follows:

> To contribute and take responsibilities in the world, it should be necessary for Japan to promote education to be good Japanese in the international society, and moreover, to be good human beings as well.

Thus, we can say that EIU element (2) originated as a measure to overcome

foreign pressures and cultural conflicts in international society.   However, various

studies (e.g., Yoneda 1993, Sano, et al. 1995) point out that stressing this element can

encourage nationalism or ethnocentrism.   In the Central Council for Education (1996),

awareness of "Japaneseness" seems toned down, and a strong sense of self came to be

stressed.

1.4.7. Central Council for Education (1996)

Under the situation of foreign pressure and cultural conflicts, the phrase "ability to say

no" (*no to ieru*) became fashionable when Morita and Ishihara (1989) appeared.   In

the 1990s, other Asian countries showed rapid economic growth, and some of them

began to refuse demands from larger countries.   For example, Asahi Shimbun (1994)

has the headline "Asia begins to say No" *(No to iihajimeta ajia)*, which focuses on the

case of Singapore against the United States.   An 18-year-old American man was

sentenced to flogging in Singapore in 1994.   The United States objected to the decision, and requested that special consideration be given to him.   The government of Singapore resisted the request stating it is a matter of national pride, and the sentence was carried out.

It seems that the ability to make powerful arguments in English came to be widely acknowledged in this period, and the development of communication skills is further emphasised in the Central Council for Education (1996).   The report explains element (3) of EIU as follows:

> It is expected that the necessity to express own thought and opinions, and to deepen mutual understanding with respect would increase from now on. Foreign language skills as a means would be more and more important for us as we promote international exchanges and international contributions.   From this perspective … the development of communication skills such as listening and speaking should be further enhanced.
>
> (Central Council for Education 1996) Translated by the author

Based on this report, practical communication skills became one of the key features of English classes in the current Course of Studies for lower and upper secondary schools.

1.4.8.   Arguments on the Framework of EIU

It has been pointed out that there are problems in the current framework of EIU. Kihara (2002) argues that the discussions on EIU that appeared in the Ad Hoc Council on Education in the 1980s and the Central Council for Education in the 1990s over-emphasised the establishment of a strong sense of self and sense of being Japanese, and English communication skills.   As a result, she states that EIU only means as an education for Japanese people to survive in international competition, while lacking the development of a global point of view, the awareness of interdependence, the attitude to take actions towards global issues, and the awareness

of being a global citizen.

Uozumi (1995) seems to have the same viewpoint as Kihara. He says that EIU aims to cope with the world in the framework of country-to-country relations. He sees global education as the opposite end of the scale from EIU, and suggests replacing EIU with global education. Tada (1997) also argues that development of a global mind would be an issue in school education in the near future, and this point could be most effectively taught in EIU. In this way, Sato (2003) summarises that in the 1990s, global education was stressed as an opposing framework to EIU.

In the same period, some studies (e.g., Tabuchi 1999) attempted to link EIU with multicultural education, as the number of workers from foreign countries increased. Others considered the relationship between multicultural education and global education. In Japanese society, being increasingly global and multicultural are trends occuring at the same time (Morishige 2002). Japan has little experience about multicultural education, and in this situation, Uozumi (1995) states that global education can replace multicultural education to develop tolerance to accept different values and the awareness of interdependence.

According to Sato (2007), some researchers attempted to associate EIU with citizenship education after 2000. He states that they promoted recognition of people from other countries as citizens and the establishment of a new order to live together. Minei (2007) states that citizenship education does not stay to promote 'nationality' with a quality to be actively involved in the international society, being responsible for the nation's prosperity. She says that citizenship education is expected to bring up 'citizens' who actively participate in their society, being independent from the framework as a nation.

1.4.9. Issues on Communication Skills in English

As we have seen, the importance of communication skills in English has been often pointed out in the national council reports on EIU in Japan:

- Further improvement on contents, methods, and the educational environment to develop foreign language skills as a means of communication

  Central Council for Education (1974)

- Communication skills for use in international society based on understanding of various cultures

  Ad Hoc Council on Education (1987)

- Development of basic foreign language skills, the ability for self-expression, and other communication skills for the purpose of expressing one's own thoughts and intentions, while respecting the positions of others in an international society

  Central Council for Education (1996)

It is said that Japanese people tend to be beaten in English communication in international society, simply accepting other's demands without expressing their opinions in many cases.   Therefore, popular opinion is that Japanese people need communication skills for English to free themselves from the Japanese style of communication.   In the business world, for example, Federation of Economic Organizations (2000) points out that communication skills are essential in school education to prepare to work in international society.

The National Language Council (2000) (Japan) suggests that it is necessary to let foreign people understand the Japanese way of communication towards people from different countries.   The council states that this is because the Japanese way of communication tends to be difficult to understand, and may easily cause misunderstanding when Japanese people communicate with foreign people. Therefore, the council also recommends Japanese not to use the Japanese

communication style relying on each other's mutual understanding of the meanings behind the words, but expressing themselves in clearer terms when necessary.

However, there are arguments which cast doubt on these opinions.   As the National Language Council recommends, many Japanese people try to change their behaviours and ways of thinking to western ones because many western people do not have a notion to try to understand Japanese ones.   Arai (1997) states that this suggests that many Japanese would see their communication styles as inferior to western ones.

Researchers working on English as an International Language (EIL) also point out this aspect.   For example, Honna (1997) states that it should not be appropriate to follow English communication style when Japanese people use English.   Although English is now used as an international language in the world, it does not mean that people always use American English and British English.   In fact, many people use varieties of English (Englishes) rather than American or British English such as English in India, Philippines, Singapore, etc., which reflect their own communication styles.

Therefore, he states that it should not be necessary for Japanese people to stress assimilating American communication style in English.   He goes on to say that what Japanese people need in English communication is to eliminate English native communication styles, and to be confident to show Japanese ways of communication. His argument is that internationalization of English language does not mean a wide spread of American or British English, but means a spread of variety of English according to historical, social, and cultural needs in each group of non-native speakers.

However, it seems doubtful whether the need for speakers of such 'Englishes' and the one for Japanese people are similar.   In his examples of Englishes, English is mainly used for daily communication in each country.   In this case, there might not be problems in interactions, because both speakers would share similar communication

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backgrounds.   On the other hand, the great demand for English communication for Japanese people is not interactions between Japanese people but with foreign people, especially people in western developed countries and Asian countries.   It seems difficult to use Japanese communication styles in such cases, because there tend to be great differences in communication styles between Japanese people and people in other countries.

In practice, concessions should be necessary for both Japanese people and people from other countries to communicate in English.   Japanese people would need to follow certain standards in English communication.   At the same time, English native speakers and other non-native speakers also need to make an effort to try to understand Japanese communication style.

Machi (1998) argues that "communication needs collaboration (p. 65)".   She describes that failures of communication are not the results of problems in one side, but in both sides.   Therefore, she suggests that it should be necessary for both sides to take responsibility and cooperate for creating better relationship by changing own ways of communication.   Then, she goes on to say that both sides would need to see how people on the other side would respond to them, rather than to believe that every problem is due to the attitude in people in the other side because they do not understand Japanese, or they strongly insist on own opinions, etc.   Furthermore, she states that it is also important to consider needed actions to receive ideal responses, and to take actions based on such considerations.

So far we have looked at issues on English communication skills for Japanese people.   Several key points have emerged here.   Firstly, Japanese people would need to follow certain standards used in English communication.   However, discussions on EIL suggest that it would not be appropriate to stress to assimilate to American or British communication styles entirely.   Instead, it appears necessary to teach learners

that Japanese people do not need to eliminate Japanese style as much as possible in English communication.

For example, introducing American gestures seems to one of the most popular topics in Japanese primary English classes.   It appears that teachers often let students master such gestures for English communication, which actually encourages students to assimilate American culture.   Therefore, it would be appropriate for teachers to introdce varieties of gestures without asking students to practice them, and to teach that it is not necessary to follow such gestures in English communication.

As studies have suggested, it may also be necessary to promote education for Japanese to demand changes on attitudes from English native speakers.

1.4.10. Issues on Recognition of Japanese People in the World

Interpreting these arguments on communication skills, what is needed for Japanese people seems to be to have a positive attitude towards the Japanese communication style.   It seems that Sano et al. (1995) are to the point on this aspect. They explain that behind the attitude to assimilate native communication styles is a dominant power of English, which causes an inferiority complex towards native speakers, and creates an unequal relationship between native speakers and non-native speakers.   In this way, a negative social structure and people's negative minds emerge causing people to change their self and their own culture to English native models. Therefore, they point out that the most important action should be to overcome such unequal treatments and this type of sense of inferiority.

The necessity of overcoming these points is also suggested in the national council's reports on EIU to promote recognition of Japanese people in the world.   The following aspects would share education to overcome a sense of inferiority:

- attitude to appreciate as Japanese, to have an attitude of pride in their nation

<div align="right">Ad Hoc Council (1987)</div>

- attitude to be good Japanese in the international society, and moreover, to be good human beings

<div align="right">Ad Hoc Council</div>

- establishment of strong sense of self and a sense of being Japanese to better appreciate the concept of international understanding

<div align="right">Central Council for Education (1996)</div>

The promotion to overcome unequal treatment is referred to in the following elements:

- effort to let foreign countries better understand Japan

<div align="right">Central Council for Education (1974)</div>

- abilities to get the world to understand the uniqueness of Japanese culture in international society

<div align="right">Ad Hoc Council (1989)</div>

- development of basic foreign language skills, the ability for self-expression, and other communication skills for the purpose of expressing one's own thoughts and intentions, while respecting the positions of others in an international society

<div align="right">Central Council for Education (1996)</div>

While these points seem important to focus on, there are a number of studies which point out possible problems to deal with them in classes. Yoneda (1993) argues that stressing the importance of Japan would emphasise nationalism in the name of internationalization. Sano, et al. (1995) also point out that there is a danger of causing ethnocentrism if we overly stress these points. He implies that if Japanese people insist that Japanese culture always has absolute value, it would be impossible to

communicate with foreign people, because in reality, they would need to ask to accept their situation, or they would need to change attitudes according to the insistences.

It seems possible to point out that these elements would encourage nationalism or ethnocentrism if teachers prepare for classes to introduce this aspect only relying on the phrases in the statements of the reports such as "attitude to appreciate as Japanese, to have an attitude of pride in their nation (Ad Hoc Council, 1987)". In such a case, teachers might misunderstand that we need to stress how great Japan is compared to other countries.

As we have reviewed, however, it seems that these elements emerged from the criticism about the lack of communication among Japanese people in foreign countries, and the lack of understanding about Japan amongst foreigners. Responding to these problems, the education policies seem to stress promoting education to be good Japanese who are able to communicate with local people overseas.

There is another danger in dealing with this aspect, which many researchers have pointed out. It is often said that we can not see uniqueness of own culture until we understand other cultures. Therefore a typical way of deepening one's own culture is to compare it with other ones, and in this way, it may be possible to see what unique elements are in their cultures. However, some studies suggest that there is a great danger in relying on this approach. Sato (2003) states that if we only stress this approach, it is likely that students would apply this viewpoint to various things comparing to another category such as 'foreign people and Japanese people', 'women and men', etc. assuming that relations of these two categories are binary oppositions. Therefore, he points out that what is necessary should not be to rely on such existing categories for interpreting things, but to try to create own understanding to establish own viewpoints.

"From passive learning to active learning" became a key word to emphasise

communication skills in English classes.   As "active learning", there is a trend to focus on Japanese cultures to introduce about them towards the world.   Suzuki (2000) seems to express a typical opinion which supports this movement.   He states that traditional basic concept towards English in Japan is a means to adopt unique technologies, studies, and social systems from the world.   The situation has changed and Japan is now a world power.   Then, he continues, it is Japan's turn to send various information about Japan towards the world, because the world still tends to see Japan as a country where many cultural aspects are difficult to understand.

One of the goals of EIU in many elementary schools seems to be to invite foreign people to schools and to let students introduce Japanese culture to them. However, it appears from my experience that such cultural topics often contain stereotypes.   It seems that there are several reasons for this problem.   One reason is likely to be the lack of understanding about stereotypes among teachers.   In addition, as vocabulary for primary students is limited, it is sometimes seen that teachers try to use very simple sentences such as "Japanese have rice every day", which often convey an overly generalised Japanese culture, although teachers are often not aware of this tendency.

Furthermore, studies suggest that students might not get interested in topics on their own cultures.   For example, Prodromou (1992) conducted a survey on this point among 300 Greek university students.   The result suggested that EFL concentrating on their native culture does not seem to draw students' interest.

It seems that we also have to pay attention to social changes.   Due to the rapid spread of internationalization, people easily come and go to foreign countries. The number of foreign residents in Japan is increasing year by year.   In this situation, differences in values among Japanese people are getting greater.   Therefore, it is said that there seems a limitation to teach EIU as a framework of national education from

now on.   Sato (2003) states that EIU needs to change its aim from promoting national identity as Japanese to pluralistic identity.   In fact, it seems that awareness of Japanese in international society seems to have gradually toned down in recent national council reports, and a strong sense of self has come to be emphasised.   Sato states that it is likely that this shift is based on this social change.

Thus, what is necessary for Japanese people to gain deserving recognition in the world is to promote positive attitudes towards Japan among Japanese students.   As studies have argued, it seems that teachers have to pay special attention to their teaching so that they do not convey such misunderstanding as ethnocentrism and bias.

The argument which questions the emphasis of national identity seems worth considering.   The number of people from overseas coming to live in Japan increases year by year, and the nation is becoming multicultural.   Under these circumstances, it seems that we would gradually need to shift to nurture a positive attitude towards identifying oneself as a person, rather than distinctly as a Japanese.

1.4.11. Issues on Open-mindedness and Understanding Regarding Unfamiliar Cultures

The government's council reports have consistently pointed out the necessity of open-mindedness and understanding other cultures as follows:

- The closed nature of Japanese society came to cause public misunderstanding and distrust towards Japan in foreign countries. Therefore it should be necessary to promote the spirit of harmony, and to address education to be reliable and respectable Japanese in the international society.
  Central Council for Education (Japan) (1974)

- Abilities to understand various unique aspects in other cultures

  Ad Hoc Council on Education (1987)

- Development of broad viewpoints in the context of international society to avoid judging based on the issues only in terms of Japan's side of gains and losses

  Ad Hoc Council on Education

- To respond to internationalization in education, it is necessary to develop interest and tolerance towards differences so that we can respond to the rapid changes in international relationships flexibly.

  Ad Hoc Council on Education

- To achieve internationalization in the new concept, it is necessary for every Japanese to raise awareness and to try to solve the problems on the issues on internationalization.

  Ad Hoc Council on Education

- Open-mindedness and understanding regarding unfamiliar cultures, and the development of an attitude that is respectful of these cultures and qualities, and the development of the abilities necessary for living together with people from different cultures.

  Central Council for Education (1996)

Thus, the importance of developing open-mindedness and the willingness to communicate with people from foreign countries have been stressed, rather than merely deepening knowledge about foreign countries.

However, an unwillingness to communicate with local people in foreign countries still has been often pointed out.   According to Sato (1999), a most popular lifestyle of overseas Japanese students is still the one which tends to stay in the narrow relationships in Japanese communities there, without having close communication with local people.   In this situation, he explains that these students' lives tend to stay in coming and going Japanese schools and their homes, and therefore their lifestyles are very insular and similar regardless of country.

Therefore, Sato suggests that it seems necessary to promote education on this issue whether students live overseas or not, because it can be said that all of them are likely to have possibilities in the future to communicate with people from unfamiliar

cultures, with the occurrence of similar problems to the cases of overseas Japanese students, being a possibility.

1.4.12. Issues on the Cultural Element in EIU

According to Sano et al. (1995), a cultural element was introduced as knowledge in traditional foreign language classes in Japan, as the situation of actual communication was not considered in this type of teaching.   Outstanding cultural aspects such as literature, arts, and music were focused on.   This is because this type of foreign language classes was mainly for increasing knowledge (Sano et al.).

As the need for communication skills increases, elements of daily life in the target culture came to be focused upon.   Though many aims of cultural teaching in foreign language classes have been presented so far, it seems that majority of them tend to stay simply at the level of increasing knowledge.   In fact, Mizuno (1996) states that the element of culture in Japanese English classes is still mainly dealt with as background knowledge separated from the communication skills, or as cultural information to be used for understanding other cultures.

However, it seems impossible to separate communication skills and cultural understanding, as it is believed that cultural understanding is an essential skill for communication.   Mizuno (1996) states that communication skill and cultural understanding are united, because communication skill is necessary to understand other culture through direct interaction, and cultural understanding is also necessary to have smooth communication.

Some studies emphasise the importance of communication focused intercultural understanding.   Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991) criticise current knowledge focused understanding, and suggest the importance of ethnographer's viewpoint as follows:

It will not be adequate to provide 'background information', first because the scope of its future usage will be limited and, more importantly, because learners will need not only to cope with alien behaviours and objects but also to interact with individuals who have a different set of values and meanings.

<div align="right">Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991, p. 8)</div>

The learner's ultimate goal is to achieve a capacity for cognitive analysis of a foreign culture, people and its artefacts --- whether intellectual or other --- and for affective response to experience of another culture which neither hinders his perceptions of self and others nor prevents his adaptation to new environments.

<div align="right">Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991, p. 11)</div>

Similarly, Wada (1999) states that the most important element of EIU in English classes is the skill to create smooth communication while avoiding big misunderstandings with people from different cultural backgrounds.　That is to say, a needed cultural aspect in English classes is the inclusion of cultural communication skills.　The suggestions of Byram and Esarte-Sarries and Wada seem appropriate as the concept is well narrowed.　Furthermore, this aspect should show the uniqueness of English class as a provider of cultural education in the school education.　Note though, Wada insists in the same study that global issues are necessary as well as the aspects of intercultural communication, they seem somewhat beyond the role of cultural understanding for English classes.

1.4.13. Conclusion

So far we have outlined the background of the elements of EIU. Government council reports and related arguments clearly show that EIU does not simply mean an understanding of foreign countries.　We can say that EIU is a serious national strategy to develop an appropriate response for Japanese people to survive,

and to thrive in the rapid progress of internationalization.

1.5. English at Elementary School Level in Japan

1.5.1. Introduction

Based on historical background and issues on EIU in the previous section, this section will turn to outline English at elementary school level in Japan.   The following points will be mainly focused on:

- The relationship between EIU and EA in the current education system
- The current position of EA
- Issues on EA

1.5.2. Relationship Between EIU and EA

EIU is one of the topics of the Period for Integrated Study (*sougouteki na gakusyu no jikan*), which is introduced in the 3rd – 6th grades in the current Course of Study.   The Course of Study states that the Period for Integrated Study should aim to teach elements which reflect school community, school, or student characteristics. The following are shown as examples:

- Interdisciplinary topics such as international understanding, information technology, the environment, social welfare and health

- Topics based on students' interests

- Topics based on school community or school characteristics

In this class, English is often taught as part of international understanding. The guidelines state that careful consideration is required when schools introduce foreign language conversation, etc. as a part of international understanding:

When conducting foreign language conversation abilities within the studies for international understanding, activities should incorporate experiential learning, appropriate for elementary school age students, in which children are exposed to foreign language and familiarized with the culture and daily life of foreign countries.

English Translation by MEXT (2001b, p.122)

Although activities described above are referred to as 'foreign language conversation', the government recommended selecting English in 2007.　This is because English is used as a common language in Asia, and thus it has broad utility in the world (Central Council for Education, 2007).

Although teaching EA seems to be popular, the class itself is often criticised. For example, MEXT (2005) points out that the introduction of EA into the Period for Integrated Study takes away from EIU per se, narrowing down EIU activities to somewhat superficial experience or interchange with foreigners.　This issue will be explained in more detail in a later section.

1.5.3.　Trend of Teaching English in Elementary School in Asia

The number of countries to introduce English at elementary school level is increasing in Asia.　For example, English became a required subject in elementary school in Thailand in 1996, South Korea in 1997, Taiwan in 2001, and China in 2005.

Behind this movement is the perception that English competence is closely tied to students' jobs in the future in these countries. Oka and Kanamori (2007) state that people in China and Taiwan view English competence as a key for success in society. Koike (2006) suggests that the government's teaching guidelines for English in South Korea aim to contribute towards the development of the nation and people of the nation.

A similar tendency has been indicated in Japan, too.　Since the middle of the 1990's, worldwide competition in science and technology etc. has increased, and the

promotion of the talent who bears such a competence is recognized as a base of the national power.   In this situation, the Central Council for Education (2007) suggests that for the development of its human resources, and to enable it to succeed amongst international competition, English is a vital key for Japan.

1.5.4.   Three Types of Teaching Foreign Languages at Elementary School Level

According to Reeves (1989), teaching foreign languages at elementary school level is classified into the following categories: total immersion, partial immersion, content-based FLES (foreign language in the elementary school), regular (non-content-based) FLES, and FLEX (foreign language experience/ exploration).

In total immersion, virtually all classroom instruction is in the target language (Reeves, 1989).   The target language is the vehicle for content instruction; it is not the subject of instruction (Met, 1993).   The goals of immersion programmes include functional proficiency in the target language, mastery of subject content material, cultural understanding, and grade-level competence in mother language subjects (Curtain & Pesola, 1994).   Partial immersion differs from total in that 50% of the school day is conducted in the mother language right from the start.   In partial immersion, language subjects are always taught in the students' mother language. Beyond that, the choice of subjects taught in each language is a local decision (Met, 1993).

The goal of FLES programs is functional proficiency in a foreign language (Curtain & Pesola, 1994).   Regular FLES programmes concentrate primarily on the development of listening and speaking skills, and on cultural awareness.   Grammar is less focused, and is learned indirectly rather than through direct instruction (Reeves, 1989).   FLES programmes involve instruction three to five times a week for an average of 75 minutes a week.   Classes meet throughout the entire school year

(Curtain & Pesola, 1994).

Content-based FLES programmes use a foreign language to teach subject content from the regular school curriculum such as social studies and mathematics. Thus, the focus is not on language instruction alone (Reeves, 1989).

The Central Council for Education (2007) states that FLEX is an experiential activity as an introduction of a foreign language.   The goal of FLEX is to increase motivation, and to instil the importance of communication in a different language, and to deepen understanding of mother language.   FLEX takes up approximately 1% to 5% of total teaching hours per week (Central Council for Education).   FLEX programmes are set apart from other foreign language programmes because language proficiency is not a goal (Curtain & Pesola, 1994).

EA in Japan is not taught as a subject, and it stresses experiential learning.   In light of the three types of English teaching at elementary school, therefore, we can say that EA in Japan belongs to FLEX.

1.5.5. How English was involved at Elementary School Level in Japan

In Japan, it seems that teaching English at elementary school level was suggested by the government for the first time in 1986.   The Ad Hoc Council on Education (1986) pointed out the necessity to revise foreign language education in school curriculum as follows:

> First of all, English education at secondary school places too much emphasis on grammar and reading.   University English lacks the development of practical skills.   These points demand improvement.   From now on, it is necessary to present clear purposes of English education for each school level. The contents should be also revised so that students with various competences and various future career plans can develop the skills they need.   The beginning period of English education should be examined.   In this regard,

improvement of educational methods such as providing intensive learning for a certain period should also be considered.

The Ad Hoc Council on Education (1986) Translated by the author

In this report, the possibility of introducing English at elementary school is implied, and the context above suggests that the reason to begin teaching English at elementary school is to enhance practical language skills.　According to Kaneshige and Naoyama (2008), the background to this is that English in Japanese school education was criticised at the time for students' poor communication skills compared to students in other countries, and for the large number of students who disliked English.

Following this report, English was introduced on a trial basis to two elementary schools in 1992, and the trial results showed that English was highly suitable to elementary school students (Ministry of Education, 1993).　In 1996, the Central Council for Education stated that it was vital to consider how to involve foreign language education at elementary school level.　Based on the results of the pilot schools and opinions of experts, the council concluded that it is appropriate to have exposure to English, or lifestyles and cultures in other countries in the Period for Integrated Study as a part of EIU, or in the Period for Special Action Area and so on in elementary school.　English was not placed as a separate subject at elementary school level for the following reasons:

> The advantages of introducing foreign language as a subject are in developing pronunciation, in addition to enhancing the quality of foreign language education in secondary school and afterwards. However, there are some other issues to consider.　Total learning hours will be increased putting an extra burden on students, while upcoming education policy puts an emphasis on careful selection of educational content, and on decreasing total teaching hours.　Developing Japanese is more important at elementary school level, and therefore we believe that improvements in foreign language education

should be made at secondary school level and thereafter...

Central Council for Education (1996) Translated by the author

When the new Course of Study was introduced based on the Central Council for Education (1996) in 2002, it became possible to teach EA in elementary school. At first, the government did not indicate clear reasons to include EA.   This was because it was merely one 'suggested activity' for the Period for Integrated Study. The contents for this period are supposed to reflect school community, school, or student characteristics.   Therefore, the government's viewpoint appeared to be that if EA is taught in a school, that school should have some reasons to introduce English.

In 2003, MEXT released an action plan to foster Japanese people with a good command of English:

In this situation, English serves as the most popular international common language, and has the central role in communication among people with different mother languages.   Therefore, communication skills in English are necessary for students to survive in the 21st century.   The skills are especially vital for our nation to establish links with other countries, to be understood or relied on by other countries, to increase the status of our country, and to ensure the country's further development.

However, many Japanese people have limited ability for communication with foreign people.   Japanese people are not suitably valued by society due to inadequate English skills.   To develop English skills, first of all, it is also necessary to develop Japanese skills to express one's own thoughts clearly.

MEXT (2003b) Translated by the author
http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo3/015/siryo/04042301/011.htm#mokuji

Thus, MEXT (2003b) states that with the progress of globalization, people come to experience using international goods and services, and be involved in such activities on a daily basis.   It also suggests that the progress of the IT revolution

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comes to require information-gathering capacity and communication skills to transmit knowledge towards the rest of the world and accordingly, it describes the importance of English skills.

In accordance with the above statement, a concrete action plan for each school level was indicated.   The specific goal for English in elementary school was that around one third of the total lessons were expected to be taught by teachers from foreign countries, people who are fluent in English or English teachers at secondary schools.   To meet this goal, the following measures were introduced:

- Increase the number of Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs)
- Increase the number of people who are fluent in English

Owing to this action plan, EA came to focus the element of practical communication skills further.

ALTs are one of the positions of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme.   The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) administers this programme in cooperation with local government organisations and central government ministries (CLAIR 2009).   To respond to the action plan, the maximum contract period for ALTs was extended from three years to five years.   In addition, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) planned to place 400 extra people in 2005, and 1000 extra since 2006.

As to the second measure, MEXT started involving local working people to assist HRTs to teach classes in 2002.   This programme aimed to take approximately 50,000 people by 2005.   In the same year, it also became possible for working people with various experience or special skills to be a school teacher without teaching qualifications (MEXT 2003b).   Facilitating the use of these human resources, some of them were expected to be sent to elementary schools to help EA.

Such initiatives resulted in the number of elementary schools to teach EA increasing year by year, and MEXT (2008b) reported that 97% of municipal elementary schools taught EA in 2007. It seems that most schools teach EA at present not because of the reflection of school community, school, or student characteristics as the Course of Study in 2001 stressed (Matsukawa, 2003). This could be because of the action plan to develop communication skills in English.

1.5.6. Reasons to Teach English at Elementary School Level in Japan

In 2007 the Central Council for Education outlined the reasons to teach English at elementary school:

> In our country, foreign language education is to start in lower-secondary school, where students learn basics such as greetings and self-introduction for the first time. These activities seem to be, however, appropriate at elementary school level. In addition, foreign language education in lower-secondary school places most emphasis on listening and speaking activities. However, attention is also given to reading and writing. In this situation, some researchers believe that it is difficult to teach these four skills altogether from the start.
>
> Considering this, it seems important to establish a basic grounding through exposure and experiential activities in English at elementary school to create a foundation for developing communication skills in secondary school.
>
> As to developing language skills, listening is to some extent suitable. However, it is difficult for elementary school students to maintain interest if they have to remember various expressions for situations that they are unlikely to encounter in their daily life. It is also hard to nurture an interest in understanding the structure of English because this requires abstract ideas. In this case, it is pointed out that the fundamental goal to develop should be active attitude to communicate with ALTs and others, etc.
>
> For these reasons, foreign language teaching in elementary school should not bring forward English teaching such as grammar for lower-secondary school

level, but develop understanding about languages and cultures including Japanese, and develop an active attitude for communication to establish an awareness towards languages, a basic grounding for learning languages from a wide range of choices, and a sense to be an internationally-minded person, drawing on elementary school students' natural ability of flexibility.

Central Council for Education (2007, pp. 62-63) Translated by the author

Teaching EA became possible in 2002 in accordance with the circumstances of each school and school community.   However, the report suggests that English at elementary school is now necessary in terms of a reform of school curriculum between elementary school and lower-secondary school at a national level.   That is, we can say that English at elementary school serves well to lighten lower-secondary school students' work load in the beginning of English class in lower-secondary school. Suggested contents to bring forward from lower-secondary school English to elementary school English is not the four skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking), but basics such as greetings and self-introduction, and the attitude to develop the willingness to communicate.   Thus, the necessity of English at elementary school level has remained since the introduction in 2002, but it has come to differ from the context of its original purpose.

The council report describes that the current situation of EA in each school 'varies considerably in quality (p. 63)'.   Therefore the council recommended providing guidelines on the contents to teach in EA.   The nature of the Period for Integrated Study, in which EA classes were positioned at that time, was to create the content without specific government guidelines.   To maintain the goal of the Period for Integrated Study, therefore, the council suggested that English should be taught apart from the Period for Integrated Study in Year 5 and 6 at elementary school level.

1.5.7. English at Elementary School Level in the Next Course of Study

Based on this context, in the new Course of Study, which is gradually being introduced from 2009, English is taught independently, but not as a subject "as it is believed that it does not fit with numerical evaluation used in subjects" (Central Council for Education 2007, p. 64).   In the new Course of Study, English at elementary school level is called "Foreign language activities".   However, as the Central Council for Education suggested that English should be taught among various foreign languages at elementary school, this study continues to refer to the new English class as EA.   According to MEXT (2008c), EA are expected to be taught for 35 hours per year (one class per week) in Year 5 and 6.   There are three elements for the goal of the new EA:

1. To deepen understanding about languages and cultures through experiential
   activities using foreign languages

2. To develop an active the attitude for communication using foreign languages

3. To be familiar with sounds and basic expressions using foreign languages

MEXT, (2008c, p. 7)

To develop the element 1 and 3, three points are shown as content to be taught:

● To be familiar with sounds and rhythms of foreign languages, understand
   differences from Japanese, and be aware of richness of languages.

   The aim of foreign language activities is not to remember various
   expressions or understand abstract concepts such as sentence structure in
   detail.   As to sounds, on the other hand, it is possible to make use of
   students' flexibility… students might be aware that the word 'brother'
   could mean 'elder brother' and 'younger brother'… Through these

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activities, it is important to make the students notice that there are interesting points and richness in language.

● To understand differences from Japan, in lifestyles, customs, and events, and be aware that there are various viewpoints and various ways of thinking.

In foreign language activities, aspects of lifestyles, customs, events, etc., not only in foreign countries but also in Japan will be explored.　These elements should be associated with students' eating habits, plays, events in their local community.　It is hoped that students will be aware of various viewpoints and various ways of thinking through foreign language activities, and will deepen understanding of our culture comparing Japanese culture and foreign culture.　It is important that these elements should be done specifically through experiential activities, rather than given knowledge.

● To deepen understanding about cultures etc. through communication activities with people from different cultural backgrounds.

… this element should be done though experiential activities.　Therefore, it is important to deepen understanding about cultures, etc. through communication with native speakers (such as ALTs and international students) or foreign people in the local community.

To develop an active attitude for communication, the following three points are stressed to teach in class:

● To experience enjoyable communication in foreign languages

Foreign language activities are not simply to introduce enjoyable activities for students.　It is important that students try hard to express and share thoughts with each other, using foreign languages that students know.　Students will have real experience of enjoyable communication in this way…

● To listen and speak foreign languages actively

…it is desirable that foreign language activities mainly focus on "listen and speak foreign languages" to lighten students' heavy work load.

- To be aware of the importance to communicate with languages

…it seems that current students lack skills to express or understand one's own or other people's feeling. To help students to establish good relationships with others, it is necessary to develop communication skills using languages. Therefore, it is important to give opportunities for students to be aware that various expressions and grammar in detail are important through experiences of actual communication, rather than teaching these points directly. It is important for students to have experiences of difficulties in communication, and to be aware of this point.

Thus, it seems that EA in the new Course of Study basically follows the discussions which appeared in the government reports. As we have reviewed in previous sections, the government reports often emphasised the importance of 'active attitude' and 'communication', which also goes for EA in the new guidelines. This implies that the government perceives it is further vital to develop these elements for future students.

In addition, the guidelines state that current students lack skills to express or understand one's own or other people's feeling, and therefore it is necessary in EA to develop communication skills through interaction. That is to say EA in the new guidelines are expected to develop communication skills applicable to Japanese, students' mother language.

One point to note is that EA taught so far have not aimed for developing language skills but an active attitude for communication (MEXT 2001b, Central Council for Education 2007). In the new guidelines, these skills are also likely to be focused on, as listening and speaking skills are referred to.

One remarkable point in the new guidelines is a reference to the teachers to lead EA.   The guidelines states as follows:

> Homeroom teachers or teachers who are in charge of EA are expected to prepare teaching plans and to teach the lessons.   Sufficient backup for teaching staff should be enhanced.   The use of native speakers should be facilitated.   It is also desirable that people who are fluent in English should be involved if possible.
>
> MEXT, (2008c, p. 34)   Translated by the author

MEXT (2008c, 2009) explain on this point that the qualities of the following three points are necessary to teach EA:

- to prepare appropriate topics and activities which draw students' interest
- to establish a good learning atmosphere for encouraging students' active communication
- to provide exposure to English

To serve these points, MEXT (2008c, 2009) state that deep understanding about each student is necessary, and therefore, the role of HRTs is vital in EA.   Thus, the statements introduced by the government suggest that in the next guideline, HRTs are expected to teach EA (Nihashi, 2009).

1.5.8. Commutation Skills in ELT

The phrase 'communication skills' often appears in the Japanese government's documents.   However, Moriyama (2009) states that the government has not provided a clear definition for it.   The government's Course of Study for foreign languages from 1989 included the phrase for the first time (Takahashi, 2001).   The overall objectives for upper-secondary school foreign languages were as follows:

To develop the ability to understand a foreign language and express themselves in that language, to develop a positive attitude to communicate in that language, to deepen interest in language and culture, and to foster international understanding.

Ministry of Education (1989, p.108)   Translated by the author

Subjects such as 'Oral Communication' were introduced in English for upper-secondary school and appear in the 1989 guidelines.

After this change, Hatakeyama (1995, 1996) pointed out that teachers came to believe 'communication' in English class simply means to weigh heavily on listening and speaking.   Ishii (1995) also says that the term sounds trendy, but its concept has not been understood well among ELT specialists, and therefore many of them misunderstand it.   In the actual classrooms, Niisato (1999) states that 'communication' became regarded as casual interaction activities focusing on sounds, and included activities which tended to be just for fun, such as games.   There was some criticism about this trend, and conversely it became popular to enhance 'hard' contents such as grammar and translation (Niisato).

Based on these issues, the next guidelines added the word 'practical' in the overall objectives.   The guidelines for upper-secondary school foreign languages are as follows:

To develop students' practical communication abilities such as understanding information and the speaker's or writer's intentions, and expressing their own ideas, deepening the understanding of language and culture, and fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages.

MEXT (2003c)
http://www.mext.go.jp/english/shotou/030301.htm

Thus, the guidelines show two elements as 'practical communication abilities'. They are (1) understanding information and the speaker's or writer's intentions, and (2) expressing their own ideas.

Ishibashi (2006) points out that the different fields of studies such as intercultural communication and speech communication define and understand communication skills differently. In addition, as pointed out earlier, the Japanese government has not provided a clear definition about it. Therefore, it seems necessary to sort out the theoretical background of communication skills in the field of ELT.

The concept of communicative competence in current ELT is based on works in the field of linguistics (Hatakeyama, 1996). It seems increasingly common to see this competence as a mixture of two components. One is about language itself such as knowledge, grammar, and language skills. The other one is about language usage such as strategies. According to Moriyama (2009), these two components of communicative competence first appear in Hymes (1972). Hymes defined the competence as knowledge and the ability for use, considering that competence requires not only linguistic knowledge, but also the ability to put the language into use. The ability for use is explained as 'appropriateness' in Hymes (1974). It is the ability to choose appropriate sentences as the situations demands:

> Appropriateness involves a positive relation to situations, not a negative one, and, indeed, a knowledge of a kind of competence regarding situations and relations of sentence to them... Rules of appropriateness beyond grammar govern speech and are acquired as part of conceptions of self, and of meanings associated both with particular forms of speech and with the act of speaking itself.
>
> Hymes (1974, pp.93-94)

Next, Canale & Swain (1980) see that competence consists of three elements; grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Besides these three competences, Canale (1980) added discourse competence.   It is said that the most important point here is the strategic competence, and more attention was focused on this ability in works that followed (Moriyama, 2009).   It is the ability to get through a situation when communication goes wrong (Moriyama).   In the 1990s, Bachman (1990) described a 'communicative language ability' that consisted of 'language competence' and 'strategic competence'.

These definitions by Canale, Swain, and Bachman are quoted today in many articles on communicative competence (e.g., Savignon 1983, Stern 1983, Scarcella 1990, and Brown 2007).   The Council of Europe (2002) also has a similar framework. They classify 'Communicative language competences' into three components: linguistic competences, sociolinguistic competences, and pragmatic competences.

Thus, in general, we can say that communication skills in current English language teaching mean not only skills about language itself such as knowledge, grammar, and language skills, but also language usage such as strategies for better communication.

1.5.9. Issues of the JET Programme

Although the government is currently trying to increase the number of ALTs, there is always a lot of debate around the JET Programme, which sends ALTs to local boards of education and schools throughout the nation.   According to Takahashi (2000), Wakabayashi criticised the programme through the mass media for the first time in 1987.   He raised the following points:

(1) Students should be taught by specialists, not by amateurs.

(2) The budget for inviting amateurs from foreign countries should be spent for replacing Japanese teachers who teach English without qualifications for English.

(3) Intense training and teaching experience for more than 10 years should be necessary to become a specialist in teaching English. 'Boys and girls' as ALTs cannot meet this criterion.

(4) The same number of Japanese teachers as ALTs should be sent abroad to train in communication skills.

(5) Teachers in Japan are always busy. In this situation, they will be exhausted by inexperienced ALTs to support matters on daily life, and to teach various aspects on English education in Japan.

<div align="right">Takahashi (2000, pp. 180-181)</div>

On his argument, CLAIR (1989) answered as follows:

- JET programme does not necessarily seek specialists on language education. In the current situation, schools will not be able to utilise them. Non-professional people could contribute towards Japanese school education better.

- Most ALTs do not have a qualification in English teaching. However, the fact that there are young people from foreign countries in various regional towns and cities in Japan would promote young people for internationalisation in Japan.

- Specialists in English teaching in Japan are very keen to know about English teaching. However, they tend to be captured by dominated ways of thinking and teaching methods in Japan. Although many ALTs are below 26, they are better than qualified old teachers from abroad in terms of adaptability to Japanese society, and energy to get involved in social activities after work.

- Although we agree with the plan to send Japanese English teachers abroad, it is doubtful whether speaking ability is adequately stressed in the current Course of Study.

CLAIR (1989, pp. 11-12)

More than twenty years have passed since he argued these points, and yet it seems that the programme is still a target of much criticism.

Firstly, ALTs are not necessarily professional language teachers, and many of them are fresh graduates from university.   This vague requirement for ALTs is rooted in the origin of the JET Programme.   According to Tsuido (2007), the JET programme started in 1987 on the initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs.   He states that this programme was originally planned in the 1970s and 80s to assist local governments to promote international exchange.   At the same time, Japan experienced trade frictions with the US, and the idea of the JET programme developed to solve this problem (Tsuido, 2007).   An officer in the Ministry of Home Affairs who formulated the JET programme looks back that period as follows:

… I decided local governments must open their doors and let people come and see the truth directly --- not just any people, but those with a college degree and under the age of thirty-five, since people start to lose flexibility after that age.   I thought this would be a much better way of solving the trade conflict than using money or manipulating goods.   I thought that seeing how Japanese live and think in all their variety, seeing Japan the way it is, would improve the communication between younger generations in Japan and America.

(McConnell 2000, p. 35)

Wakabayashi (1989) also criticises that the programme started as an excuse to respond to the international trade balance, and was not as a fundamental revision of

English teaching. Tsuido points out that these unclear aims of the programme brought about the unclear role of ALTs in the classroom. The current JET programme is described as follows:

> The JET Programme enables local authorities (prefectures, designated cities and other municipalities) to employ foreign youth for the purpose of improving foreign language education as well as promoting international exchange at the local level.
>
> <div align="right">CLAIR (2009, p. 2)</div>

Although one of the purposes is to make improvements in foreign language education, the pamphlet about the programme (CLAIR 2009) suggests that a degree in this field is not required.

Some researchers say that it is not necessary for ALTs to be professional language teachers if they teach with qualified language teachers (e.g., Iida 1988, 1989, quoted by Takahashi, 2000). This idea could work in secondary school where English is taught as a subject, and a certain number of English teachers are allocated in each school. However, this is not the case with English in elementary school. As English is not a subject in elementary school, there tend to be no teachers who work to teach English. In addition, most elementary school teachers have not learned how to teach English.

On this point, Benesse Educational Research and Development Center (BERD) (2007) conducted a nation-wide survey on the conditions of elementary school English class in 2006. It was found that ALTs mainly teach English class in 60.1% of schools, and 63% of these schools had no teacher training for the English classes in their school. In addition, 62% of schools where English is taught had almost no teachers who attended in-service training on English outside their school.

These figures suggest that schools tend to leave English class to ALTs. As

pointed out, they are not necessarily professional language teachers and thus the quality of the lessons may vary greatly.   The report by BERD shows that 27.6% of schools feel that ALTs are placed after completing little teaching training, and 12.8% of schools feel ALTs do not display effective leadership.

In this situation, the government's commission concerning promotion of improvement of English teaching etc. released a report (MEXT, 2001c).   It says that it is necessary to increase the number of ALTs to enhance English education. Despite the fact that a teaching certificate for English is not required for ALT candidates, the commission concluded that appropriate teacher training should be a requirement after they are hired.

1.5.10. Conclusion

So far we have outlined the condition of English in elementary schools in Japan. The potential for introducing English at the elementary school level was considered for the first time in the 1980s.   This was to develop practical language skills.   Having been introduced on a trial basis in several schools, English could be taught widely in schools as of 2002.   However, English was not placed as an independent subject, but as a part of EIU in the Period for Integrated Study.   This is because the new Course of Study from 2002 aimed to reduce total teaching hours, and therefore it was difficult to extend the time spent in English class.   The government also believed that development of Japanese language must take precedence at elementary school level.

The reflection of school community, school, or student characteristics, which is the key point of teaching the Period for Integrated Study, gradually faded away in EA. Firstly, English at elementary school was caught in the government's "an action plan to foster Japanese people with a good command of English" in 2003.   Measures have since been taken to expand EA to develop practical communication skills.   Secondly,

EA became involved in the discussions for the next Course of Study, which was gradually introduced from 2009.   In particular, the Central Council for Education (2007) pointed out that EA serves well to restructure English education in the national curriculum.   It states that EA at elementary school enables a lightening of lower-secondary school students' work loads when they start learning English once a week.

In addition, it was decided that in the new Course of Study, EA was separated from the Period for the Integrated Study, and it should be taught along the government's guidelines.   This is because the quality of EA tended to vary greatly. When EA was in the Period for Integrated Study, each school had to create own curriculum, which caused differences in the standards of EA.

Passing through the various changes of the government's policy, we can say that the current EA operates as a warm up activity to learning practical English communication skills from lower-secondary school onwards.

Although it is popular in EA to involve ALTs, there is always debate about them. An action plan to foster Japanese people with a good command of English included a measure to increase the number of ALTs.   However, it is doubtful if the quality of them could be guaranteed, as they are not required to be specialists of foreign language education.

The background to this is that the JET Programme, which sends ALTs to local boards of education and schools throughout the nation, started in the 1980s as a means to solve the trade frictions between Japan and the US.   It was believed that inviting young American people to Japan would help to clear misunderstandings about Japan and to improve relationships between the two countries.   Sending young foreign people to regional towns and cities was also believed to contribute towards internationalisation in Japan.

Time has passed, and various factors such as the position of Japan in the world, internationalisation within Japan, and the nature of foreign language education in Japan have changed. Current school education in Japan expects ALTs to play a lead role in English classes, rather than to assist teachers. In this situation, it seems a fair question to ask if it is appropriate to spend a large sum of national budget to increase the number of ALTs who are not necessarily foreign language professionals. It seems necessary to take measures to better ensure the quality of ALTs by such as requiring a teaching qualification for foreign languages.

1.6. Theoretical Approaches to Language Learning and Students' Learning

1.6.1. Introduction

In this section, we will review the main theoretical approaches of language learning. As we have outlined in the previous sections, the goal of EA is fundamentally different from those of English classes in upper and lower secondary schools. Therefore, firstly, this section aims to clarify which approaches would best describe the nature of EA. Among various approaches, behaviourist, innatist, and interactionist approaches will be examined, as they are the three main theoretical approaches to explaining language learning over the past fifty years (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). The model of students' learning will be also presented.

1.6.2. Behaviourism

Behaviourism is a psychological theory of learning which was very influential in the 1940s and the 50s (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). According to Brown (2007), one of the best known attempts to construct this theory is B.F. Skinner (1957). In his view, all learning, whether verbal or non-verbal, takes place through the establishment of habits. When learners imitate and repeat the language they hear in their

surrounding environment and are positively reinforced for doing so, habit formation (or learning) occurs (Lightbown and Spada).

Behaviourism had a powerful influence on second and foreign language teaching between the 1940s and the 70s especially in North America, and Brooks (1960) and Lado (1964) were two proponents of this perspective who had direct influence on the development of the Audiolingual Method (ALM) (Lightbown and Spada, 2006).   As the ALM overemphasised oral production drills (Brown 2007), mimicry and memorization tended to be focused on in the classroom activities, and students learned dialogues and sentence patterns by heart (Lightbown and Spada).   In this theory, language development was viewed as the formation of habits, and therefore it was assumed that a person learning a second language would start off with the habits formed in the first language and that these habits would interfere with the new ones needed for the second language (Lightbown and Spada).

Behaviourism was often linked to the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), developed by structural linguists in Europe and North America (Lightbown and Spada, 2006).   Gass and Selinker (2008) summarise the assumptions behind CAH as follows:

1. Contrastive analysis is based on a theory of language that claims that language is habit and that language learning involves a new set of habits.

2. The major source of error in the production and / or reception of a second language is the native language.

3. One can account for errors by considering differences between the L1 and the L2.

4. A corollary to item 3 is that the greater the differences, the more errors will occur.

5. What one has to do in learning a second language is learn the differences. Similarities can be safely ignored as no new learning is involved.   In other

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words, what is dissimilar between two languages is what must be learned.

6. Difficulty and ease in learning is determined respectively by differences and similarities between the two languages in contrast.

Gass and Selinker (2008, pp.96-97)

However, the behaviourist theory of language learning was challenged in the 1960s.   Lightbown and Spada (2006) explain problems with CAH as follows:

… researchers have found that learners do not make all the errors predicted by the CAH.   Instead, many of their actual errors are not predictable on the basis of their first language.   Adult second language learners produce sentences that sound more like a child's.   Also, many of their sentences would be ungrammatical if translated into their first language.   What is more, some characteristics of the simple structures they use are very similar across learners from a variety of backgrounds, even if their respective first languages are different from each other and different from the target language.

Lightbown and Spada (2006, p.34)

By the 1970s, language came to be seen in terms of structured rules instead of habits, and learning was seen not as imitation but as active rule formation (Lightbown and Spada, Gass and Selinker, 2008).

Important implications for language acquisition drawn in behaviourism could be summarised as follows:

● Behaviourism seems to offer a reasonable way of understanding how children learn some of the regular and routine aspects of language, especially at the earliest stages.   However, children who do little overt imitation acquire language as fully and rapidly as those who imitate a lot. And although behaviourism goes some way to explaining the sorts of overgeneralization that children make (an error resulting of trying to use a

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rule in a context where it does not belong.   For example, putting a regular –ed ending on an irregular verb such as 'buyed' instead of 'bought'.), classical behaviourism is not a satisfactory explanation for the acquisition of the more complex grammar that children acquire.

Lightbown and Spada (2006)

- …[i]f children were not imitators and were not influenced in a significant way by reinforcement as they learned language, then perhaps second language learners were not either.

Gass and Selinker (2008, p.97)

1.6.3. Innatism

Skinner's theories attracted a number of critics, and among them, Chomsky (1959) penned a highly critical review (Brown 2007).   Lightbown and Spada (2006) refer to his argument as follows:

Chomsky argued that the behaviourist theory failed to account for 'the logical problem of language acquisition' – the fact that children come to know more about the structure of their language than they could reasonably be expected to learn on the basis of the samples of language they hear.   The language children are exposed to includes false starts, incomplete sentences, and slips of the tongue, and yet they learn to distinguish between grammatical and ungrammatical sentences.

Lightbown and Spada (2006, p. 15)

He concluded that children's minds are not blank to be filled by imitating language they hear in the environment (Lightbown and Spada, 2006).   Instead, he hypothesised that human beings are born with an innate knowledge about or predisposition towards languages in general that makes it possible to learn the specific language of the environment (Brown, 2007).   This theoretical approach of language

learning is called innatism, and the universal innate property is called as a language acquisition device (LAD) or universal grammar (UG) (Lightbown and Spada).

Lightbown and Spada (2006) suggest that Chomsky's ideas are often linked to the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH). This hypothesis claims that there is a biologically determined period of life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire (Brown 2007).

It should be noted, however, that there is no agreement as to whether there is a critical period (Gass and Selinker, 2008). Gass and Selinker suggest that what we can say at this moment could be that "there is some evidence for an age-related decline in abilities" (p. 414). Brown (2007) states the classic argument that a critical point for second language acquisition occurs around puberty, beyond which people tend to be incapable of acquiring a second language. Considering the fact that the explanation of the hypothesis is still unclear, and therefore needs further research, it does not seem appropriate to jump to conclusions about a right timing for language learning.

According to Gass and Selinker (2008), various explanations of CPH have been presented so far, such as age of first exposure, length of stay, and processing differences. With these explanations, as Brown (2007) suggests, an assumption should be viewed in the light of what it means to be "successful" in learning a second language.

Marinova-Todd, Marshall, and Snow (2000) also seem worth consideration. They state that "[t]he misconception that adults cannot master foreign languages is as widespread as it is erroneous" (p. 27). Gass and Selinker (2008) summarise their argument that there are three misconceptions about CPH:

1. Misinterpretation
   a. Fallacy: Children are fast and efficient.
   b. Reality: Children learn languages slowly and effortfully.

2. Misattribution
    a. Fallacy: Language proficiency is tied to brain functioning.
    b. Reality: This may in fact turn out to be the case, but data currently in evidence cannot discern this.

3. Misemphasis
    a. Fallacy: Because there is frequent failure by adults to learn an L2 does not mean that it is impossible to do so.
    b. Reality: Most adults do end up short of native-like levels of proficiency, but there is often a lack of motivation, a lack of commitment of time or energy, and a lack of environmental support.

Gass and Selinker (2008, p. 416)

Thus, they suggest that age differences may reflect more the situation of learning than a capacity for learning.

1.6.4. Interactionism

A third position of language acquisition is interactionism.   In this view, language develops as a result of the complex interplay between the uniquely human characteristics of the child and the environment in which the child develops (Lightbown and Spada, 2006).   A strong view of this approach is Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of human mental processing (Lightbown and Spada).   Vygotsky (1978) concluded that language develops entirely from social interaction, and argued that in a supportive interactive environment, the child is able to advance to a higher level of knowledge and performance than he or she would be capable of independently (Lightbown and Spada).

One of the most popular concepts advanced by Vygotsky is that of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Brown, 2007).   The ZPD is the distance between

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learners' "actual development as determined by independent problem solving" and "potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky 1978, p. 86).   A number of applications of the ZPD have been made to foreign language teaching (e.g., Nassaji and Cumming 2000).

1.6.5. Constructivism

According to Brown (2007), Vygotsky is often associated with constructivism, and it emerged as a prevailing paradigm in the last part of the twentieth century, and is now almost an orthodoxy.   Brown suggests that there are two types of constructivism: cognitive constructivism and social constructivism.

In cognitive constructivism, emphasis is placed on the importance of learners constructing their own representation of reality (Brown, 2007).   "Learners must individually discover and transform complex information if they are to make it their own, [suggesting] a more active role for students in their own learning than is typical in many classrooms" (Slavin 2003, pp. 257-258).   The idea of this view is explained as follows:

> For example, the use of certain terms such as 'bigger' or 'more' depend on the children's understanding of the concepts they represent.   The developing cognitive understanding is built on the interaction between the child and the things which can be observed, touched, and manipulated.
> Lightbown and Spada, (2006, p. 20)

Such claims are rooted in Piaget's works (Brown 2007).   For Piaget, "language was one of a number of symbol systems which are developed in childhood. Language can be used to represent knowledge that children have acquired through physical interaction with the environment" (Lightbown and Spada 2006, p. 20).

Social constructivism emphasises the importance of social interaction and cooperative learning in constructing both cognitive and emotional images of reality (Brown 2007).   Spivey (1997) states that constructivist research tends to focus on "individuals engaged in social practices … on a collaborative group, [or] on a global community" (p. 24).   Vygotsky's viewpoint is this type, as he advocated that "children's thinking and meaning-making is socially constructed and emerges out of their social interactions with their environment" (Kaufman 2004, p. 304).

Vygotsky's view contrasted with Piaget's (Lightbown and Spada).   Piaget stressed the importance of individual cognitive development, and social interaction was claimed only to trigger development at the right moment in time.   For Vygotsky, on the other hand, social interaction was foundational in cognitive development (Brown 2007).

Social constructivist perspectives have been further emphasised in the early years of the new millennium (Brown, 2007).   Block (2003) explains that learning is "about more than the acquisition of linguistic forms; it is about learners actively developing and engaging in ways of mediating themselves and their relationships to others in communities of practice" (p. 109).

1.6.6. Aims of EA

So far we have outlined three major theoretical approaches to explaining language learning.   Which approaches would be most appropriate for EA?   Firstly, it is necessary to clarify the aims of EA, synthesising the issues raised in the three angles of education, which we have examined in the previous sections: the Japanese school education system, EIU, and English language education in Japan.

In school education in Japan, first of all, we have examined the current situation of Japanese society, followed by issues of Japanese school education.   It was found

from the analysis that there are three key points in this angle.   Current school students
need:

- to develop an active attitude towards their studies
- to develop communication skills in Japanese in person to person relations
- to develop self-confidence

The analysis of background of EIU revealed that the following three elements
should be dealt with in school education:

- to develop open-mindedness towards different cultures, and to develop the
  abilities for living together with people from different cultures
- to develop communication skills in English
- to develop self-confidence

Lastly, in English education at lower and upper secondary school in Japan, the
development of practical communication skills in English was stressed in *the Course of
Study*.   It became possible for English to be taught at elementary school in 2002, but
no clear goals were presented from the government at first, because English started as
an element of EIU, for which each school sets its own goals and content reflecting the
specific needs each school has.   After the government presented an action plan to
foster Japanese people with a good command of English, the development of practical
communication skills was further stressed in elementary school English, too.   In 2007,
the Central Council for Education showed the aims of EA for the first time, and it
stated that the fundamental goal to develop is not linguistic skills but the following
points:

- to develop an active attitude to communicate with ALTs and others
- to develop understanding about languages and cultures

Thus, each aspect is rooted in different educational issues, but we can say that highlighted elements tend to overlap with each other.   At the same time, a sense of English as a part of EIU faded away in English at elementary school, and in the new Course of Study from 2009, English is taught apart from EIU in the Period for Integrated Study.

Considering these issues, we can say that EA at elementary school in Japan is expected to develop particularly for the following points:

- to develop an active attitude to communicate through interaction
- to develop self-confidence
- to develop understanding about languages and cultures

1.6.7. Approach to EA

These three elements of EA, willingness to study, and expression skills, and self-confidence are interrelated with each other (see 1.2.).   Therefore, we can say that the fundamental goal of elementary English in Japan is to develop communication skills through actual interactions with peers, teachers, and other people.   With such experience, students are also expected to develop confidence and an active attitude for communication.

Taken in the light of language acquisition theories, such aspects of EA may be associated with being 'interactionist'.   EA also emphasises social interaction and cooperative learning.   Therefore, we can say that EA best fits with the model of social constructivism in interactionism to explain its nature.

There are also other studies which seem to have social constructivist perspective to view EA.   For example, Oka and Kanamori (2007) argue that the EA at elementary school serves as communication education in a broad sense.   It is often

said that today's Japanese students tend to lack communication skills in their daily life. Difficulties to create good relationships with classmates, and a lack of caring about other people are typical problems (Oka and Kanamori).   In this situation, they point out that opportunities to interact with people in EA also help to build up communication skills in Japanese, too.   They suggest that teaching about communication is what mother language education (Japanese) tends to lack. Therefore, they state that this point can be taught in EA.   They explain as follows:

> At elementary school level, communication activities are valuable for students. The activities include not only to interact in a foreign language and with foreign people but also to communicate with classmates sitting nearby for expressing themselves. … Interaction such as "I like dogs." and "When is your birthday?" may sound childish when they do it in Japanese, but they become great opportunities to express themselves when they do it in English.
>
> Oka and Kanamori (2007, p.86), Translated by the author

Therefore, they go on to say:

> The goal of foreign language education in elementary school should be to develop sociality (communication ability) to communicate with people using languages.   The experience of communication activities will also develop basic communication skills in English such as to be familiar with English sounds, listening skills to understand basic English expressions, expressing skills to tell about themselves using expressions they learned.
>
> Oka and Kanamori (2007, p. 86), Translated by the author

Actually, it seems that there are HRTs who realised the importance of interaction in the classroom after seeing ALTs teaching EA.   MEXT (2004f), for example, reports the change of teachers' viewpoint as follows:

When two years had passed since elementary school introduced EA, teachers said that they understood that their students wanted to communicate more. They came to notice through observing ALTs' classes that they should have involved opportunities to communicate in their classes every day. That is, they thought they should have taught students to be independent thinkers, and to let students express their thoughts.

MEXT (2004f)   Translated by the author

1.6.8.   The Necessity of the Notion of Context to Focus on Students' Learning

In the literature review chapter, we have pointed out that EA in the actual classroom is related to various issues such as other subjects, parenting, and the government's educational policies. Therefore, we cannot understand what the most needed elements of EA are until we view it with a broader perspective.

In fact, the importance to understand an object in relation to its context has been argued in various studies in the field of psychology. More than half a century ago, Dewey (1938) proposed a relational theory of cognition, and he used the term 'situation' to explain this point: "What is designated by the word 'situation' is not a single object or event or set of objects and events in isolation, but only in connection with a contextual whole. This latter is what is called a 'situation'" (p. 66). He goes on to state that psychologists are not likely to treat situations in such perspective: "by the very nature of the case the psychological treatment [of experience] takes a singular object or event for the subject-matter of its analysis (p. 67)". However, "[i]n actual experience, there is never any such isolated singular object or event; an object or event is always a special part, phase, or aspect, of an environing experienced world --- a situation" (p. 67).

Cole (1996) also argues that "all human behavior must be understood relationally, in relation to "its context" as the expression goes" (p. 131). According to him, the

notion of context is often represented as a set of concentric circles representing

different levels of context.   He explains the focus in the circles as follows:

> The psychologist's focus is ordinarily on the unit "in the middle", which may be
> referred to as a task or activity engaged in by individuals.   When using the
> "surrounds" interpretation of context, the psychologist seeks to understand how
> this task is shaped by the broader levels of context.
>
> <div align="right">Cole (1996, p. 133)</div>

He suggests that the image in Bronfenbrenner (1979) is probably the best

known example.   This book focuses on the ecology of human development, and

describes embedded systems showing such circles, starting with the microsystem at the

core and proceeding outward through mesosystems and exosytems, to the macrosytem.

In applying the notion of context to issues of education, Cole, et al. (1987)

present circles to explain a teacher-pupil exchange that was part of a lesson that was

part of a classroom that was part of a school that was part of a community.   A similar

example appears in Cole (1996) (see Figure 1).   A child is at its centre here, and the

context is the one surrounding the child's performance in a classroom lesson.

When we consider the order of levels in the idea of layers of context, he points

out that there is no simple, temporal ordering.   He explains as follows:

> … there is a complex temporal interdependence among levels of context which
> motivates the notion that levels of context constitute one another.   To take our
> example of the teacher-child exchange, it is easy to see such events as "caused"
> by higher levels of context: a teacher gives a lesson, which is shaped by the
> classroom it is a part of, which in turn is shaped by the kind of school it is in,
> which in turn is shaped by the community, and so on.
>
> <div align="right">Cole (1996, p. 134)</div>

Figure 1   Levels of Context by Cole (1996)
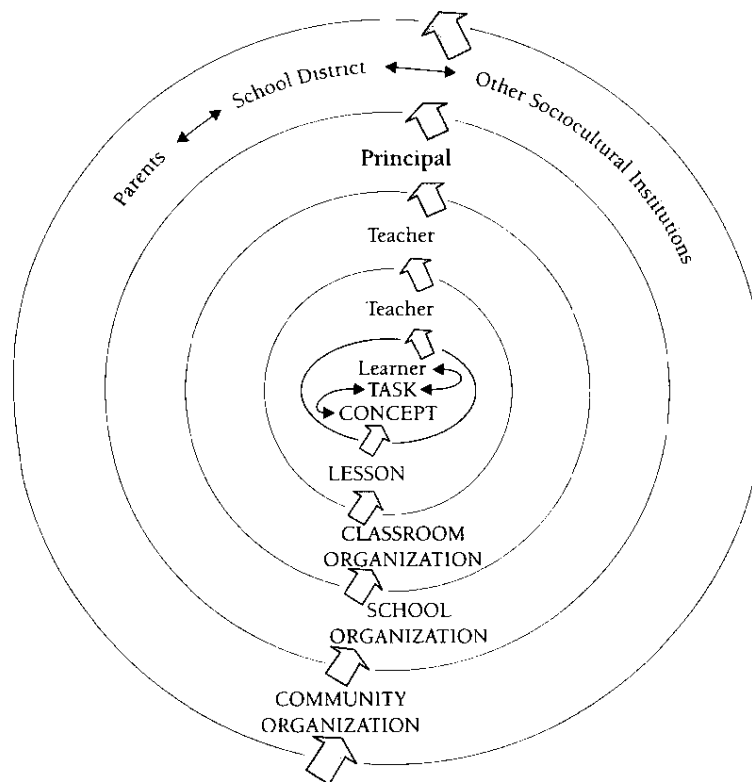
Cole (1996, p. 133)

Heath (1983) for example, explains that students bring their knowledge built up at home such as customs, manners, and general ideas into school, which affects their achievement in classes.   In this case, parents could be in a further layer causing an effect on learning, and students would be in the centre of the layers.

Thus, studies from psychology also suggest that various factors are likely to be interrelated to students' learning.   Therefore, students' performance in the classroom should also be understood in relation to its context affected by such factors as students and teachers, teachers and school, and school and the local government.

1.6.9.   Conclusion

So far we have presented theoretical approaches to language learning and students' learning.   There have been three main approaches to explaining language

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learning: behaviourist, innatist, and interactionist approaches.   Among them, the model of social constructivist perspectives in interactionist approach most accurately described the nature of EA.

That EA in the actual classroom is related to various social issues, which is argued in the literature review chapter, is explained by psychologists' perspective. The model of the "levels of context" by Cole suggested that various factors are interrelated to students' learning, and therefore, students' performance in the classroom should also be understood in relation to its context.

Thus, this study adopted social constructivist perspectives in the interactionist approach as the model of language learning, and the "levels of context" as the theoretical approach to students' learning.

2. Methodology

2.1. Introduction

Based on the clarification on the aims of EA in municipal elementary school in Japan, this chapter explains the methodology of the study. The following points are covered:

- The main aims of the study, the research questions, and how they are to be addressed
- The general research approach adopted, the methods and procedures used for the data collection
- The procedures and processes used to collate the data and their relation to the findings

2.2. Theoretical Perspectives of This Study

2.2.1. Research Questions

As the literature review clarified, various social factors are said to be related to students' learning of EA, and the aspect of interaction is especially emphasised in the current Japanese elementary school education including EA. A research plan was then prepared to verify the hypothesis in the actual classroom context. As described later, the plan was revised based on the findings of the first part of the research, which changed the direction of the research (see 2.2.8).

The research questions were finally set as follows:

(1) How far does EA in practice go in meeting objectives of EA?
(2) What factors exist to facilitate or inhibit students' learning of EA?

2.2.2. The Research Procedure

The research was implemented in two stages. The Stage 1 was prepared to grasp a general picture of actual EA in elementary school in the target city, in light of the research questions (1) and (2). Based on the findings at this stage, the following Stage 2 served as the main research to explore the two research questions in more detail. The overview of the data collected is as follows:

Table 4   The Overview of the Data Collected in This Study

Stage:	Data Collected:
Stage 1 (Piloting the case study)	● The general conditions of EA
Stage 2 (Case Study)	● School community context ● Whole school action on EA ● Teachers' perceptions of students' learning ● Students' perceptions of EA ● EA lessons in practice

Table 5 shows the procedure of the research:

Table 5   Research Procedure: Overview

Stage 1: Clarification of the general conditions of EA:
Piloting the main study in Stage 2

Purposes:	● To obtain a better general understanding of EA in actual practise ● To create links to potential schools for the main study ● To resolve appropriate research methods for the main study
Methods and Data collected:	(1) A postal questionnaire to the EIU coordinators (2) An interview with the teacher's consultant on EIU
Duration:	February 2006 – August 2006

Table 5 (continued)

Stage 2: Explanation of EA in the actual elementary classroom

Purposes:	• To explain how social factors are interwoven with EA, and how they affect students' learning in EA in the actual classroom context • To explain how the aspect of interaction takes place in students' learning
Methods and Data collected:	A case study in two elementary schools: (1) Interviews with EIU coordinators (2) Questionnaires to students (3) Interviews of students (4) Observations in two schools
Duration:	January 2007 – March 2009

In the stage 1, there were three points to proceed with.   The first point was to reach a firm understanding of EA in actual practise by cross-checking the data argued in the literature review chapter, and the data accumulated at this stage in the target city. With the literature review on EA and other aspects of education related to EA alone, I was not fully able to see what the Japanese government and society required to be taught in EA.   Furthermore, there is often a gap between theory and practice. Therefore, a postal questionnaire and an interview were prepared.   The opinion of teachers and schools from these studies were believed to help to understand the actual role and practice of EA more precisely, and supplement the knowledge base for the literature review.   It was also hoped that this would enable me to conduct the main study more efficiently.

The second point was to create an opportunity to find potential schools for the main study.   It was hoped that there might be some participants in these two studies who were willing to participate in more detailed research in their schools.

The third point was to determine appropriate research methods for the main study by understanding the general conditions and issues of EA in the target city elementary schools.   After conducting this stage, the direction of the research and the research methods were substantially modified (see 2.2.8).

Stage 2 is the main research conducted with a case study approach in two elementary schools.   Firstly, the literature review and the research conducted in Stage 1 clarified that it is the aspect of interaction that the current EA mainly needs to develop.   In actual practice, then how far does EA go in meeting this aim?   Secondly, the literature review and the research conducted in the first stage revealed that various social factors are interwoven with EA.   In actual practice, what factors exist that facilitate or inhibit students' learning in EA?

Various research methods were utilised in this study.   However, the main concern was to show perceptions to explain how and why certain outcomes might be reached, rather than to present concrete outcomes from each method.   As we shall discuss later (see 2.2.8), this is one of the strengths of the case study approach.

2.2.3. Focus areas in the Case Study

The framework of the case study focuses was developed based on Cole (1996) and Brown (2000).   Firstly, the literature review chapter and the research conducted in Stage 1 suggested that EA is related to various factors such as social changes, the government's educational policies, and issues of current students.   Therefore, to borrow arguments form Dewey (1938) and Cole (1996) (see 1.6.), EA should not be understood as an isolated subject separated from others.   Instead, it should be understood relationally, in relation to its context.

The framework of Leverhulme Numeracy Research Programme was also worth considering.   This programme aimed to develop understanding of the causes of

underachievement in numeracy among elementary school students in the UK, and to improve students' numeracy standards (Brown, 2000).   With the perspective of social constructivism, the programme focused not only on numeracy itself, but also on the beliefs of teachers, schools, and homes.

Table 6   The Framework of the Leverhulme Numeracy Research Programme

• *Core: Tracking Numeracy* – a large-scale survey of the knowledge and gains of two cohorts of 1700 pupils in 40 schools, with a variety of observational, interview and other data which is being used to investigate the contributions to progress of different factors.

• *Focus 1: Case Studies of Pupils' Progress* – a parallel project to the Core, but gathering a larger quantity of classroom data about the teaching and learning of a sample of 30 pupils in each cohort from within the larger Core sample.

• *Focus 2: Teachers' Knowledge, Beliefs and Practices and Pupils' Numeracy Learning* – case studies of changes in three teachers in each of the four schools selected to attend a five-day National Numeracy Strategy training course, focusing on mathematical content, and supported by consultant visits to their schools.

• *Focus 3: Whole School Action on Numeracy* – an investigation of the preparation for and the response to inspections in six schools, to see what actions appear to facilitate or inhibit the development of effective whole school strategies for raising numeracy standards.

• *Focus 4: Community Context and Interpretations of Numeracy* – a study of the similarities and differences between home and school in numeracy, following a small group of Reception-level children in three schools which have different socioeconomic intakes.

• *Focus 5: Cognitive Acceleration in Mathematics Education (CAME Primary)* – a collaborative intervention project designing and piloting

Table 6 (continued)

materials to investigate whether stimulating pupils' thinking through challenging tasks and verbal interactions in the classroom can help to raise standards (as in the CAME Secondary project).

(Brown 2000, pp. 3-4)

Although the scale of the case study in this study is far smaller, and the subject is different, the framework of the programme also hinted at the importance of understanding students' progress in learning through various factors.

Considering these framework models of students' learning, the case study set five focuses to explore the research questions.   A model of layers representing learning EA was created based on Cole (1996, p.133) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2   Layers of EA in Practice
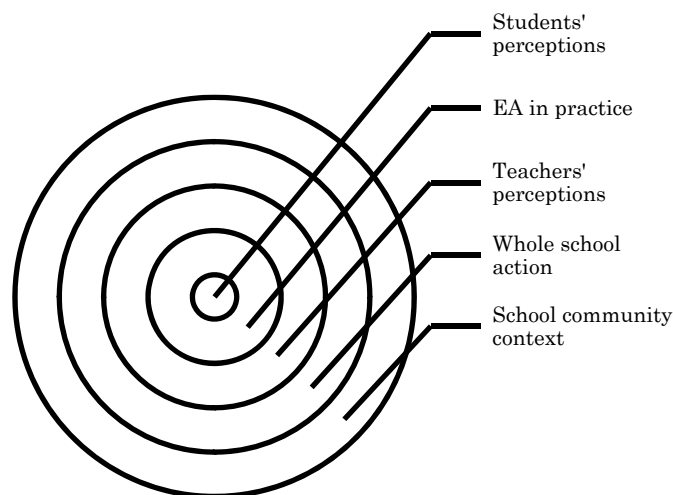
Detailed descriptions of students' progress in EA were to be obtained by focusing on students' perceptions of EA, EA lessons in practice, teachers' perceptions of students' learning, whole school action on EA, and school community context.   The

last two aspects (whole school action on EA, and school community context) were investigated before starting the main research to pilot and to develop the study, and while the main research was conducted for a variety of reasons.

Firstly, as previously explained, all factors are interrelated to EA, and therefore it is impossible to separate EA from this context.

Secondly, because actual classroom practices are thus influenced by various factors surrounding schools, Conteh, et al. (2005) suggested investigating these outer and inner contexts long before starting the main research.   This is because this data could serve in advance to raise further and more detailed questions, and to confirm the necessity of researching on the main questions.

Thirdly, as we see later in this chapter, in the case study approach, the reader of the findings must be provided sufficient detail about the target cases.   Considering such information, the reader makes an informed judgement about how far the findings have relevance to other instances.   Therefore, it was hoped that adequate information related to the target schools including significant features would be covered by the examination of these two aspects.

As we explain later again in this chapter, the five points above were not only examined individually, but also done holistically, which is, as Denscombe (2003) states, one of the advantages of the case study.   The processes that explain the social factors that affect students' learning, and students' interactions in EA would be investigated in this study.   Focusing on the relationships and the processes of the situations of the five points would also help to explain why the outcomes (social factors and students' interactions) might or might not happen, and to identify issues for an effective programme.

The methods and schedules to collect data for each focus are summarised in Table 7:

Table 7   Schedule for the Case Study

School community context

Duration	Focus	Targets	Methods
06-2006 03-2007	School community context	EIU coordinator Documents	Interviews Documents
11&12-2006	Interiors and exteriors, and the atmospheres of the schools	Indicators such as posters, pictures, cleanliness, etc.	Field notes
03-2007	A brief description of the schools	School reports	Documents

Whole school action on EIU

Duration	Focus	Targets	Methods
06-2006 04-2007 06-2007	School policies about: • EIU • the whole curriculum • students' behaviours	EIU coordinators Official reports	Interviews Documents

Teachers' perceptions

Duration	Focus	Targets	Methods
01-2007	Opinions on EA	ALTs	Interviews (informal)
02-2007		Librarians	Interviews
04-2007		EIU coordinators	Interviews
06-2007		HRTs	Interviews

Students' perceptions about EA

Duration	Focus	Targets	Methods
11-2006 to 03-2009	Opinions on EA	Students	• Interviews • Questionnaires

EA in practice

Duration	Focus	Targets	Methods
11-2006 to 03-2009	EA classes	Students HRTs ALTs Librarians	• Observations on (1) Events and Activities (2) Students' performances (3) Roles of ALT & HRT • Interviews to students and teachers • Questionnaires to students

2.2.4. The Necessity of Self-evaluation

Denscombe (2010) suggests that the inclusion of self-evaluation is necessary in the research account in part for accountability:

> The researcher is expected to recognize the strength and weaknesses of his or her own research, and to convey some overall *self*-evaluation of the work to the readers. Self-evaluation helps to establish the credibility of the research through statements that:
>
> - support the choice of strategy, methods and analysis as appropriate (justification);
> - recognize the boundaries to what can be concluded from the research (limitations).
>
> Denscombe (2010, p.164)

In accordance with the points of self-evaluation above, the following sections will explain justification and limitations in this research from the perspectives of the two approaches: (1) the theoretical approach of language learning, and (2) the methodological approach to the research.

2.2.5. What is Justification?

Denscombe (2010) explains that a justification is necessary because social research is rarely a matter of simple 'right' or 'wrong' when it comes to the choice of strategy, methods or analysis. Therefore, he states that the credibility of social research tends to rely on arguing a case in support of the decisions made – a case which rests on whether the choice is *reasonable* rather than 'right'. To be deemed 'right', there would need to be a general consensus among social researchers about the merits of particular approaches, a consensus that does not (yet) exist (Denscombe). In this situation, he suggests establishing a case to support the selection of strategy,

methods and analysis by showing that the approach is:

- *fit for purpose* (produces findings directly linked to the research questions). Claims to credibility are based on judgements about the *suitability* of the strategy, methods and analysis in relation to the particular research question. This means that what might be deemed good practice in relation to one kind of research project might not be deemed appropriate for the investigation of some different question or problem.

- *logically organized* (is consistent within its own frame of reference). It is to be expected that, whatever the approach, there is a coherence and consistency to the perspective that is adopted.

- *better than the alternative approaches.* Rather than attempting to argue that the choices were absolutely the 'right' ones, the justification takes the form of arguing that the approach that was adopted was better than – or no worse than – other possibilities.

Denscombe (2010, pp. 164-165)

For the third point above, *better than the alternative approaches*, he suggests there are three main criteria that come into play when it comes to claims that the research is justified relative to alternatives:

- **Time and resource constraint**: A short time-span and small budget might justify an approach as the best available, whereas under other circumstances it would not be.

- **The matter of feasibility of the approach**: The use of brief questionnaires in preference to semi-structured interviews, for instance, might be justified not in terms of any inherent advantages to the method itself but in terms of the circumstances of the research, in which the time and location render the use of semi-structured interviews not possible.

- **The research questions themselves will have a strong bearing on how the research is undertaken**: Where the questions concern matters such as emotions, feelings, attitudes and relationships, it might invite the use of in-depth case studies with qualitative data.   By contrast, research questions concerned with objective facts (e.g., income, car ownership) might be better tackled using a survey and the collection of quantitative data.   It depends on the questions being asked.

Denscombe (2010, p.165)

2.2.6.   The Theoretical Approach to Language Learning in This Study

The previous chapter summarised the main required points to develop in EA in Japan, followed by the three main theoretical approaches of language learning.   Each theory of language learning would help to explain different aspects of students' language development.   Among them, the perspective of language learning adopted in this study is social constructivist in its view of learning through the interaction.

The social constructivist perspectives that are associated with more current approaches to language acquisition emphasise the dynamic nature of the interplay between learners and their peers and their teachers and others with whom they interact (Brown 2007).   As the interpersonal context in which a learner operates takes on great significance, the interaction between learners and others is the focus of observation and explanation (Brown).

We can say that EA lies very close in essence to the social constructionist model.   As we have clarified, the fundamental goal of current EA is to develop an active attitude to communicate through interaction with peers, teachers, and others (see 1.5., 1.6.).   Their self-confidence may also be developed through such interactions. Therefore, this study aimed (1) to describe how far EA goes in meeting the aspect of interaction, and (2) to illuminate factors which facilitate or inhibit students' learning of EA.

Thus, the main focus of EA and of this research are not linguistic competence but interactions.   Therefore, the social constructivist approach seemed the most appropriate for this study.

2.2.7.   Methodological Approach in Stage 1: the Survey Approach

As we have outlined, the research was implemented in two stages (see Table 4). Stage 1 was to grasp a general picture of actual EA in the target city elementary schools in light of the three research questions.   Based on the findings from this stage, Stage 2 served as the main vehicle to explore the two research questions in more detail. Broadly speaking, two methodological approaches were adopted in this study: (1) the survey approach and (2) the case study approach.

The survey approach was adopted in the Stage 1 of the research with a semi-structured interview to support data.   The questions in this stage mainly focused on objective matters such as annual teaching hours for EIU and popular content.   As the main aim of this stage was to understand the general conditions of EIU in the target city schools, collecting data from all the schools in a quantitative way seemed appropriate.   Here, the survey approach seemed to best cater for these purposes.

The word survey means 'to view comprehensively and in detail', and in another sense, it refers specifically to the act of 'obtaining data for mapping' (Denscombe, 2003).   He shows three crucial characteristics of the survey approach:

● *Wide and inclusive coverage*.   Implicit in the notion of 'survey' is the idea that the research should have a wide coverage – a breadth of view.   A survey, in principle, should take a panoramic view and 'take it all in'.

● *At a specific point in time*.   The purpose of mapping surveys is generally to 'bring things up to date', and so it is with the notion of social surveys. Surveys usually relate to the present state of affairs and involve an attempt

to provide a snapshot of how things are at the specific time at which the data are collected.   Though there might be occasions when researchers will wish to do a retrospective study to show how things used to be, these remain more an exception than the rule.

- *Empirical research*.   In the sense that 'to survey' carries with it the meaning 'to look', survey work inevitably brings with it the idea of empirical research.   It involves the idea of getting out of the chair, going out of the office and purposefully seeking the necessary information 'out there'.   The researcher who adopts a survey approach tends to buy in to a tradition of research which emphasizes the quest for details of tangible things – things that can be measured and recorded.

Denscombe (2003, p.6)

The questions were prepared to cover general issues of EIU including EA in all the municipal schools in the target city (*wide and inclusive coverage*).   The purpose of the questions was to understand present conditions of EIU (*at a specific point in time*).   The questions mainly focused on objective matters such as teaching hours for EA.   Such data was necessary for me because I was away from a real-world classroom situation at that time (*empirical research*).

Following these criteria of the survey approach, two possible choices of the research methods, a postal questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were considered, and a postal questionnaire was finally selected.   The use of semi-structured interviews did not seem feasible in terms of time, budget, and location. Eighty municipal elementary schools were dotted all over the target city, which had an area of about 267 sq km (Kumamoto City Board of Education) when this research was conducted.   It was likely that the visit to each school for conducting the interview would take a great amount of time.   The adjustment of schedule to fit all schools also seemed impossible.   In addition, it would take a considerable amount of money to travel to each school.

The use of a postal questionnaire, on the other hand, seemed reasonable because it would require a shorter time for the collection with smaller budget. Considering these issues, a postal questionnaire was justified relative to semi-structured interviews.

2.2.8. Methodological Approach in Stage 2: the Case Study Approach

The case study approach was adopted in Stage 2 of the research. The main focuses in this stage were as follows: students' interactions, understanding about languages and cultures, and the relationships between social factors and students' learning of EA. The main aim of this stage was to illuminate why students' learning is facilitated or inhibited, and how social factors are interwoven.

The survey approach in Stage 1 worked well for the compilation of factual questions. However, the respondents' answers to the questions on students' attitudes and progress in EA tended to be based on their broad impressions. In addition, issues the respondents had at that time suggested that there were various social factors in play . To clarify these points, it seemed necessary to use another approach. An appropriate way seemed to be collecting data in the actual schools with qualitative data. In this case, the case study approach seemed suitable to serve these purposes.

Adeleman et al. (1980) state that a case study is 'the study of an instance in action. They explain that it provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles. Thus, a case study enables us to understand how ideas and abstract principles can fit together.

Cohen, et al. (2000) point out that in a case study, events and situations should be allowed to speak for themselves rather than to be largely interpreted, evaluated, or judged by the researcher. That is, the case is a naturally occurring phenomenon as

Yin (1994) stresses.   It exists prior to the research project, and it is hoped to exist after the research (Denscombe, 2003).   In this respect, Cohen, et al. (2000) state that the case study is similar to the television documentary.   They do not mean, however, that the case study is not systematic or merely illustrative.   In fact, Nisbet and Watt (1984) point out that the following points should be regarded in a case study:

- A case study is not journalism to pick out more striking features of the case, thereby twisting the full account to emphasise these more sensational aspects.

- A case study is not for reporting only selected evidences.   Selecting only evidences which support a particular conclusion will misrepresent the whole case.

- A case study is not to report personal experience which falls into an endless series of low-level trivial and monotonous illustrations that take over from in-depth, careful analysis.

- Some case studies only result in self-admiration striving to derive or generate profound theories from low-level data, or by wrapping up accounts in high-sounding tone.

- Some studies unquestioningly accept only the respondents' views, or only include those aspects of the case study on which people agree rather than areas on which they might disagree.

Taken from Nisbet and Watt (1984, p. 91)

Denscombe (2003) states that case studies tend to emphasise the detailed workings of the relationships and social processes, rather than only to focus on the outcomes from these, which is one of the strengths of the case study approach. According to him, relationships and processes in social settings tend to be interconnected and interrelated.   To understand one thing, it is necessary to understand

many others, and how the various parts are linked.   He explains that the case study approach works well in this situation:

> … (the case study approach) offers more chance than the survey approach of going into sufficient detail to unravel the complexities of a given situation.   It can deal with the case as a whole, in its entirety, and thus have some chance of being able to discover how the many parts affect one another.   In this respect, *case studies tend to be 'holistic' rather than deal with 'isolated factors'*.
>
> (Denscombe 2003, p.31)

Therefore, "the real value of a case study is that it offers the opportunity to explain *why* certain outcomes might happen – more than just find out what those outcomes are" (Denscombe 2003, p. 31).

Another advantage of the case study approach is that a variety of sources, types of data, and research methods are used as part of investigation.   This also means the case study approach has different types of triangulation, which would help to increase strength in the findings.

Considering the points of the case study approach we have reviewed so far, it seemed that this approach would be fit for purpose of the Stage 2.   The aim of the Stage 2 was to describe the actual practice of EA (naturally occurring phenomenon). To understand students' learning of EA, it is necessary to understand many of other factors and how the various parts are linked (relationships and social processes).   This is the overall purpose of this study.

As other possibilities for the research in this stage, two research approaches, an action research and ethnography were considered, and a case study approach was finally selected.   Hitchcock and Hughes states the quality of an action research approach is as follows:

The principal features of an action research approach are *change* (action) or *collaboration* between researchers and researched. Action researchers are concerned to improve a situation through active intervention and in collaboration with the parties involved.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p.27)

Before conducting the postal questionnaire, an action research seemed most suitable. My previous experience of teaching EA made me believe that there would be problems in the actual practice, and therefore introduction of appropriate activities should be necessary. The first research procedure was as follows:

Table 8　The First Research Plan

Part 1: Clarification of EIU
- Literature survey on government councils reports on EIU after the World War II
- Literature review on arguments on EIU related to Japanese primary EFL class
- Literature survey on the terms of the same kind as EIU in other countries
- Surveys in schools

Literature survey and literature review would be conducted to narrow down the elements required for EIU. However, there is often a gap between theory and practice. That is, it is expected that suggestions in government councils reports and researchers' arguments on EIU do not always reflect

actual needs for primary school classrooms. Therefore, surveys in schools are set to fill such a gap. Actual needs and problems of EIU in current practice in schools would be clarified by interview and questionnaire to teachers, and by observation in classrooms.

Part 2: Activity Design for EIU in EA
- Literature review on activities and evaluation for EIU, and on child development
- Feedback from teachers on draft activities

As explained in part 1, it seems that there is often a gap between researchers' works and actual needs for classrooms. Therefore, teachers' feedbacks on draft activities are set to reflect their needs.

Part 3: Understanding of the students' progress in EIU in EA
- Core 1: Case studies of students' progress
- Core 2: Evaluation of students' progress

- Focus 1: Whole school action on EIU
- Focus 2: School community context and EIU

Table 8 (continued)

> Main research in this part is to track students' progress in EIU.   However, it is expected that other various factors will affect students' successes and failures.   Therefore, this study also focuses on two factors (Focus 1 and 2) which could possibly influence students' progress of EIU.

Part 4: Suggestions for concrete proposals for EIU in EA

Thus, the first plan was an action research by (1) creating activities, (2) introducing the activities in the classroom, (3) tracking the students' progress of EIU, and (4) suggesting appropriate activities.   However, the questionnaire indicated that EA might be already working well, and it became necessary to restructure the plan with another research approach, ethnography.

Ethnography focuses on small groups of students not only in EA in the classrooms, but also other subjects and activities outside school.   Denscombe (2003) points out that one of the characteristics of ethnography is as follows:

> It requires the researcher to spend considerable time in the field among the people whose lives and culture are being studied.   The ethnographer needs to share in the lives rather than observe from a position of detachment.   Extended fieldwork allows for a journey of discovery in which the explanations for what is being witnessed emerge over a period of time.
>
> Denscombe (2003, p. 84)

Considering my teaching commitments at my university, and the location of the target schools, it seemed it would be difficult to work with the target groups for long periods. Therefore, the use of ethnography was not feasible.

Thus, the overall purpose of this study was set to reveal learning EA in light of the social constructivist perspectives by describing students' interactions with peers, teachers and others, rather than focusing on individual students as behaviourism and

innatism do.   The survey approach incorporates semi-structured interviews, and the case study approach was adopted.

2.2.9.   Limitations of the Research

There is no perfect research because every investigation involves some kind of compromise, and therefore, every piece of research has its limitations (Denscombe 2010).   This is because the researcher would need to face the reality of limited resources and less than perfect research tools, and eventually strike some kind of balance which involves a trade between competing demands and priorities (Denscombe).

In this situation, he suggests giving due consideration to what can be, and importantly what cannot be, concluded on the basis of the specific approach adopted for the piece of research, rather than denying or sweeping away such limitations. "Acknowledging limitations is not a sign of weakness or failure (Denscombe 2010, p.165)".

When outlining limitations, he recommends including a variety of factors that might be felt to have negative effects on the findings and that the researcher feels should be brought to the attention of the reader so that the reader is not misled in any way.   The following three types of factors seem to be usually involved:

- *Resources*.   Time, facilities and money provide limiting factors on all research.   Where they have a particular bearing on the nature of what was undertaken and/ or the outcomes from the research, then they might deserve to be discussed as a 'limitation'.   So, for example, a tight deadline might be cited as a factor affecting the research that the reader ought to bear in mind when evaluating the end-product of the investigation.

- *Underlying assumptions.*   When discussing the limitations, the researcher needs to appreciate that there will be inherent limitations due to the nature

of the theories and assumptions that underpin the research.　At a fairly practical level this might translate into the recognition of the relative merits of quantitative and qualitative data in terms of shedding light on different types of research question.　The best advice here is to 'know the enemy'. Positivists should be aware of the criticisms levelled at their position by interpretivists just as interpretivists should be conversant with the criticisms that positivists make of their position.

● *Research design.*　Limitations that arise from the design of the study – its strategies, methods and analysis – include the following:

- the *scope* of the research (the research questions): what was included among the questions and, importantly, were there relevant issues that could not be covered by this research?

- the *breadth* of coverage (the sample, access): did the research approach allow the inclusion of sufficient numbers and categories of data to justify generalizations from the findings?

- the *depth* of the research (validity): were the findings significantly affected by factors inherent in the approach which limited how far the research could deal with the complexities and subtleties of the situation?

- the *objectivity* of the research (researcher self-interest, social values): were there aspects of the research design that might compromise the impartially or honesty of the investigators or the data they used?

Denscombe (2010, pp. 165-166)

Following these suggestions, limitations of this study are shown in the conclusions chapter.

2.2.10. Triangulation

It seemed necessary to see the conditions of EA through various viewpoints of

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various people.　In fact, "no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective" (Patton 1990, p. 244).　Furthermore, it seems that using more than one method has another advantage.　Cohen et al. (2000) suggest that this multi-methods approach, triangulation, will help to overcome the weaknesses of each method.

Denzin (1970), quoted in Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995, suggests that there are four types of triangulation--- data, investigator, theory, methodology:

- Data triangulation:
  To involve data that are collected over a period of time, from more than one location and from, or about, more than one person.

- Investigator triangulation:
  To involve the use of more than one observer for the same object.

- Theory triangulation:
  To involve the use of more than one kind of approach to generate categories of analysis.

- Methodological triangulation:
  To involve the use of more than one method of obtaining information within a data collection format.　For example, in questionnaire, it is better to mix various types of questions such as fixed-choice questions and open-ended questions, rather than to use only one type of question.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p. 324)

Considering these arguments, therefore, data triangulation and methodological triangulation were used in this study.　Various research methods, document analysis, questionnaires, interviews, observations, were also involved.

2.2.11. My Roles: Teacher and Researcher

Merriam (1988) points out that it is important to be aware of your own biases as a researcher 'clarifying' your own 'assumptions, world view and theoretical orientation at the outlet of the study. However, I also had such an unbalanced viewpoint in the process of determining research questions. In the beginning of the research, three research questions were prepared for the first TAG (a Thesis Advisory Group) meeting on 5 July 2005 as follows:

Research Questions

1. What does Education for International Understanding mean, and how is it related to EA?

2. What kinds of elements of EIU are necessary in EA?

3. How can we involve these elements of EIU effectively?

Hypotheses

1. The goals for EIU would be clarified by investigating Japanese government's policies on EIU.

2. My teaching experience of EA suggested that it is highly likely that there may be some serious problems to teach EIU in EA in actual classrooms, and therefore it would be necessary to suggest appropriate elements.

The purpose of the study says "to attempt to understand problems of EIU, and draw up concrete proposals for EIU in EA". On this point, TAG members commented that the expression is in somewhat absolute terms, assuming that there are problems before the facts of the situation have been established. However, my argument against their criticism was as follows: "it is not a preconceived statement, as problems were already found through my own experience of teaching EA for two years". Thus, at that time, I believed that teachers are definitely awaiting better

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content for EA.

However, the research in the Stage 1 indicated that EA might be already working well, and my "teacher's point of view" reflected my biases.   In this way, it became necessary to restructure the plan in the middle of the stage 1.

2.2.12. Ethical Issues

Ethics is the system of moral principles by which individuals can judge their actions as right or wrong, good or bad, and social researchers are expected to conduct their research with in an ethical manner (Denscombe 2010).   Professional associations in the social sciences usually have their own codes of ethics (Denscombe 2003). However, Denscombe (2010) is worth consideration.   He points out as follows:

> The point is not that each principle should be *followe*d, but that it should be taken into account and *considered*.   Each principle provides a starting point, a baseline against which to compare the actual position adopted by the researcher. If circumstances arise where the researcher feels that he or she is not able to be bound by a specific principle, it becomes necessary to weigh the pros and cons of the situation and to arrive at a decision about whether it is legitimate to 'relax the rules' on this occasion.   To do so does not automatically condemn the research as 'unethical', but it does warrant some explanation.   *The principle should be acknowledged and any departure from it needs to be fully justified.*
>
> Denscombe (2010, p.61)

It seems that the same can be said for reference books on research methods. Various principles on ethical issues were reviewed and considered to carry out the research in this study to high standards.   The following points by Denscombe (2003) were especially taken into account:

- Respect the rights and dignity of those who are participating in the research project.

- Avoid any harm to the participants arising from their involvement in the research.
- Operate with honesty and integrity.

Denscombe (2003, p.134)

Firstly, research was prepared to make sure that participants can behave as normally as possible.　To avoid stress and discomfort, and to respect the right, methods for data collection were justified upon participants' request (e.g., preference for data recording).　As for the rights of participants, Denscombe (2010) is also important to bear in mind.　During a research project, the nature of the commitment sought from a participant can change and develop.　In such a situation, a researcher might need to renew consent, and participants are free to withdraw their cooperation even if they have initially agreed (Denscombe 2010).

Secondly, the necessity of protecting the interest of participants was also considered.　At the beginning of each research, this point was explained in a brief written statement, which was provided to potential teachers or schools (see Appendix 1 and 2).　The statement contained the following conditions:

- Research data will be kept secure.
- The confidentiality of information will be maintained.
- The data will be kept anonymous when publishing results.
- Any work will only be published in respected academic outlets.

In the statement above, an introduction of myself, and the explanation of the nature of the research were also included.　In addition, a letter from my supervisor was attached to support the research (see Appendix 3 and 4).

Thus, the statements served to obtain informed consent.　Diener and Crandall (1978) defined the term informed consent as the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that

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would be likely to influence their decisions.

2.2.13. Conclusion

So far we have outlined the theoretical perspectives of this study. The overall purpose of this study is to describe how social factors influence students' learning in actual practice of EA, and how the aspect of interaction, which is stressed in the current EA, takes place. These points will be clarified through the two stages of research. Among the three theoretical approaches of language learning, the social constructivist approach was adopted. The methodological approaches adopted in this research were the survey approach and the case study approach. The model of students' learning in EA was also created based on Cole (1996).

From the next section, the methods and the strategies adopted in this study and their justification will be described.

2.3. Case Studies

2.3.1. Selection of the Schools for the Case Study

For conducting the case study, it seemed crucial to find supportive schools. The study was to rely on many students and teachers because it contained various types of data collection such as classroom observations, interviews, questionnaires, and documents. Regular visits to the schools were also necessary. In addition, the actual EA at school was believed to be related to various inside and outside factors, and in this condition, conducting research in a narrow area was believed to be more effective to capture a situation. To meet these points, it seemed necessary to conduct a research in elementary schools in a single city, and school A and B, where my former teachers at elementary school worked, were finally chosen. It was believed that conducting the research in more than one school will enhance the reliability of the study.

Each of my former teachers had higher statuses in these schools, and they asked colleagues and principals to assist me with the research, and introduced me to them. HRTs of the target grades introduced me to their students when I visited each class for the first time.

Critics may argue that this is a convenient sampling. However, crucial points were checked if these two schools could be suitable alternatives. Firstly, they are both Kumamoto city municipal elementary schools which are governed by the Kumamoto City Board of Education. Therefore, in municipal schools in this city,

(1) Teaching hours for EA are similar (about 10 hours a year)
(2) Teaching style is similar (ALTs mainly teach the classes)

Although the size of the schools varies, the data about the total number of classes and students (Kumamoto City Board of Education 2006) suggested that these two schools were also typical sizes in this city. These schools had three classes in each grade, and had about 500 students in total.

2.3.2. How can we Generalise From Case Study Findings?

The case study approach normally focuses on only one or two cases (Denscombe, 2003). Therefore, questions arise from doubts about how far it is reasonable to generalise from the findings of few cases. Denscombe states that the aim of the case study is "to illuminate the general by looking at the particular" (p. 30). He puts forward the following three reasons to explain this point:

(1)   Although each case is in some respects unique, it is also a single example of a broader class of things.

(2)   The extent to which findings from the case study can be

generalized to other examples in the class depends on how far the case study example is similar to others of its type. Therefore, the crucial tasks for the case study researcher are:

- to identify significant features on which comparison with others can be made.

- to show how the case study compares with others in terms of these significant features.

(3)   When reporting the case study findings, the researcher needs to include sufficient detail about how the case compares with others in the class for the reader to make an informed judgement about how far the findings have relevance to other instances.

Created from Denscombe (2003, pp. 36-37)

Two medium-sized municipal elementary schools were chosen for this study. In this case, they were to be treated as instances of other medium-sized municipal elementary schools (1). It is one of a type (Hammersley 1992, Ragin and Becker 1992, Yin 1994). To show how far the target schools actually fit in this category, first of all, data on the significant features for municipal elementary schools in general were collected. The obtained data was then compared with data collected in the target schools to clarify the position of the case study schools in the overall picture (2). In this study, various aspects that were relevant to the cases were prepared to focus on, which also helped to provide as much information as possible (3).

In the writing up stage, Nisbet and Watt (1984) were worth considering. They recommended that conclusions should be separated from the evidence, with essential evidence included in the main text, and that illustration with analysis and generalization should be balanced.

2.4. Questionnaires

2.4.1. When the Questionnaires Were Used

Denscombe (2003) states that questionnaires are at their most productive:

- when used with *large numbers* of respondents in many locations, e.g., the postal questionnaire;

- when what is required tends to be fairly *straightforward information* – relatively brief and uncontroversial:

- when the *social climate* is open enough to allow full and honest answers;

- when there is a need for *standardized data* from identical questions – without requiring personal, face-to-face interaction;

- when *time allows for delays* caused by production, piloting, posting and procrastination before receipt of a response;

- when *resources allow for the costs* of printing, postage and data preparation;

- when the respondents can be expected to be *able to read and understand the questions* – the implications of age, intellect and eyesight need to be considered.

Denscombe (2003, p. 145)

Considering these points, this study used a postal questionnaire and questionnaires in the classrooms.

A postal questionnaire was conducted at the first stage of the research.   It seemed an appropriate choice to collect data because it had the following advantages:

- It enabled the researcher to obtain data from 80 schools dotted all over the target city at reasonable cost (*large numbers* and *resources allow for the*

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costs).

- It enabled the researcher to obtain a general picture in a relatively short period of time (*straightforward information* and *standardized data*).
- It would raise further questions and adjust the direction of the main study.

Questionnaires to students were also undertaken in the case study schools when:

- *large numbers* of respondents were necessary to illuminate typical examples

- when there was a need for *straightforward information*

2.4.2. Justification for the Development of the Postal Questionnaire

Various means to minimise weaknesses in questionnaires were carefully considered.   In the postal questionnaire, firstly, appropriate time to send the questionnaires seemed vital to increase the response rate.   Therefore, considering the most appropriate time periods for elementary school teachers in the target city, a period between January and February was chosen.   It was believed that teachers would be able to find time to fill in the questionnaires relatively easily, because few school events are set around this period in the elementary schools in the city.

The next issue considered was an appropriate amount of time for respondents to complete the questionnaire within the selected two months.   Coombes (2001) suggests that to give about two weeks is the right amount of time.   She points out that respondents would forget about questionnaire if they are given too long time to return it.   Based on this point, a duration of 18 days was set to fill in this questionnaire.

Thirdly, to help teachers feel at ease to send the completed questionnaires in schools, this study selected the internal mail network to collect the questionnaires. This network links all the 80 municipal elementary schools, and respondents were

asked to post the completed questionnaire in the collection point in each school.

2.4.3. The Postal Questionnaire Design

The aims to undertake the postal questionnaire were as follows:

- To understand the overall state of EIU in municipal elementary schools in the target city

- To identify issues or concerns with of EIU which elementary school teachers might have

Firstly, as we have seen, EIU has been emphasised in many government council reports so far.   The first aim of the questionnaire was therefore to see whether elementary schools actually respond as these reports suggest or not.   Factual questions such as contents of EIU were prepared by mainly multiple choice questions. Secondly, various studies suggest that teachers tend to face difficulties in dealing with EIU in classrooms.   To identify such issues of EIU, and to consider possible improvement on the current state of EIU, several open-ended questions were set to enable respondents to voice their opinions in their own words.

For the questionnaire design, the following two points were specifically considered:

- To be designed to require a relatively short time to complete the questions

- To be designed to build and keep the respondents' motivation to complete the questionnaire

As elementary school teachers tend to be very busy every day, it seemed vital to keep the questions to a minimum.   Therefore, the questionnaire was designed so that all questions could be covered in three pages.

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It seemed also important to draw the respondents' motivation to complete the questionnaire.   As Denscombe (2003) points out, if respondents face the most complex questions at the start of the questionnaire, they might stop from continuing further.   Based on this point, this questionnaire adopted the method of Cohen, et al. (2000), which suggests starting with straightforward questions, followed by closed questions and then open-ended questions.   Denscombe also recommends using a variety of kinds of questions, because it has the potential advantage to stop respondents becoming bored.   This point seemed worth considering, and multiple choice questions, rank ordering, and open-ended questions were involved in this questionnaire (see Appendix 9).

The proposed questions were finally checked by the Teacher's Consultant on EIU at the target city board of education to make sure that they were suited to the target teachers (see Appendix 7).

2.4.4. Questionnaires to Students

Questionnaires to students were also undertaken in the case study schools. The question sheets were passed to the HRTs by hand in advance, and the HRTs conducted them in the classrooms at a scheduled time.   Therefore, these were not 'postal' questionnaires, but were prepared in the same manner as the postal questionnaire.

One point which was specially considered for the questionnaires to students was the wording of the questions.   The proposed questions were checked by the teachers of the target schools in advance to make sure that they were suited to the target students.

2.5. Interviews

2.5.1. When the Interviews Were Used

In this study, the interviews were used when the required data met the following criteria:

- When the number of informants were deemed sufficient
- When further detailed investigation was required based on previous research

For example, two types of semi-structured interviews were conducted in the early stage of the research: (1) an interview with the Teachers' Consultant on EIU at the target city Board of Education, and (2) interviews with EIU coordinators at two case study schools in the target city. Basically, the questions to these staff were concerned with objective matters as the ones in the postal questionnaire. In the interview (1), there was only one respondent, but this seemed sufficient because he was the only one teachers' consultant on elementary school EIU in the target city. In the same way, in the interviews (2), there was only one staff member at each school who was in charge of EIU, and therefore there was one respondent each, which was believed reasonable. A possible alternative to these interviews was a questionnaire, but the interviews seemed more appropriate in this case. This was firstly because there was no great difference in the two methods in terms of the time for preparation. Secondly, in the interview, you can ask for further clarification from the respondent if necessary.

In other cases, interviews were chosen when it was necessary to clarify certain points in depth, rather than to illuminate typical examples which usually require larger samples.

2.5.2. Justification for the Types of Interview

There are various types of interviews.   In structured interviews, questions and answers are tightly controlled.   Questions are usually short, direct, and capable of immediate responses such as 'yes' or 'no' (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).   In this respect, structured interviews are often used for collecting quantitative data.   With semi-structured interviews, questions are also prepared in advance, but the answers are open-ended to let the respondent develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher (Denscombe, 2003).   Unstructured interviews go further. The researcher asks questions out of sequence, and the respondent answers questions in their own way (Hitchcock and Hughes).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that structured interviews are useful when the researcher is aware of what he does not know.   Therefore the questions are to supply the required knowledge.   On the other hand, unstructured interviews work well when the researcher is not aware of what he does not know.   In this case, the researcher relies on the respondent to tell him.

In this study, interviews were placed when further questions arose in the previous research.   To borrow Lincoln and Guba's words, I was aware of what I do not know.   I had no clear idea, however, about how the respondents would answer my questions.   Based on the review of various kinds of interviews, therefore, semi-structured interviews were chosen for this research.

2.5.3. The Interviewer Effect

Research on interviewing shows that data collected by interview is often affected by the personal identity of the researcher.   People respond differently depending on how they perceive the person asking the questions (Denscombe 2003).   Although it is not possible to cover up my personality, careful consideration was made to present

myself in a light manner.

To be neutral and passive seemed vital as an interviewer. As proper clothes to wear for the interviews, it seemed necessary to show the interviewees a sense of formality and ease at the same time. Therefore I chose a suit which appeared not too formal and not too casual. It was also taken into account that the interviewer's opinions could influence the interviewee's answers. It seemed that the more the interviewee perceives the interviewer's viewpoints, the more likely the interviewee might adjust answers to meet what the interviewer expects. Therefore, I tried not to present my thoughts, not only in the interview session, but also in the arrangement process for the interview by letters, emails, phone calls, or in person.

Personal backgrounds such as social status and age of the interviewer and the interviewee could also cause impact on the interactions in the interview. When this study was conducted, I was a part-time lecturer at a university in Japan. As there was a worry that the status as a university lecturer might put some pressure on the interviewees, I tried not to stress this point and instead emphasised that I was a research student.

My status as an outsider at elementary school seemed to be an advantage to interview students. If I were their HRT, some questions might have impacts on students' willingness to tell honest answers. For example, they might worry that negative answers could affect their evaluations. I was not a teacher of the interviewees, and this situation was likely to affect the interviewer-interviewee relationship in a positive manner.

As to the age gap, most teachers who participated in the interviews were older than me, which was believed to be more comfortable for them. I tried to take a modest attitude to show that it was a pleasure for a beginning teacher like me to hear opinions from an experienced teacher with deep insights into education.

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The difference in age between the students and I was about 20 years, which was a substantial gap.   However, it seemed possible to bridge the gap, because I had much experience being with students as a teacher in elementary school previously. Obviously, plain language was used in the interactions so that the students could understand exactly what I meant.

The schedule for the interviews was also carefully arranged to avoid unnecessary pressure from me on the students.   The interviews to the students were set long after starting classroom observations, which was expected to be enough to build a good relationship with them.

2.5.4.   Preparation for Interviews

Denscombe (2003) points out that seating arrangements are important in interviews.   He recommends that the interviewer and the interviewee should be seated at a 90 degree angle to each other.   This is to avoid too much direct eye contact which sometimes causes an uncomfortable feeling when one sits directly opposite to the other person.   In the group interviews, he also suggests arranging seats to allow contact between all parties without putting the researcher in a focal position.   Considering these points about seating, a corner of the table was chosen as the researcher's seat in the group interviews.

2.5.5.   The Procedure for the Interview Analysis

In this study, interviews were basically audio-recorded with some additional field notes.   The proposed process of data recording was explained every time before the interview.   When interviewees declined an audio-recording, everything was recorded in field notes.

Interviews were digitally recorded with mp3 format, and transcribed using the

software *Microsoft Office OneNote 2007*.   Any notes taken with *OneNote* when the recorded audio is played are directly linked to the audio file.   This feature enables you to search notes for keywords or specific text that is associated with a particular recording.

Transcribed audio file data were analysed with a qualitative approach.   It seems that extracts from transcripts are often used in social research.   Denscombe (2003), however, points out a danger to rely on extracts too much.   He states that extracts serve not as proof of a point, but as illustrations of a point and supporting evidence for an argument – nothing more and nothing less.   He shows two reasons for this:

- The significance of extracts from transcripts is always limited by the fact that they are, to some extent, presented out of context.

- The process of selecting extracts involves a level of judgement and discretion on the part of the researcher.
                                        (Created from Denscombe 2003, p. 188)

Firstly, the meaning of the words could be changed because they are not linked to what was said before and after the extracts.   Secondly, it is unclear for the reader to know if the extracts are drawn from a fair selection of the overall picture.

To avoid these problems, his suggestions were taken into account:

- Provide some details about the person you quote to give the reader some idea of relevant background factors associated with the person.

- Provide some indication and background of the context of the extract so that the meaning as intended comes through.
                                        (Created from Denscombe 2003, p. 189)

The important point here should be that extracts are just one example to support the

argument, and sufficient background information about the extracts will satisfy reliability.

Extracts were firstly transcribed in Japanese, the original language. They were then translated into English.

2.6. Observations

2.6.1. When the Observations Were Used

The focus of the case study was students' interactions in the actual classroom. Therefore, it was necessary to observe what actually happened in person to understand such behaviours more precisely. Denscombe (2003) states that observation offers a distinct way of collecting data:

> It does not rely on what people *say* they do, or what they *say* they think. It is more direct than that. Instead, it draws on the direct evidence of the eye to witness events first hand. It is based on the premise that, for certain purposes, it is best to observe what actually happens.
>
> Denscombe (2003, p. 192)

2.6.2. Justification for the Types of Observations

In the social sciences, there are essentially two kinds of observation research: systematic observation and participant observation (Denscombe, 2003). Systematic observation tends to be linked with the production of quantitative data and the use of statistical analysis, while participant observation usually produces qualitative data (Denscombe).

Cohen, et al. (2000) suggest that systematic observation will already have its hypotheses decided and will use the observational data to confirm or refute these hypotheses. On the other hand, participant observation will not have clear idea on what it is looking for and will therefore have to go into a situation and observe what is

taking place before deciding on its significance for the research.

In this case study, observations were involved to illuminate specific examples of students' interactions which had not been known, rather than to confirm what had been known with statistical data.   Therefore, participant observation was finally chosen in this study.

2.6.3. Participant Observation

Becker and Geer (1957) define participant observation as follows:

> By participant observation we mean the method in which the observer participates in the daily life of the people under study, either openly in the role of researcher or covertly in some disguised role, observing things that happen, listening to what is said, and questioning people, over some length of time.
>
> Becker and Geer (1957, p. 28)

Denscombe (2003) suggests that there are various versions of participant observation, and the followings seem to be common:

- *Total participation,* where the researcher's role is kept secret.   The researcher assumes the role of someone who normally participates in the setting.   Consent cannot be gained for the research, which poses ethical problems.

- *Participation in the normal setting*, where the researcher's role may be known to certain 'gatekeepers', but may be hidden from most of those in the setting.   The role adopted in this type of participant observation is chosen deliberately to permit observation without affecting the naturalness of the setting, but it also allows the researcher to keep distance from the key group under study.   This distance might be warranted on the grounds of propriety, or the researcher lacks the personal credentials to take on the role in question.

- Participation as observer, where the researcher's identity as a researcher is openly recognized – thus having the advantages of gaining, informed consent from those involved – and takes the form of 'shadowing' a person or group through normal life, witnessing first hand and in intimate detail the culture/ events of interest.

Denscombe (2003, p. 203)

In this study, it was not possible to utilise the first two versions above, as I conducted the research at the target schools as an outsider.   Therefore, the third version, 'participation as observer' was chosen.

2.6.4. What to Observe, What to Record

Although the case study focuses on two points; students' interactions in EA, and factors that facilitate or inhibit students' learning, it seemed necessary to narrow down the target to a few points for observations.   Therefore, a pilot study of a few lessons was undertaken to decide the focuses as Wragg (1999) suggested.   He recommends making notes under observation not only about events which catch the eye, but also about routine matters which can be taken for granted.   In the end of the pilot study, students' interactions with ALTs and other people outside the classroom tended to draw my attention.

2.6.5. The Procedure for the Observation Analysis

The fieldwork researcher needs to translate the observations into some permanent record at as soon as possible (Denscombe 2003).   In this study, field notes and audio-recorded memos were used to record the observations (see Appendix 8). They were then analysed with a qualitative approach.

3. General Condition of EA in Kumamoto City Municipal Elementary Schools

3.1. Introduction

The general condition of EA in Kumamoto City municipal elementary schools will be outlined in this section.   The following two studies were undertaken: (1) a postal questionnaire to elementary school teachers, and (2) an interview with the Teachers' Consultant on EIU at Kumamoto City Board of Education.

The main purposes of these studies were:

- to reach a better understanding of EA in actual practise by cross-checking data between the one from these two studies and the arguments presented in the literature review chapter.

- to narrow down the focuses in the following main research in the classroom, on the assumption that several additional issues on EA would emerge in these studies.   Appropriate research strategies and methods were also believed to be narrowed down accordingly.

There is often a gap between theory and practice.   Therefore, it was expected that the opinions from teachers and schools in these studies would help to understand the actual role and practice of EA more precisely, and supplement the knowledge base for the literature review.   It was also hoped that these two studies would raise further and more detailed questions for the following main research.

3.2. An Analysis of a Questionnaire to Kumamoto City Municipal Elementary School Teachers

3.2.1. Introduction

A postal questionnaire was sent to all the municipal elementary schools in

Kumamoto City at the end of January 2006.   The questionnaire focused mainly on two points.   Firstly, as we have seen, EIU was stressed in the elementary school education system at that period.   To see whether actual elementary schools respond as the government suggests or not, multiple choice questions asked about how EIU was actually taught.   Secondly, it is often said that teachers tend to face difficulties dealing with EIU in the classrooms.   To identify such issues, and to consider possible improvement on the current conditions of EIU, several open-ended questions were set to ask respondents' opinions in their own words.

To send the questionnaire at the right time seemed vital to increase the response rate.   Therefore, after consulting with an elementary school teacher in one of the target schools, the period between January and February was originally chosen as appropriate.   It was believed that teachers would be able to find time to fill in the questionnaires relatively easily in this period, because few school events were set. However, it took longer than anticipated to receive approval from the City Board of Education to conduct this survey, which resulted in a two-week delay.

Twenty-nine schools out of eighty answered the questionnaire (=36%) (see Table 8).   The response rate might have been higher if we could have started the survey on time.   However, we can still say that the survey was successful, as Denscombe (2003) suggests that the response rate of a postal questionnaire would be about 20% at best.

With this limited collection rate, however, it did not seem appropriate to attempt to draw a whole picture of EIU in elementary schools in this city.   Therefore, the data is shown as a sample of a particular category of the teachers who were in charge of EIU and who were interested in the questionnaire.   It seems safe to say that the quality of the data is reliable because the respondents tended to have long experience as a teacher (see Figure 3).

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The questions were written in Japanese, and all the respondents answered in Japanese. The respondents' answers were translated into English. The answers to open-ended questions and "other" in several multiple choice questions were classified according to the categories that emerged. To protect respondents' privacy, the respondents' real names are not shown. They are referred to as code names R1 to R29 in this study.

Table 9   Summary of the Questionnaire

Target schools:	80 (All the municipal elementary schools in Kumamoto city)
Respondents:	A teacher in each school who was in charge of EIU
Duration:	16 days (from Wednesday 1 February 2006 to Friday 16 February 2006)
Collection Method:	• Sent and collected by post • Sent with no prior notification to the respondents

Result:	Received 29 answer sheets (36%)

3.2.2. Respondents' Background Information

We see from Figure 3 that Respondents tended to have long experience as elementary school teachers. More than half of them (n=17) had been working in elementary school for more than sixteen years. On the other hand, few of the respondents had experience as EIU coordinators for a long time. Most of them (n=22) had been EIU coordinators for three years or less. Two of the respondents lived overseas for more than half a year (see Appendix 11).

Figure 3   The Respondents' Background Information
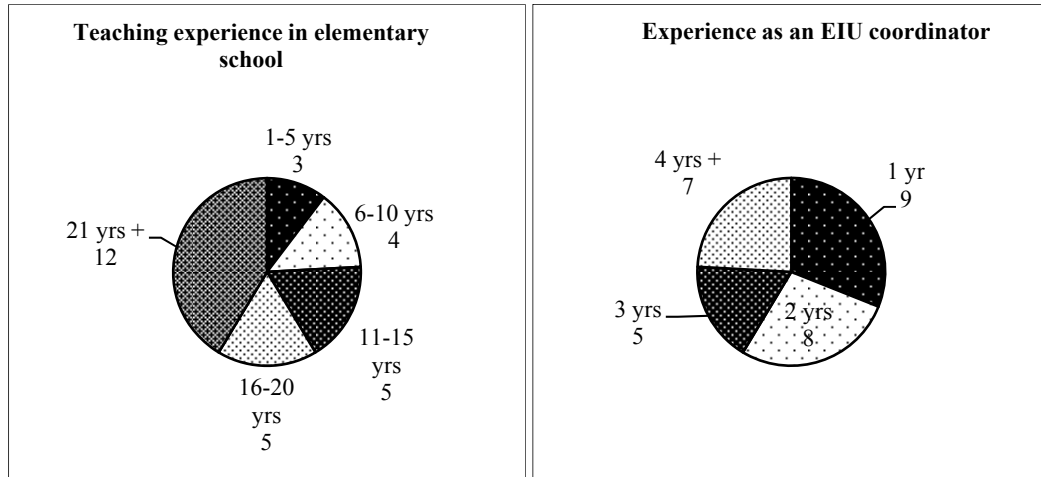
Note: numbers outside the circle = number of respondents

3.2.3.   The Annual Teaching Hours for EIU

The Period for Integrated Study is introduced from the 3rd grade of elementary school, and EIU is one of the suggested elements for this subject in the Course of Study.   Therefore, it was expected that EIU would not be introduced in the 1st and 2nd grades.   However, we see from Figure 4 that most schools (n=24) taught it in every grade.

Figure 4   The Grades Which Teach EIU
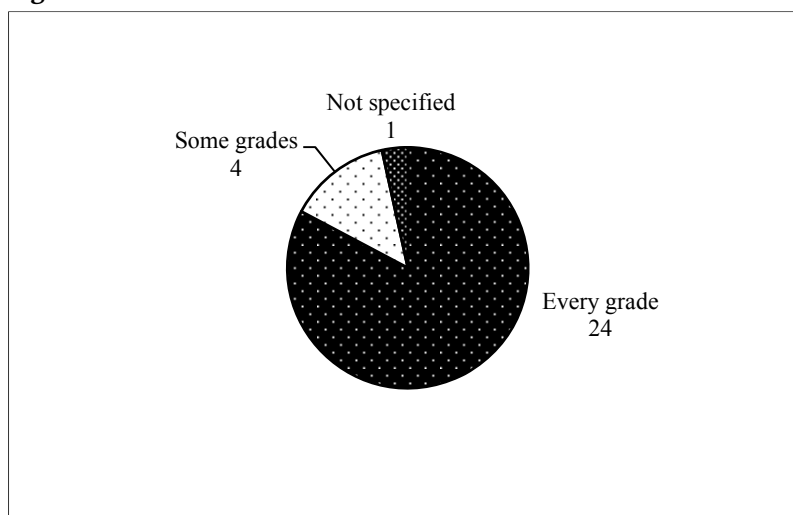
Note: numbers outside the circle = number of schools

Annual teaching hours for EIU appear in Figure 5.　It was found that no more than five hours were spent on EIU in most of the 1st and 2nd grades in each school (n=22), and longer hours tended to be spent from the 3rd grade.　The 6th grade of R6's school taught EIU for 100 hours, which was the longest in the sample.　In most schools (n=23), however, it was taught in the 3rd - 6th grades for less than twenty hours a year.　Thus, we can say that teaching hours for EIU tended to be limited in the sample schools.

Figure 5　Annual Teaching Hours for EIU (average)
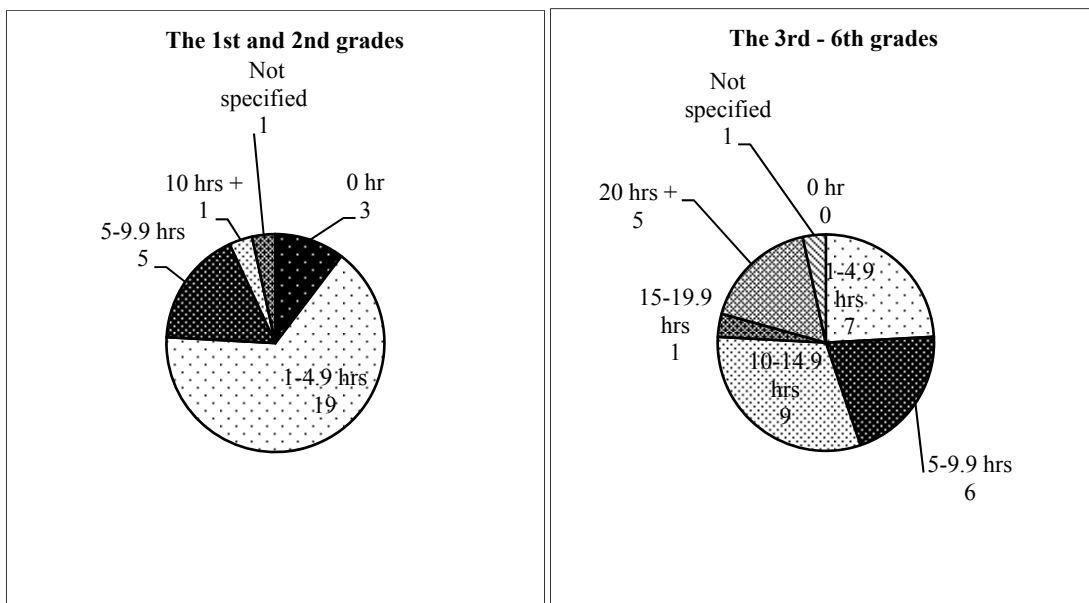
Note: numbers outside the circle = number of schools

3.2.4.　Curriculum Planners for EIU

Figure 6 shows the conditions of curriculum planning.　The most common situation was that an EIU coordinator planned the entire curriculum for each grade (n=13).　On the other hand, an ALT (Assistant Language Teacher) planned the curriculum in three schools.　Thus, the curriculum for EIU was left to certain teachers in more than half of the sample schools, rather than created together by a group.　In other words, in these schools, the contents of EIU depended on a single teacher.

Figure 6 Who is in Charge of the Curriculum for EIU in Your School?

Other
1

Not specified
1

Jointly managed
4

ALT
3

EIU coordinator
13

Teachers in each
grade
7
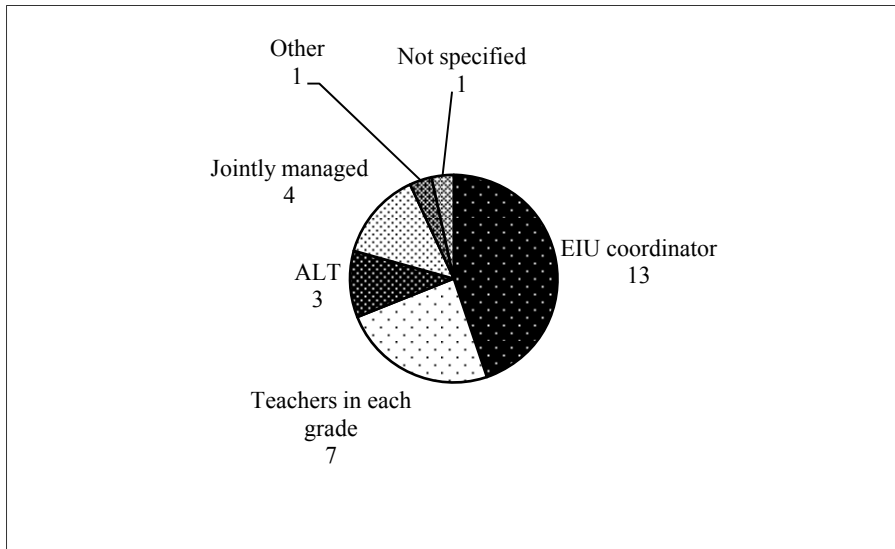
Note: numbers outside the circle = number of schools

3.2.5. Reasons for Teaching EIU

To understand why they teach EIU, respondents were asked to select

appropriate reasons from a-d (Figure 7).

Figure 7 Why Does Your School Teach EIU?

a. Because it is easy to teach it, as ready-made examples,

examples from other schools, etc. are available.

b. Because parents request us to teach it.

c. Because our school or school community characteristics
require us to teach it: (please describe briefly)

d. Other: (please describe briefly)
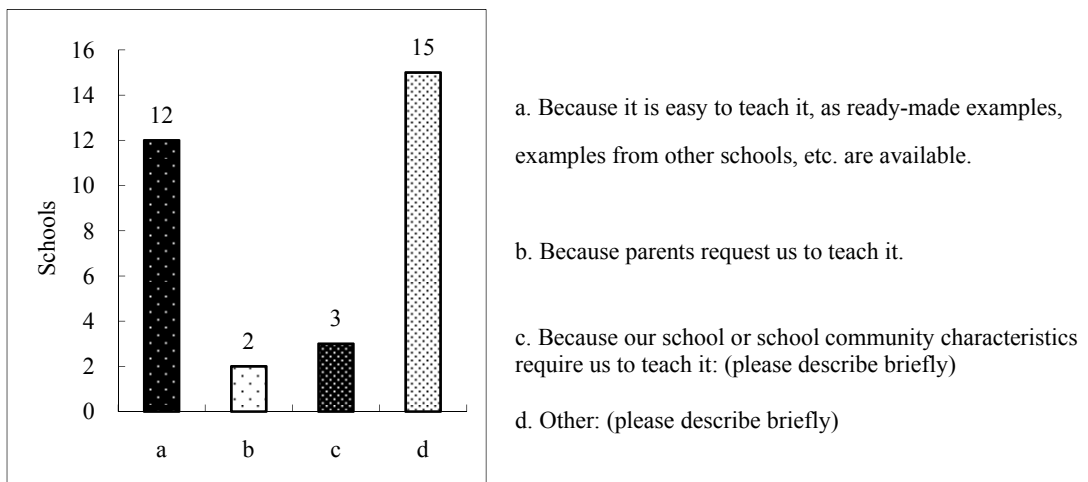
The Period for Integrated Study, which includes EIU, is supposed to teach

elements which reflect school or school community characteristics.   Therefore, it was

expected that many respondents would select reason c.   However, only three

respondents chose this item.   Their reasons were as follows:

- Because some students' parents are from foreign countries. (R2)

- To respond to the students' conditions. (R5)

- Because it is a good opportunity.   There are not many opportunities to interact with foreigners here because our school is located at the southwest end of the city. (R8)

The most popular answer was because it is easy to teach (reason a.) (n=12).

The following eight schools selected "other" (reason d) indicating relatively passive

reasons:

- Because ALTs are available. (R7, R12, R15, R29)

- Because it is easy to prepare for the class, as one of the teachers in our school plays the leading role in promoting it. (R18)

- Because other elementary schools in our lower secondary school district introduce EIU. (R4)

- Because it is included in the school curriculum. (R25)

- Because our head teacher decided to do it. (R27)

Among other answers for reason d, five respondents (R14, R16, R19, R22,

and R23) stated that they taught EIU because the elements of EIU meet the goals

which their schools set.   They did not mention, however, why they set such goals.

Thus, at this moment, it seems that the sample schools tended to teach EIU not

because there were needs in their schools, but because it was easy to introduce, or for

other relatively passive reasons.

3.2.6. The Attitudes and Abilities Each School Aims to Develop in EIU

The questionnaire asked about the attitudes and abilities each school aims to develop in EIU.   This was to see if there are differences between policy and practice. The answers were classified into categories a-h (Figure 8).

Figure 8   What Kind of Attitudes and Abilities Does Your School aim to Develop in EIU?

a. To understand foreign cultures

b. To develop communication skills

c. To understand Japanese culture

d. To develop the attitude to respect foreign cultures

e. To be familiar with English

f. To develop self-expression skills

g. Other

h. Not specified
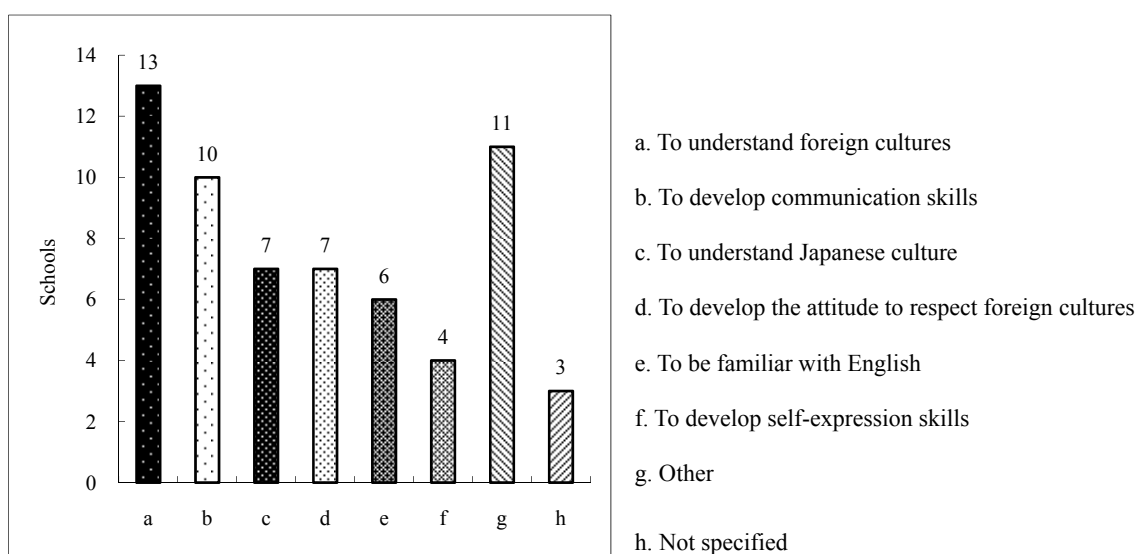
Different schools seemed to have different points to develop in EIU.   It was often pointed out that EIU in school education tends to encompass only superficial knowledge (e.g., Central Council for Education 1974), but it is necessary to reach beyond this level to develop practical expertise needed in the real world by involving more experiential activities (e.g., Central Council for Education 1974, 1996).   As proof of this, understanding of foreign cultures was selected the most popular point to develop in the sample schools (n=13).   However, other elements of EIU such as items b-f were also stated by many schools, which suggests that the sample schools had relatively wide interpretations of the aims of EIU.

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3.2.7. Popular Contents of EIU

    Respondents were asked to select the three most popular EIU contents from items a-h shown in Figure 7.   Twenty-four schools selected English conversation (item a) as the most popular item.   Events to invite people from overseas countries (item b) and knowledge about customs in English speaking countries (item c) were the next popular items.   Thus, we can say that the sample schools mainly involve EA and international exchange activities as EIU.

Figure 9   The Three Most Popular Contents

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
Most popular	24	2	0	0	0	2	1	0
2nd	2	7	8	0	2	1	3	3
3rd	2	7	7	1	0	0	3	1

a. Basic English conversation such as greetings

b. Events to invite people from overseas countries

c. Knowledge about customs in English speaking countries such as Halloween

d. Knowledge about Asian countries

e. Knowledge about Japan

f. Knowledge about global issues such as environment, peace, and human rights

g. Activities to promote tolerance (e.g., an activity to understand that there are various viewpoints about one thing.)

h. Other: (please describe briefly)

3.2.8. Introduction of EA

    The questionnaire asked about EA in more detail.   It was found that most schools included EA (n=26), and ALTs usually taught the class (n=16) (Figure 10).   R6 selected "other" for teachers in EA.   In her school, English was taught four times a month, with HRTs and ALTs alternating days, each teaching it twice a month.

Figure 10 The Conditions of EA (1)
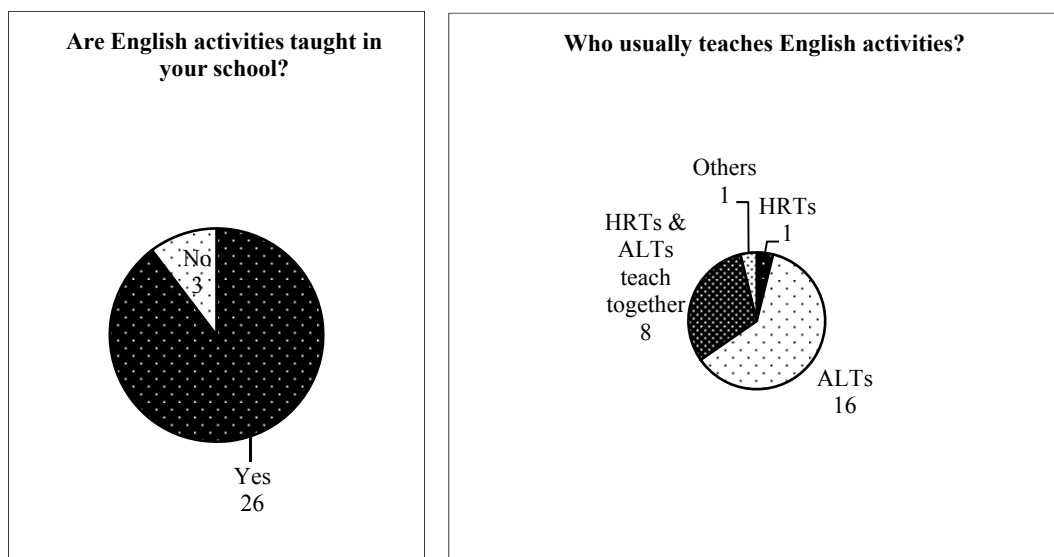
Note: numbers outside the circle = number of schools

Respondents were also asked to give their reasons for teaching EA (Figure 11). It was hoped that they would give reasons why the activities are necessary to introduce in elementary school.   No respondents answered in this way, however.   Instead, they tended to cite purposes of the activities.

Although there was a problem in the way of asking the question, unexpected points came out from the answers here.   It was found that different schools had different perspectives on EA.   The most popular answer was to make the most of the opportunity to involve ALTs (n=8).   To be familiar with English and English culture (n=7), to respond to the needs in the society (n=7), and to develop communication skills (n=6) were also popular.

However, the last two purposes overlap with the goals of English class for lower and upper secondary school.   Therefore, it was unclear why they thought these points were necessary for English at elementary school level, too.

Figure 11 The Conditions of EA (2)

What are your reasons to teach English activities?
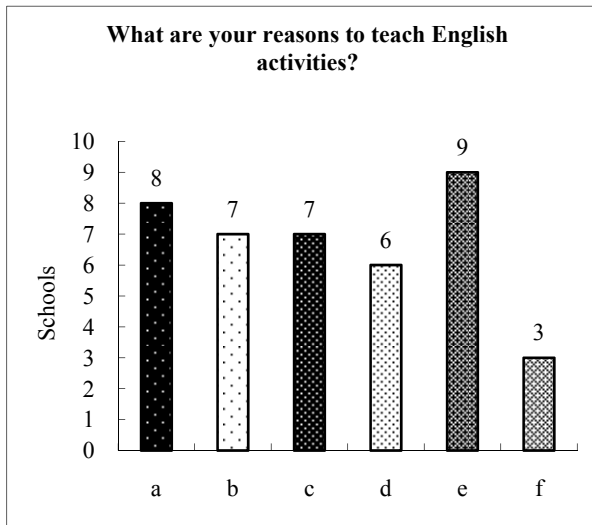
a: To make the most of the opportunity to involve ALTs.

b: To be familiar with English and English culture.

c: To respond to the needs in the society.

d: To develop communication skills.

e: Otherf: Not specified

f. Not specified

3.2.9. Effects of EIU

How do teachers monitor students' progress of EIU?   The questionnaire asked if EIU is evaluated in each school.   Figure 12 suggests that evaluation is not popular in the sample schools at this moment.

Figure 12   Is EIU Evaluated in Your School?
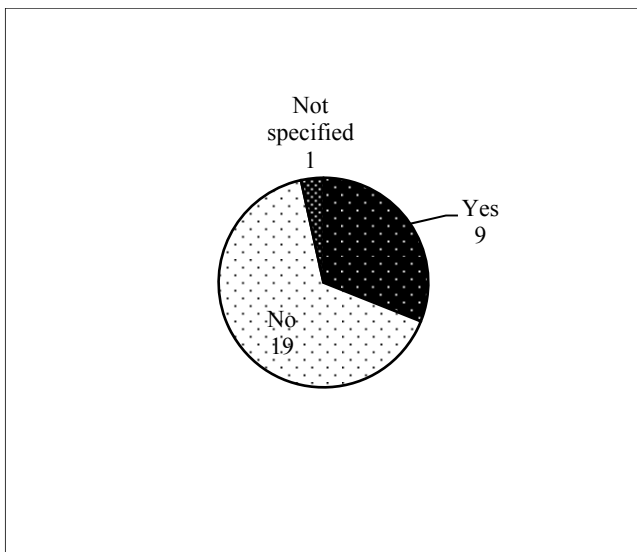
Note: numbers outside the circle = number of schools

Without evaluation, it seems difficult for teachers to check if the class is effective or not clearly.   Some possible reasons why EIU is not evaluated appeared in the respondents' additional opinions:

- Evaluation for EIU is difficult and it confuses me. (R10)

- I am troubled about evaluation for EA.   I am now wondering what kind of evaluation would be appropriate. (R14)

- Evaluation should be necessary, but we have not done it.   At this moment, it is all we could do to make a curriculum and run the classes. (R23)

Although various studies have been presented so far, we can say that little is known about appropriate evaluation for EIU.   In this condition, it is hard for elementary school teachers to prepare for it (see opinions of R10 and R14 above).   Additionally, R23's comment suggests that elementary school teachers might be too busy to consider doing it.

EIU was evaluated in nine schools as follows:

- Comments in the Period for Integrated Study section of the school reports (R1, R15, R22)

- Portfolios, self evaluation cards every time, evaluation of one-on-one conversations with HRTs or ALTs (R6)

- Observation etc. in light of the achievement of goals each time (R13)
- Questionnaire method (R16)

- Self evaluation after class (R18)

- Not specified (R3, R7)

The situation of R6's school seems outstanding, as various methods of evaluation were used there.

The questionnaire also asked if the respondents noticed some changes in students after introducing EIU in their school (Figure 13).   Although the total hours of EIU tended to be limited, most respondents saw positive changes in their students.

Figure 13   Respondents' Perception About Changes in Students After Introducing EIU
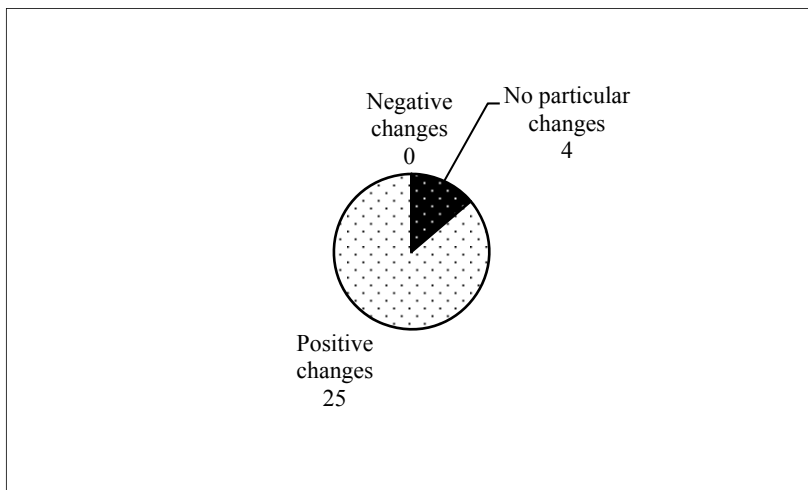
Note: numbers outside the circle = number of respondents

Perceived positive changes in students were examined in more detail (Figure 14). Respondents who saw positive changes tended to give examples of the evidence in EA with ALTs or communication with foreign people.   Many of them commented on the attitude in communication (n=16).   Teachers mainly saw two points; the disappearance of shyness, and the eagerness to communicate.   The following comments are examples:

The disappearance of shyness

- Students began to overcome their shyness when they communicate with strangers. (R24)

- At first, students seemed nervous when ALTs talked to them in EA. However, they came to be cheerful in the end. (R28)

The eagerness to communicate

- Students are pleased to get a chance to know foreign people.   It seems that through communicating with ALTs, they developed the attitude to communicate cheerfully. (R14)

Figure 14   Perceived Positive Changes in Students
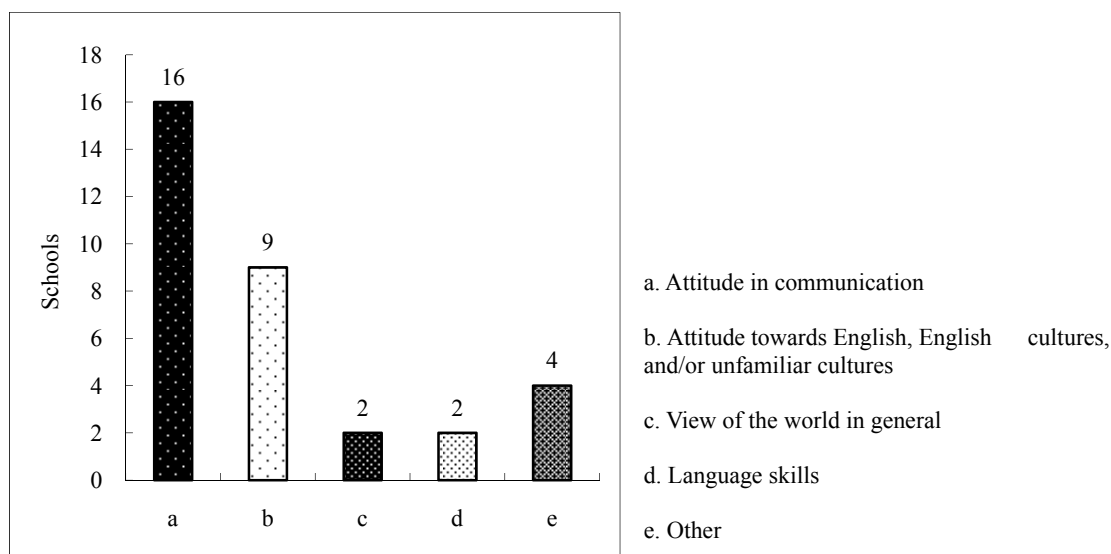
The second most popular answer was the attitude towards English, English cultures, and/or unfamiliar cultures (n=9).   The comments suggest the increase of interest and understanding towards unfamiliar cultures including English:

The attitude towards English, English cultures, and/or unfamiliar cultures

- Students came to be interested in English and cultures in English-speaking countries. (R11)

- Students deepened interest in English.   In the class, students concentrated on what ALTs say, their eyes shining. (R20)

- The number of students who borrowed books about foreign countries increased. (R21)

Students' point of view of the world appeared widened in some schools:

Positive changes in students' viewpoints

- Students understood that their circumstances do not always apply in other countries, and widened their view of the world. (R9)

- After having several classes with people from English-speaking countries,

students said that they want to communicate with people from other countries such as Germany and China next time. (R27)

Only two schools referred to language skills.   Considering the limited hours for EIU, it seems natural that the only language development observed was knowing how to exchange greetings:

Positive changes in language skills

- Students are able to exchange greetings in English. (R1, R22)

As other points, the comments of R13 and R22 suggest that what students learn in EIU might also bring positive effects beyond the class.   In contrast to other classes, EIU tends to include various experimental activities which let students be physically active.   Foreign people are often invited to the class.   These circumstances might stimulate students to develop the attitudes described here:

Others

- Students became enthusiastic and independent. (R13)

- Even the students who do not normally show interest in classes sometimes become very lively. (R18)

- Students became cheerful. (R22)

Thus, respondents referred to the development of students' attitudes towards communication with foreign people and unfamiliar cultures including English, rather than the development of English skills themselves such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking.   This result suggests that EA and international interchanges performed in these elementary schools develop various elements of EIU effectively.

3.2.10. Issues of EIU in Elementary School

Respondents were asked if they had difficulties a, b, c, and d in dealing with EIU (Figure 15), and to describe the issues briefly if they had. We see from the figure that there were only four schools which did not select any difficulties. That is, most of the sample schools faced some troubles in dealing with EIU.

Figure 15   Difficulties in Dealing With EIU

a.   Curriculum planning

b.   Teaching in the classroom

c.   Cooperating with guest lecturers

d.   Other

e.   Selected no items
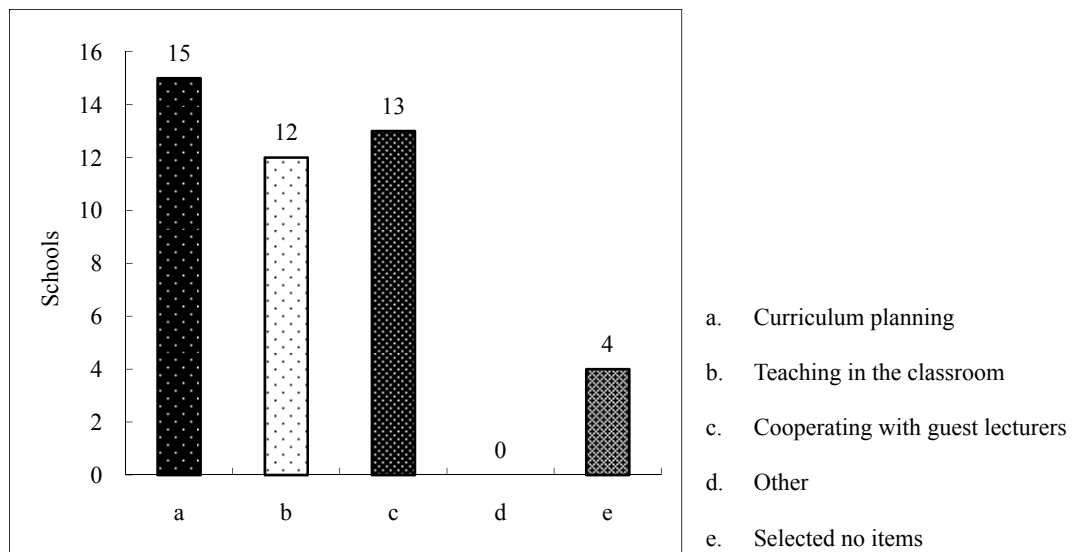
Fifteen respondents stated that curriculum planning is difficult (item a). They were likely to be at a loss to create a systematic curriculum. The following are examples:

- I have no clear vision for creating a curriculum for a year. (R10)

- We do not know what kind of contents we have to teach. We do not know which contents to teach first, either. (R18)

Other comments for this item suggest possible reasons for this problem:

- Systematic curriculum throughout the grades should be necessary. To make it, we want to have opportunities to have common understanding among teachers in different grades, but we cannot. One of the reasons is because teachers often have to take charge of different subjects each year.

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(R14)

- We seldom have training. (R25)

- It is difficult to allocate time for EIU in each grade, as there are many other activities to involve. (R28)

It is natural for curriculum planners to have trouble creating the programmes if they were in charge of different subjects in the previous year, and suddenly began to plan EIU when the new school year starts (see opinion of R14 above).   It should be also hard to do it without prior training in EIU (see R25).   As various events and activities are involved as well as regular subjects in elementary school, teachers also understandably face difficulties finding time for EIU (see R28).   Other comments mentioned the necessity of involving elements of EIU besides EA:

- As we mainly teach English for EIU, it is unclear how to involve elements of EIU. (R11)

- Systematic curriculum throughout the grades and contents of EIU to expand and complement EA should be necessary. (R23)

R11 observes that EA do not necessarily include the elements of EIU.   As we have seen, EIU in the sample schools tend to focus on English, which might lead to students' misunderstanding that EIU means to learn about English-speaking countries, ignoring the necessity to open their minds towards the rest of the world (see R23).

Twelve respondents stated that teaching in the classroom is difficult (item b). Among them, six teachers commented on teachers' participation in EIU:

- The degree of interest towards EIU is different among HRTs.   I worry that this situation might cause different achievements in different classes. Therefore, the use of ALTs is very helpful. (R1)

- I feel from our school atmosphere that our teachers do not want to take EIU seriously until EA becomes a required subject. (R8)

- I do want to involve EIU.   To introduce it in the whole school, however,

is difficult to run well until all the teachers take part in it. (R14)

- We need time to have training in EIU if we adopt a serious stance towards it. Until then, HRTs can only act as assistants of ALTs. (R19)

- The attitude towards EIU is different among different teachers. Therefore it is necessary to consider how we can come to a common understanding about it at first. (R23)

- Great differences appear in the attitude to EIU among HRTs. In this situation, it is difficult to run the classes without ALTs. (R29)

Worries about teachers' uncooperativeness appear in these comments. It is easy to suggest the importance of active participation in EIU as a whole school. However, as R19 suggests, one reason why teachers do not take part in the class seriously might be a lack of knowledge about EIU. It is likely that there are many teachers who do not know how to be involved in the class even if they want to, as they had not have any training for EIU. In this situation, as R1, R19, and R29 imply, the use of ALTs seems very helpful to run the class.

In addition, issues of pronunciation (R13, R27) and time-consuming preparation (R22, R27) were also noted. The following is an example:

- Many teachers say that they worry about pronunciation. It is time-consuming to prepare for the materials such as flash cards for classes. (R27)

Cooperation with guest lecturers, ALTs, etc. (item c) also seemed difficult in the sample schools (n=13). The answers tended to refer to the difficulty to find time to meet guest lecturers such as ALTs to prepare for the classes (n=10). The following is one of the answers:

- By right, we should not leave everything to ALTs. We would be able to teach more effectively if we could have more time for meeting with ALTs. (R3)

Besides, most elementary school teachers are not specialists in English, and they often face difficulties in communicating with ALTs.   One respondent stated as follows:

- Because of the difficulty to understand English, HRTs sometimes cannot discuss the details of the classes well with ALTs. (R18)

3.2.11. Conclusion

So far we have outlined the current condition of EIU in twenty-nine Kumamoto City elementary schools.   These schools mainly used EA and international exchange activities as EIU.   The total hours for EIU seemed limited, as less than twenty hours a year were used for EIU even from the third grade in most schools.

Schools tended to teach EIU not because there were needs in their schools, but because it was easy or for other relatively passive reasons.   Many respondents also pointed out that curriculum planning is difficult, and they suggested that they would need to have a systematic curriculum.   These two conditions suggest that these schools were likely to teach the contents in disorder.

It seems necessary to improve the management of EIU in school.   It was found that EIU coordinators and ALTs prepared the curriculum alone in half of the sample schools.   Teachers' uncooperative attitudes towards EIU were also pointed out in several schools.   To improve these situations, some training should be necessary for teachers to develop a common understanding towards EIU.

Different schools seemed to have different points to develop in EA and international exchange activities, but most respondents perceived positive changes in their students after introducing them.   Although EA were the most popular content in many schools, the respondents tended to refer to the development of students' attitudes towards communication with foreign people and towards unfamiliar cultures, rather than the development of English skills themselves such as listening, reading, writing,

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and speaking.

Such respondents' perceptions hint that it may be possible to develop various elements of EIU in the current contents.   For example, although the make-believe play for shopping situations in EA appears superficial and may be inappropriate at elementary school level, students might be learning not only useful expressions, but also willingness to communicate or confidence when their communications are successful.   Having such a perspective on EIU, we might also be able to introduce game and role-play activities more effectively.

We can say that focusing on elements of EIU is an advantage for EA in elementary school, as English classes in secondary school are more about developing the four skills.   To make the most of the limited teaching hours for EIU, therefore, it seems possible to suggest that elementary schools use EA as a means to develop the elements of EIU, rather than aim to develop English skills.   When the goal is set clearly, other teachers would be able to understand the role of EA more easily, which might create a more cooperative atmosphere.

Based on these findings, it is necessary to go on to more detailed examinations of students' development in EIU in actual elementary school classrooms.   The students' progress in EIU reported in this study tended to be based on respondents' broad impressions without specific examples.   In the next study, therefore, this progress needs to be ascertained by various classroom data including quantitative statistics and factual evidence about students in light of EIU.

3.3. An Analysis of an Interview to the Teachers' Consultant on EIU at
Kumamoto City Board of Education

3.3.1. Introduction

To back up data collected in the questionnaire to Kumamoto City municipal elementary school teachers, a semi-structured one to one interview was conducted to understand the general condition of EA in elementary schools in the target city. Contact was made with the Teachers' Consultant on EIU at Kumamoto City Board of Education, and he agreed to cooperate with this interview.

It was his second year as the teachers' consultant of the Board when this interview was conducted.   He was in his mid-40s, and had been a lower-secondary school English teacher for 21 years.   We had known each other as he had assisted in conducting the questionnaire shown in the previous sections.

Every effort was made to make this interview comfortable for him.   The list of the questions was given to him in advance so that he could outline a whole picture about the interview, and prepare for the answers to each question.   The interview was conducted in the Board.   We used a small meeting area on the floor he worked. Before the interview, preferences for recording data were also asked.   He requested not to use a recording device, and therefore memos were used instead.

The questions were prepared to clarify the following three points:

- General educational policy on EIU (Questions A.1, A.2)
- Contents of EIU at school in general (Questions B.1 – B.3)
- Perception of the current situation and the future direction of EIU (Questions C.1, C.2)

Table 10　Summary of the Interview

Point to be clarified:	The general state of EIU in Kumamoto City elementary schools
Method	Semi-structured one to one interview
Interviewee:	the Teachers' Consultant on EIU at Kumamoto City Board of Education (n=1)
Date:	11 August 2006
Duration:	One hour

The interview was conducted in Japanese.　Therefore, the questions that appear in this section are translations.　The original questions and the framework of the interview are shown in Appendix 12 and 13.

3.3.2.　The Position of EA in Municipal Elementary Schools in This City

The first point in this interview asked the general educational policy on EIU of the Board.　The first question began with the position of EIU in the policy.

Question A.1:
How is EIU positioned in your educational policy?

According to the interviewee, EIU is mentioned in "promotion of international education" in "promoting education for responding to the social change".　Three aspects are covered: (1) promotion of international exchange, (2) promotion of EA, and (3) education of returnee children.　Among them, (2) promotion of EA was taught as EIU.　As to (1) promotion of international exchange, he described that CIRs (Coordinator for International Relations) of Kumamoto City International Centre and Cultural and International Division of Kumamoto City Hall, and ALTs sometimes visit schools to have experiential activities as events, rather than as a part of a subject.　The

last aspect, (3) education of returnee children, was taught for returnee children in several schools.

Thus, it was found that EIU means EA in municipal schools in this city. However, his explanation suggested that this did not mean that the only taught element of EIU was EA.   Other elements of EIU were actually taught, but not as EIU. They were taught as part of school events.

Question A.2:
What kind of attitudes and skills does your board aim to develop in EIU in the elementary school?

As the first question clarified, EIU basically meant EA in this city.   Therefore, he focused on EA to answer this question.   He showed "Promotion of international education" of the Board's educational policy.   It states as follows:

> To develop Japanese people who actively engage themselves in international society, students are to learn Japanese traditions and cultures, to develop the foundation of communication and communication skills in foreign languages such as English, and to deepen understanding of societies, cultures, and histories in other countries and in Japan through international exchange activities, etc. (We try to develop the attitude and ability to accept people from different cultural backgrounds, and to express one's own thoughts and opinions to take actions.)
>
> (Translated by the author)

The attitudes and skills stated in this statement seemed very similar to the three elements of EIU of the Central Council for Education (1996) (see 1.4.).   As EA is the only one element of EIU in elementary school in this city, it seems that the Board aims to develop the foundation of communication in EA at elementary school level.

3.3.3. The Guidelines for EA

Next, the questions moved on to the contents of EA.   The first question was whether or not the Kumamoto City Board of Education provided guidelines on the contents of EA.

Question B.1:
Does Kumamoto City Board of Education provide guidelines on the contents of EA?

He told he believes that the Board made a guide for EA, and he provided a copy of the pamphlet about EA (see Appendix 14 and 15).   It says that EA in Kumamoto city municipal elementary schools are taught to build the following points:

- the foundation of understanding of the world to raise awareness towards languages and cultures in the world
- the foundation of communication to develop the attitude to communicate without hesitation
- the foundation for character formation to develop the quality to live better in a global society

(Translated by the author)

A brief explanation about the goal of EA is as follows:

Widen the students' world through the interaction in English.   The goal is not to develop English skills but to deepen understanding of the world and to develop essential qualities to live better in a global society.   We believe that speaking and listening activities in English in elementary school level are "a language nest egg."   We strive to develop students who are willing to learn and love English.

(Translated by the author)

Again, it was likely that these points were based on the Central Council for Education (1996).   The explanation clearly states that the goal of EA is not English skills.   It was also found that the three points of EA the Board emphasises also correspond to the three main points of EA we have suggested based on the review of the three educational aspects (see 1.6.):

- to develop a pro-active attitude to communicate through interaction
- to develop self-confidence
- to develop understanding about languages and cultures

3.3.4. Reflection of the Student Character

The reasons why the Board sends ALTs to elementary schools to teach EA were also asked:

Question B.2:
EA is one of the topics of the Period for Integrated Study.   The government's Course of Study states that in the Period for Integrated Study, each school is expected to introduce activities that reflect the actual conditions of the school. I understand you send ALTs to various elementary schools to teach EA following this point.   How do EA reflect Kumamoto city elementary students?

To sum up, his answer was as follows:

EA are taught because the government states that it's possible to have EA as a part of EIU.   We try to introduce EA about 10 hours in each class from this school year onwards (i.e. from April 2006).   This is because the government now recommends teaching around 7 hours by ALTs when EA are taught.

It was believed that introduction of English in elementary schools would be related to the students' needs in the city.   For example, I thought some schools might

need English in their daily life if they had students from other countries in their schools. The actual reason seemed rather passive, however.   EA was introduced simply because the government suggested involving them.

His comments on the increase of the teaching hours for EA suggested that it was the time when the teaching of EA was changing in this city to correspond to the government's action plan of 2003 to foster Japanese people with good command of English (see 1.5.).

3.3.5. The Points to Teach EA at Elementary School Level

The study also asked unique points about EA compared to English in lower-secondary school.

Question B.3:
What are the points to teach EA in elementary school, not in lower-secondary school?

He argued that there are two points:

- Timing: Elementary school students are more open-minded, and they can develop such as pronunciation skill and listening skill easier through games and songs at the elementary school level.

- Social demand: There are needs from both society and the business community.   Data suggests that teaching English in elementary school is already popular in other countries, and this is a pressure for us.

He stressed the advantage of developing listening skills in elementary school. When he answered this question, he repeated such words as 'pronunciation skills' and 'listening skills', which sounded like a contradiction with the pamphlet stressing EA is

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not for developing English skills.   He admitted later in the interview that his viewpoint might be still based on English class at lower-secondary school level, not on EA in elementary school, because he had been teaching in lower-secondary school for many years.

3.3.6. Perspectives of the Current Situation and the Future Direction of EIU

Lastly, the questions focused on the viewpoints of the current condition and the future direction of EIU in Kumamoto city elementary school.

Question C.1:
How would you evaluate the current condition of EIU in Kumamoto city municipal schools?

He answered as follows:

Although the total hours and contents about EA vary in different schools, and schools tend to rely on ALTs to teach EA, it seems that we manage to teach EA well according to the reality of each school.

Question C.2:
Do you feel there are any pressing issues regarding EA in elementary school in Kumamoto city municipal elementary school now?

He pointed out the following aspects:

- The number of ALTs is limited.
- HRTs need extra work time to prepare for EA.
- Schools tend to let ALTs be completely responsible for EA.   This situation is understandable for the first few years, however.   Some schools may have no other choice.
- It seems necessary to develop appropriate teaching materials, and therefore

we are going to distribute a guidebook for EA.

- Each school has a different awareness about EIU.

The answers to these questions suggest that schools tend to leave EA to ALTs. The Board views this as a situation that can't be avoided as EA was new to schools. It seemed that the Board expects the situation would improve after providing a guidebook for EA.

3.3.7. Conclusion

So far the general condition of EIU in Kumamoto city municipal elementary school has been presented. The interview with the Teachers' Consultant on EIU at Kumamoto City Board of Education revealed the characteristics of EA in this city.

Firstly, EA was the only one element taught as EIU in the educational policy of the Board. However, it was also found that other elements of EIU were actually taught, not as EIU, but as school events.

Secondly, the objectives for EA that the Board defined also corresponded to the three main points of EA we have suggested based on the review of the three educational aspects.

Thirdly, it was found that EA was introduced because the government suggested involving them, not because there are any special needs to use English in elementary schools in this city. This reason sounded rather passive, but they might have no choice because the policy of the Board would need to meet the government's suggestions. In particular, the interview revealed that the teaching of EA was changing in this city at that time to correspond to the government's action plan of 2003 to foster Japanese people with good command of English.

Lastly, it was likely that schools in this city relied on ALTs to teach EA. The teachers' consultant saw this as inappropriate, and they were preparing to improve the

situation by providing a guidebook for EA as a first step.

Based on the framework of EA in municipal elementary schools in this city, which was clarified in this interview, the actual practice of EA will be explored with a case study in two schools in the next chapter.

4. A Case Study in Kumamoto City Municipal Elementary Schools

4.1. Introduction

The presentation, analysis of results, and discussions of a case study are introduced in this chapter.   As explained in the previous chapter, the following two points were set as 'cases':

(1) Social factors that affect students' learning in EA
(2) The interaction in EA

To explore these two points, the case study was conducted in two Kumamoto City municipal elementary schools.   Firstly, each of the many sources of data collected by various methods is analysed individually.   Based on the findings from all these sources, the research then explores how each source is related to others, and why certain outcomes might have been reached..

Table 11   Summary of the Case Study

Points to be clarified:	1. How far does EA go in achieving objectives of EA in actual practice? 2. What factors exist that facilitate or inhibit students' learning of EA?	
Sampling method:	The case study schools:	Two municipal elementary schools in Kumamoto city: Elementary school A: 2 classes of the Year 3 of 2006 Elementary school B: 3 classes of the Year 4 of 2006
	Duration:	November 2006 to March 2009

A case study approach was selected as a research strategy to investigate

students' development in EIU in actual elementary EA.   This research was prepared mainly to clarify two points; (1) How far does EA go in achieving objectives of EA in actual practice?, and (2) What factors exist that facilitate or inhibit students' learning of EA?

To clarify these two points, the following five aspects were focused upon: school community context, whole school action on EA, the teachers' perceptions of students' learning, students' perceptions of EA, and EA in actual practice.   Based on the analyses of these aspects on EA, the study will finally clarify what the conditions of EA in actual practice are, and how such conditions have formed.

To protect respondents' privacy, the participants' real names are not shown in this study.   Students in school A are referred to as code names SA1 to SA83, and students in school B are shown as SB1 to SB99.

4.2.   The School and School Community Context

4.2.1. Introduction

This section introduces information about each school and its school community.   As we have explained in the methodology chapter, the main reason to focus on this aspect was that after considering such information, the reader of the case study findings may make an informed judgement as to how far the findings have relevance to other instances.   To serve this point, therefore, this section aims to cover sufficient information on the target schools and their surroundings including significant features.

The information about each school and its surroundings presented in this section was mainly based on the documents written by the teachers in each school.

4.2.2. Elementary School A: the Location and History

Elementary school A is situated in the north of Kumamoto city. The area of the school is blessed with a good natural environment, located at the foot of a mountain. To the south, there is a river which runs from Mt. Aso, and there is another river to the west. There are also natural parks in the mountains and along the rivers here.

In the Edo Period (1603 – 1868), there were samurai residences in school A area. You can see many temples in the town now because they were used as gathering places to prepare for wars at that time. In this period, a herb farm was set in the area to cure sick people. Later, it was moved to the secondary school which became a national university, but a legacy of the days remains in the name of a town near school A. Thus, we can say that school A has a good environment.

Elementary School A has a history of more than 130 years. It was established in its current location in 1874. In the earliest years, the school had only a few students, as there was no official policy about the entry age of schooling in that period. The number of students increased year by year, however, and subsequently the size of the school became larger.

In the twenty years since the school first opened, two secondary schools were founded close to the elementary school. One of them is the oldest secondary school in Kumamoto prefecture, and has been a prestigious school even now. The other school developed into a national university in later years. Thus, the town where school A is located evolved into a centre of learning and schools.

It seems that Elementary School A was recognised for its excellent teaching from the beginning. In 1910, the school received an award from the prefectural government for students' outstanding academic results. By 1915, the school was also honoured by the local government twice.

4.2.3. Elementary School A: Education

This tradition of quality education seems to remains today. Various works by the students were awarded around the time when the school celebrated its 100th anniversary. Among them, instrumental music, handwriting, and science projects were praised continuously every year in this period. Furthermore, the school has been often appointed by the local governments to work on teaching practices, and the school receives many teachers from other schools who come to learn about research outcomes. Works on social studies, science, and health education were carried out in the 1970s. Local history and the environment have been focused on since the 1980s, as there are various historic sites around the school. Students experience the outdoors through activities such as mountain climbing, visits to the university, and bird-watching.

Research on teaching Japanese was also commissioned by the local government in 1990. It is said that the students' active attitude to talk about topics impressed teachers who visited the school from other schools. The school continues to work on this since then. It seems that current students in this school still practise speaking accurately with good pronunciation utilizing television, reading poems well aloud, making speeches, and conducting interviews.

The number of students of the school varied in different periods. The peak was 1958, with 2203 students. Since then, the number of students decreased year by year, and there were 496 students in total with 18 classes, and 32 staff in 2005 (Kumamoto City Board of Education). In this situation, empty classrooms are changed into playrooms and meeting rooms for students.

Elementary School A has five school mottos:

- To have determination
- To be tough
- To unite one's strength

- To follow the social roles
- To be lively and cheerful

The words of the school song also express that students in school A would grow up physically and mentally sound like Mt. Aso, an active volcano.   As to the school emblem, a Chinese character, which is one of the characters used in the actual name of school A, is in the centre, and three pen tips and leaves of chrysanthemum surround the letter.

In Elementary School A, there are two reinforced concrete buildings, with four stories each.   They were built in the 1970s.   In addition, there is a pool and an athletic field.   There is a big gingko tree near the main gate.   It was planted by a former student in 1911, and it is now a symbol of the school.

When this study was conducted, there were six students from overseas in this school.   One of the reasons of this would be because there is a university nearby.   The school also serves as the base for teaching Japanese as a foreign language in this city, and therefore foreign students who are in other Kumamoto city municipal elementary schools and junior-high schools regularly come to the school to learn Japanese.

The following is a snapshot of my earlier days in the school, based on a memo on 21 November 2006 about the impression of the school:

> I arrived at the school at 13.55.   It was a Period of Cleaning (this is a part of education in municipal schools in Japan).   Students wipe the floors of their classrooms, teacher's rooms, hallways, and entrances with wet rags.   Some students clean toilets, sweep the school field and roads surrounding the school.
>
> When I was entering the main school gate, students who were sweeping there noticed me, and said hello with smiles.   I returned a greeting, and walked to the main entrance.   Some higher-grade students were cleaning around the entrance hall, and gave a polite greeting.   One student said, "slippers, slippers!" to other students.   A student near the slippers rack prepared a pair of slippers for me,

and said, "Please leave your shoes here.   We will put them in a shoe box later".

This welcoming atmosphere and a caring attitude of the students made me feel as if I were to check in a prestigious hotel.   It was amazing that the students' behaviour was natural, and it seemed they were used to treating visitors nicely.   It was my second or third time to visit this school when I had this experience, and I was still a stranger there.   I did not know much information about students, staff, or education policies in this school.   However, I could see from this short time experience that it was highly likely that students in this school would be well educated.

As to the inside of the school, some foreign languages appeared in some areas. For example, one expression was written in ten different languages in different colours on each step of stairs towards the top floor.   This is because on the top floor, there is a Japanese classroom for foreign students.   Colourful foreign language expressions were to welcome these students, and to promote awareness of different languages towards Japanese students.   Furthermore, there was a section in a hallway to introduce ALTs. Each teacher wrote a short message to students with their picture and a map of their home country.   These displays suggested that there were some teachers in this school who were keen to promote foreign languages.

4.2.4. Elementary School B: the Location and History

Elementary School B is located in the northeast of Kumamoto City.   The school area is on a terrace at a height of 77.5 meters, and it is on the right bank of a river.   It is in a residential estate.

The area used to be vast farmland where burdock, potatoes, and sweet chestnuts

were grown.   There were no houses in the area at this time.   The school was

established in 1970 as a part of a suburban housing project.   It was the largest project

at that time to build houses for 2,000 families in an area of 40 hectares.   Around this

period, the nation's industries had been dramatically developed.   As people's incomes

began to increase, they began to buy electric items and cars.   On the other hand, the

number of houses tended to be insufficient.   This is because of the increase of the

population in Kumamoto City, and the increase of nuclear families.   In this situation,

new residential districts such as the school B area were built outside the city centre.

The name of the town where school B is located was taken from a kind of tree

which grows in warmer places in western Japan.   The tree has been often planted in

grounds of a shrine.   The Kumamoto City Housing Association selected this tree as the

name of the town because in those days, they often named a new residential district

from trees and flowers.   Each district planted the trees or flowers of their name to be a

beautiful forest or garden.   Therefore, you can now see a lot of B trees in the town of

school B.

The number of students increased year by year, and after the school took 1,653

students in 1976, three new schools were built around the school.   Some students

moved to these new schools, and the size of school B gradually became smaller.   In the

meantime, other large residential districts were also built around the town, and the

region is now one of the largest residential areas in Kumamoto City.   In 2005, there

were 523 students with 19 classes, and 27 staff (Kumamoto City Board of Education).

4.2.5. Elementary School B: Education

Elementary School B gives priority to education of the heart such as promoting

friendly greetings.   The school tries to deepen cooperation with students' homes and

the local community by bringing up students who can express their feelings in various

words of gratitude and empathy (City of Kumamoto, 1994).   The school has three school mottos:

- To have honesty
- To be kind
- To be tough

The following is a snapshot of the school, based on a memo on 14 September 2007 about my impression of the school.

The school consists of two concrete buildings of four stories for classrooms, the gym, and the sports ground.   I had an impression that this school is always kept clean.   For example, I often saw the vice-principal picking up rubbish around the campus.   As to the interior of the school, there are not notable ornaments or pictures in the hallways, and therefore inside appears overall to have no warmth and be boring.   The only one exception is some students' winning pieces of art displayed in the main entrance.

An example of a classroom interior is that there is a blackboard at the front. Students sit at the desks facing the front.   There is a shelf at the back, and each student has their own space.   Students' paper crafts of labyrinths, which are made in Art class, are displayed on the top of the shelf.   Students' Japanese calligraphy works are put on the back wall.

Students in this school seem to be shy and quiet.   For example, half of the students greet me by themselves, and the others tend to keep quiet.

Based on a memo written by the author on 14 September 2007

4.2.6. Conclusion

So far we have provided information on the target school A and B and their surroundings.   We can say that the basic features of these schools were much the same.

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They were both located in the north of the city with several concrete buildings, and had approximately 500 students in 2005.

Elementary school A has a history of more than 130 years.   As there is a national university and a prestigious secondary school nearby, the area where school A is located is known for a good education.   One significant feature on school A would be that there were several students from foreign countries, and for this reason, the school served as the centre of teaching Japanese as a second language in the target city.

School B opened in 1970, when the nation's history had been dramatically developed.   The area where school B is located was developed as a commuter town of Kumamoto City, and many people had moved into the area.

4.3. Whole School Action on English Activities

4.3.1. Introduction

The whole school action on EA has a direct impact towards actual practice, and it may be most influential.   Therefore, the case study began with the examination of this aspect.   The general condition of EIU and EA was outlined by semi-structured one to one interviews with current or former EIU coordinators in Kumamoto City municipal elementary school A and B.   The interviews were mainly carried out in school A. The points that emerged in school A were cross-checked with those of school B at a later date.

In school A, two teachers agreed to cooperate with the interview: CA1 (EIU Coordinator at school A, code 1), who was the current EIU coordinator, and CA2, who had been the coordinator before CA1 took over his position in April that year.   CA1, who was in her late 50s, had worked at school A previously, and had returned from working at another school that year.   She had been teaching at schools since she graduated from university.   CA2, who was in his mid-30s, had been teaching in

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elementary school for 10 years, and once worked as a member of JOCV (Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers).   Both of them were in charge of Japanese class for students from other countries.   School B had one EIU coordinator: CB1, who also underwent this interview.   He appeared to be in his early 40s, and was also in charge of the class for students with learning difficulties.

The interviews were conducted in their classrooms, and interviews with CA1 and CA2 were audio recorded with their permission.   Memos were used in the interview with CB1.   The interviews were prepared to focus on two points: (1) the general condition of EIU including EA, and (2) teachers' involvement in EA.

Table 12 Summary of the Interviews

Points to be clarified:	(1) the general condition of EIU including EA (2) teachers' involvement in EA
Method	Semi-structured one to one interviews
Interviewee:	Current and former EIU coordinators at a Kumamoto City municipal elementary schools A and B
Date:	School A: 13 June 2006 School B: 25 June 2007
Duration:	School A: One hour in total School B: 10 minutes

4.3.2. General Conditions of EIU and EA

The first question asked was about the contents of EIU.   CA2 mainly answered this question, as he had been in charge of EIU in the school longer.   According to him, the only form of EIU in this school was EA, and these lessons were taught from the 3rd to 6th grades about 10 times a year.   As the Teachers' Consultant on EIU at Kumamoto City Board of Education stated, they try to introduce EA about 10 times a year in each school (see 3.3.), EA in school A seemed to be a typical model.

That EA was the only one element for EIU in this school A was beyond my expectation. I expected that various activities would be included in this school because of the school environment. A national university is near the school, and therefore many people from other countries live in this school area. This is one of the reasons school A runs Japanese classes for students from other countries.

Why is this school unable to make the most of its originality for EIU? The interview responses suggested that one reason could be because teachers have a feeling that once a framework for each subject is built, they should just follow it and do not change it. He told of an episode when he passed out a copy about exercises on EIU to each teacher of the school. Because it was just before the new school year started, he only gave copies without explaining what it was, which he said he should have explained. In the end, he had no response from his colleagues, and no change was made about the contents.

In this case, it seems natural not to have feedbacks from other teachers, but he said that it is difficult to expect something to change in any situation. This viewpoint seemed to be related to a pre-fixed framework about the contents of each subject. According to him, once a framework has been established, there is no space to include extra elements or no atmosphere conducive to such change. For example, he described that the contents for the *Period for Integrated Studies* in school A, which EIU including EA could be taught, was as follows:

Year 3: an exchange activity with elder people
Year 4: an exchange activity with students with disabilities
Year 5: a study about environment
Year 6: a study about peace

Each item is related to other subjects to be taught in the target grade. Therefore,

he stated that teachers might feel that it is difficult to change the content, and they would simply follow the content that was taught previous year.   He also appeared to have a similar perception of EA.   When I asked why they teach EA in his school, his answer was "because they had been already introduced when he became responsible for EIU".

Even if the only EIU component of EIU was EA in this school, it seems possible to make the most of the uniqueness of the school in EA.   For example, they could invite local foreign people who are fluent in English to teach the class.   However, it was found that in EA in this school, only ALTs were dispatched from lower-secondary school as was the case in other schools.   If this is the case, ALTs might teach EA considering the uniqueness of this school.   The class involving students from other countries in the school might also be stimulating.   I asked CA1 to clarify this point:

> Yohei: I understand that ALTs come to this school from other schools.   Do they teach the same contents everywhere, or…
> CA1: It seems that most of them have completed teaching training somewhere before they were sent (to Kumamoto City Board of Education).   In the training, they seem to use a kind of handbook containing various activities, teaching plans, game activities, and so on.   I guess they select (the contents) from these, or use activities which they made with other ALTs.   They generally decide in this way, I think.
> Yohei: Don't they change the contents according to school characteristics?
> CA1: Well, I don't think they will go that far.

Thus, it seems EA are taught in the same way in each school ALTs visit using activities which they learned before or created with other ALTs.

However, this did not mean that school A had no EIU elements reflecting the school's particular characteristics.   As the Teachers' Consultant on EIU clarified (see 3.3.), such elements were involved not as parts of subjects, but as school events.   CA2

suggested that there were opportunities to focus on students from foreign countries in this school: the music week and the students' presentation day. In the previous year, there were three students from foreign countries: South Korea, China, and the US. In the music week, each of them sang their native songs at a school assembly. In addition, all students in each grade practiced one of the songs with a music teacher. For example, Year 4 students learned to sing a Chinese song because there was a Chinese student in this grade. As to the students' presentation day, Year 1 students from China and the US talked at a school assembly about 'what to do when a baby tooth comes out' in their culture.

Thus, these opportunities were involved as school events, not as part of the subject, *Period for Integrated Study*. However, we can say that they are actually EIU, too. These events would be good chances for students to understand their own culture and other cultures. What this story clarified was that focusing only on EIU in *Period for Integrated Study* does not always reveal an actual condition of EIU in each school. We need to take other subjects and events at school into account to understand an overall picture of EIU.

The current state of EIU in school B basically seemed similar. The only EIU element in this school was also EA, and they were taught from the 3rd to 6th grades about 10 times a year. CB1 also said that the reason why EA is taught in his school was that because EA had been already introduced when he became responsible for EIU.

4.3.3. How Teachers are Involved in EA

As we have outlined in section 1.5., and as the Teachers' Consultant on EIU admitted (see 3.3.), today's elementary schools tend to leave EA to ALTs, and the rest of the teachers do not seem to be keen to be involved in EA (BERD, 2007). However,

the quality of ALTs may vary (BERD), and the inadequate quality of EA is also noted (MEXT 2005, Central Council for Education 2007).   In this situation, why do schools rely on ALTs?   To clarify this point, I asked how teachers are involved in teaching EA in school A.

Firstly, I asked CA1 how EA were prepared every time:

CA1:   Usually, I send a schedule to ALTs about one week before the classes to inform teaching periods and classes, because they work at lower-secondary schools.   They then make a teaching plan, and send it to me few days before the classes.   When they send it at the last minute, or when they send it a day before the classes, I just make copies of the plan, and leave them on the desks of the HRTs who teach Year 3, 4, 5, and 6.   Sometimes ALTs also send worksheets, and we make copies of them along with teaching plan copies.

Yohei: I see.

CA1:   And a teaching plan is written in English only.   As HRTs are busy, I put down notes (in Japanese) in the margins to summarise what today's games activities are like.

Thus, it seems that they do not meet each other until the day of the classes.   It should be helpful to place a copy of a teaching plan (see Appendix 16) on each HRT's desk, but there might be some teachers who will not read it at all.

Next, I asked if the school takes the initiative in the curriculum of EA:

Yohei: When you contact ALTs, do you ask about the contents to ALTs, like, "Please do this, in this way?"

CA1:   Well, I came here this year, so Mr. XXX (=CA2) prepared an annual plan (on EA) last year.   I passed it to the ALTs, saying that this is just our suggested content.   I guess ALTs prepare for their classes based on either our plan possibly sometimes, activities created in other schools, or their original contents.

She suggested that what the school provided was a loose framework, and it was likely

that ALTs would decide the contents of EA by themselves.

I then asked CA2 about teachers' attitude and perception about EA:

Yohei: What are the roles of HRTs in EA when ALTs mainly teach the lessons?

CA2:   They often stand in a corner.   ALTs are assistants by definition, but they actually have the main role.   Therefore, HRTs just stand in a corner, and assist the lessons.

Thus, it was likely that HRTs acted as assistants for ALTs just as other schools appeared in BERD (2007).

In this situation, is it possible to maintain the quality of the lessons?

Yohei: Do you think whether EA will work or not depends on the ALTs?

CA2:   Well, probably.   I've heard that there are some ALTs who ask a lot of things to HRTs.   For example, "I will do pronunciation", and "Next, please do this in this way".

He associates good collaboration between ALTs and HRTs with the success of the lessons.   HRTs would be confused when they are suddenly asked various things in the class.   However, the situation seems natural in a sense, given the fact that they only talk to each other on the day of the lesson.

Are HRTs satisfied with their position in EA?

Yohei: How do you think teachers in your school view the current state of EA?

CA2:   Let's see.   I think in this school, teachers don't feel uncomfortable introducing EA because ALTs teach the lessons at the moment. Times are changing, however.   In the near future, HRTs would need to teach the lessons, as the dispatch of ALTs might be cancelled. This would cause strong opposition towards EA.   For example, I've heard that some EIU coordinators who work in a school with no ALTs in EA demand HRTs to teach various things in detail along with a plan with a high degree of specificity.

Yohei: Oh...

CA2: In such a situation, there would be many teachers who have difficulty accepting the lessons.

Thus, it seemed that HRTs tended to have a passive attitude towards EA.   This is understandable in a way because most of them would not have learned ELT.

Teachers in school B also seemed to have a similar attitude towards EA.   CB1 stated that in his school, the same ALT teaches throughout the year, and they leave everything on EA to the ALT, because "He likes to do everything by himself".

However, as we have outlined before, the role of HRTs is vital in EA (MEXT 2008c, 2009).   Are there opportunities for them to learn how to teach the lessons? According to CA2, a meeting for EIU coordinators in each school was held for the first time in the previous year.   The contents appeared to be somewhat superficial because they merely provided information such as local organizations for EIU, and in giving directions such as asking each school to make annual plan.   Therefore, highly-motivated teachers seemed to attend a study group to develop practical skills on EIU.   He said he learned *BaFa BaFa*, a cross-cultural simulation activity, in the previous year with about ten participants in a study group.

CA2 suggests that the support system on EA for elementary school teachers was likely to be insufficient.   In this situation, it would be difficult for HRTs to lead EA. In addition, it would be also hard for a teacher who suddenly becomes an EIU coordinator to create a plan by themselves.

4.3.4. Conclusion

So far we have presented the analysis on the whole school action on EA.   The interview was conducted with EIU Coordinators at school A and B.   The interview clarified (1) the general condition of EIU and EA, and (2) the teachers' involvement in EA.

Firstly, the basic conditions of EA in school A and B seemed to be typical, as the lessons were introduced about 10 times a year, as the Board of Education in Kumamoto City planned.

Secondly, EA seemed to be the only one EIU element taught as a subject. However, several topics such as songs about foreign students' countries were likely to be taught as events, and they were virtually EIU elements, too.   Such events well reflected the school characteristics.   The interviews remind us that we cannot clarify the situation of EA until we place it in a whole school programme.   As EA is a part of elementary school education, we also need to understand other subjects and events, as they are related each other.

Thirdly, the comments on teachers' involvement in EA suggest that current EA in this school does not seem to be run by collaboration between ALTs and school teachers.   It was found that the school does not seem to take initiatives in the curriculum of EA.   It seemed that ALTs often make a teaching plan alone, and send it to school by fax a few days before the class.   An EIU coordinator then makes copies of the plan, and places them on HRTs' desks.   In this process, it was likely that ALTs and school teachers do not discuss a lesson plan together.   On the day of the class, ALTs mainly teach the lessons, and HRTs assist the class.   However, it appeared that there are HRTs who become confused, as they are suddenly asked various things during the lesson.

The situation that school teachers tend to leave everything on EA to ALTs seems understandable in a way.   This is because they are not likely to have knowledge on teaching EA.   Firstly, most of them probably did not learn how to teach the class when they were university students, as EA was yet to be at that time.   Secondly, CA2 implied that in-service training on EA seemed insufficient in this city.   In this situation, it seems difficult for them to lead EA.   However, times are changing, and

the government recently stated that the role of HRTs is vital in EA (MEXT 2008c, 2009) (see 1.5.).   To involve school teachers in EA, it seems necessary to improve the preparation and the collaboration process between ALTs and HRTs.

4.4.   Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Learning

4.4.1. Introduction

This section focuses on teachers' perceptions of EA in actual practice.   To investigate this point, interviews with the target school teachers were conducted.

Firstly, the research on the general condition of EA in municipal elementary schools clarified that the required aspects to develop in EA are an active attitude to communicate, self-confidence, and understanding about languages and cultures (see Chapter 1 and 3).   The postal questionnaire was then undertaken to confirm these points in actual practice (see Chapter 3) and it raised several further questions that required more detailed explanation.   How do teachers at the case study schools perceive the following points?

- Why is the quality 'to be familiar with English and English culture' necessary for English at elementary school level while it has been already emphasised at secondary school level?

- Are students inadequate communication skills acknowledged as a serious issue in actual practice'?   If so, what are some examples?

- How do teachers at the case study schools perceive students' active attitude to study after the introduction of EA?

Secondly, literature review chapter also suggested that various social factors are interrelated to the current EA (see Chapter 1).   In the issues on the three additional questions above, what kinds of factors are there to facilitate or inhibit students'

learning?

The case study asked several teachers in the target schools to offer their opinions about these two points.   In addition, some other issues in the interviews which the participants also referred to, will be introduced.

4.4.2.   The Response to Being Familiar With English and English Culture in EA

The questionnaire to EIU coordinators in Kumamoto city municipal elementary schools suggested that 'to be familiar with English and English culture' seemed a relatively common reason to teach EA (see 3.2.).   Furthermore, as we have reviewed, the government also emphasised this point for EA (MEXT 2001a).   However, as Niisato (1999) pointed out, various activities such as games were commonly included in the current Course of Study for lower and upper school English classes (see 1.5.), and these activities were likely to serve the purpose of this point.   In this situation, it seemed unclear why the quality 'to be familiar with English and English culture' was necessary for English at elementary school level.

Therefore, in the interview with CA2, I asked him why he thinks teaching this aspect is suitable for elementary school students.

He introduced a school policy in one of the pioneer elementary schools for EIU in Kumamoto city, and pointed out that EA serves to express themselves, rather than just to be familiar with English:

> CA2:   Well, for example, to ask "What colour is this?" is nothing new in Japanese.   How should I put it…But in English, it's new for students to learn how to say it, and next, they try to communicate using that phrase.   I think this is in a way an activity to express themselves rather than just to be familiar with English.   Therefore I thought XXX elementary school is doing well on this point.   They are not just teaching English in EA.   The three subjects, EA, Japanese, and

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homeroom activities are all linked.　The phrase "the ability to exchange thoughts" is a key term at school these days, and this school teaches EA, Japanese, and homeroom activities to develop this ability.　I think English in lower-secondary school focuses on developing four skills, but EA in elementary school is to be 'familiar' with English as we talked, and perhaps to use what they learn as a means to express themselves.

In the end of this interview, he went back to this point, and stated as follows:

CA2:　I think successful experience will develop self-confidence.　Viewed in this light, first, students learn such expressions as "What colour is this?"　Next, they say the phrases and the listeners understand the messages.　These kinds of experiential activities should be an important point of EA.　This is what I wanted to say earlier.　This is a very simple point, isn't it?　A student says a sentence, and another student understands the message.　This might be what "the ability to exchange thoughts" means.　Many people stress EA now, but it could become like ordinary English classes if you see EA as to develop language skills.　Therefore, to put it briefly, an important point could be to relate EA to "the ability to exchange thoughts".

Thus, it seems that CA2 perceived 'to be familiar with English' not as merely to have fun with casual interaction activities such as games, which seemed to be the case with actual practice of English classes at secondary school level in the previous guideline (see 1.5.).　Instead, his viewpoint was to have much experience to interact using English words and phrases as a means to express one's thoughts to other classmates and teachers.

It was also found from his comments that the phrase 'the ability to exchange thoughts' appeared to be widely acknowledged as an important issue to deal with in actual practice in elementary schools.　According to him, this point seemed to be linked with various subjects including EA in some schools.　For example, in the

school he mentioned, EA, Japanese, and homeroom activities seemed to be the measures to develop this point, with all these activities being associated.

In this way, CA2 positioned EA as a part of 'the ability to exchange thoughts', which the government emphasised in the current Course of Study, in a broad framework of elementary school education.

4.4.3. Students' Interactions at School

As we have just introduced in the previous section, CA2, an EIU coordinator at School A, saw EA as a part of 'the ability to exchange thoughts'.   As we have clarified in the literature review chapter, this aspect is in fact one of the revision highlights in the current Course of Study.   Behind this movement was that current school students tend to lack communication skills in their daily life.   The 'zest for life' was therefore introduced in the current guidelines to develop such skills in school education.

In actual practice, were such students' inadequate communication skills acknowledged as a serious issue?   If so, what are some examples?   Two EIU coordinators at school A (CA1 and CA3) offered opinions about these points.   They both agreed that their students' communication at school is sometimes poor, and gave several examples of such episodes.

Episode 1:

Student A: Can we play together after school today?
Student B: I won't.
(Student A ran to CA3 crying.)

Note: All conversations in the episodes were originally in Japanese.   They were translated into English by the author.

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In this conversation, the Student B's answer was misleadingly short, which actually caused the problem.   The Student A thought that the Student B meant he will never play together again, and therefore ran to CA3 crying.   CA3 asked the Student B why he had said it that way, and it turned out that he only meant he couldn't play together because he had something to do with his family after school on that day.

Perhaps Student B was not aware that his short answer led to confusion and misinterpretation, and that he should have explained the reasons for not being able to play together instead.   At the same time, when Student A had become confused, it seems that he could have done something to clarify what the Student B said.   In reality, Student A seems to have interpreted the message only relying on his own understanding.   He might not have thought about asking Student B what he really meant.   In short, as Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991) suggest (see 1.4.), ethnographer's viewpoint seems needed to avoid a trouble of this case.

The next episode is that Student C happened to bump into Student D, and Student D got angry.   CA3 called the two students to talk about their trouble:

Episode 2:

CA3:   Why didn't you (Student C) say sorry to him (Student D)?
Student C: Why?   I didn't do that on purpose!

It seems that Student C meant that it was not his fault because he had not hit Student D on purpose.   Therefore, for Student C, there was no need to apologise. His viewpoint may be logically correct.   However, it seems necessary for him to be aware that he had trouble in this interaction with his classmate, not with a computer. The need for sympathy towards other classmates emerged from this episode.

The third episode showed students who tended to communicate with words, not with sentences at school:

Episode 3:

  Student E: Sweets.
  CA3:   What happened to sweets?

    The participants suggested that the number of elementary school students who do not communicate with proper sentences is increasing. It is a traditional Japanese communication style to express one's thought indirectly, relying on other people to guess the meaning behind the message. However, Student E seems to go too far in this case. It seems necessary to teach students that they are expected to express what they want to say in clear sentences, especially when the topic has nothing to do with sensitive matters.

    Lastly, CA3 mentioned a problem with students' parents in a conversation. When there was a meeting with Student F and her parent, CA3 asked her a question to better understand her feelings:

Episode 4:

  CA3:   How do you feel now?
  Student F: …
  Parent: Well…(the parent starts explaining.)
  CA3:   Excuse me, but I am asking your daughter, not you (the parent).

According to the participants, it seems noticeable these days that there are parents who want to talk for their children when they come to the school. The participants suggested that when they ask questions to a student in a meeting with their parents, the student tends to keep quiet, although they are expected to explain by themselves. Instead, their parents seem to be over-willing to speak for their children. Such parents' excessive nurturing might actually rob their children's opportunities to express

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their thoughts.

4.4.4.   Students' Active Attitude Towards EA in the Classroom

In the questionnaire to EIU coordinators in Kumamoto City, most respondents perceived positive changes in their students after introducing EIU.   However, their comments tended to be broad impressions without specific examples (see 3.2.). Therefore, the interviewer asked for more detail on this point.

Firstly, in the interview with CA2, this study asked if he had noticed any changes in students in his school.   Although he stated that he had perceived no significant development, he mentioned one of his colleague's comments.   To sum up the colleague's statement, at first, his students seemed surprised and embarrassed to interact with an ALT.   However, it seemed that they had eventually got used to communication, and came to talk about various things in a relaxed way in the end. Thus, the colleague's comment also remained as a broad impression.

CA2 also stated that EA has the potential to change students' attitude in a positive way:

> CA2:   For example, a student who has always been very quiet and thus often goes unheard in the group has a chance to start learning new things (i.e. EA) on an equal footing with other classmates.   In this way, EA can serve to increase a students' willingness to learn.   This point came to my mind when I was getting organized for EA some time ago, and considered that it might be an advantage of EA.   For instance, students tend to be in high spirits when they learn English. In such a situation, there are some students who begin using gestures and so on.   In this way, I think there is the potential (in EA) to change students' attitudes.

In the interview above, CA2 showed two advantages of EA over other classes

to lead to positive changes in students.   The first point is that as everyone starts learning EA from zero at school, more students are motivated to learn in EA.   In fact, during the research, there were also other teachers who referred to this point as an advantage of EA.   To sum up all these opinions, the background to this can be explained as follows: Students take EA from Year 3, and by this grade, they tend to have already developed likes and dislikes about subjects.   In each subject, it seems that students are quite aware of their rank in the class.   In this situation, it may be hard for teachers to motivate students who are not confident about the target subject.

In EA class, on the other hand, it is likely that learning English is new to most students.   Therefore, the class, especially in Year 3, the first year of learning EA, may stimulate many students even if they have a complex about other subjects.

As to the second point, he suggested that students in general tend to be more willing to learn in EA compared to other classes.   In EA, ALTs teach the class instead of HRTs, and the central part of the class tends to be activities with interaction.   Such an unusual atmosphere might help to encourage students to learn in EA actively.

Viewed from the opposite side, however, the second point implies that students' usual classes that HRTs teach might lack various measures to stimulate students' active attitude for learning.   As we have reviewed, MEXT (2004f) reported that HRTs recognised the importance of interaction in the classroom after seeing EA that ALTs taught.   As in the case MEXT described, the introduction of EA in the case study schools might inspire the HRTs to review their teaching, too.

4.4.5.   Students' Active Attitude Towards EA at the Library

Secondly, one respondent in the questionnaire commented that the number of students who borrowed books about foreign countries increased (R21).   Is this also the case with school A and B?   This study then asked librarians in both schools to

give opinions on this point.

The librarian at school A said that she has no idea about changes in students after introducing EA. There seemed to be several reasons for this. Firstly, it was not possible in this school to take out books about foreign countries. In addition, most books in this library seemed very old, and the room was very dark. In this condition, it was unlikely that many students borrow books from this library regardless of whether or not the topic is about foreign countries.

The atmosphere of the library at school B was very different from the one of school A. The inside of the room was bright thanks to a lot of wide windows, and it was far more spacious. However, the librarian at school B (LB1) also stated that she can see no significant link between introduction of EA and the number of students who borrowed books related to EA. She described the students' attitude in the library as follows:

LB1: I've never seen students who are working actively on EIU. Students come here in a hurry saying like they need to find information for 'this' class.

Yohei: You mean they are not working by themselves.

LB1: Not working by themselves! I've never seen a student who is working by themselves. And they've never come to me to ask like, "Could you tell me what this country is like?". They don't work by themselves, nor ask things by themselves. For example, when a place appeared in a novel, they won't have an active attitude to start working by themselves. The way they work is like firstly, their HRT says, "Let's begin searching". Then they start working. What they ask is, for example, "Is there a book which contains various countries?". I then ask, "What do you mean?". Or, they just want to select a country where they can find lots of information in the library.

Yohei: I see.

LB1: They just can't be bothered.

Thus, it seems that students' inactive attitude which LB1 explained is very similar to what the Central Council for Education (2007) points out (see 1.2.). That they only start working when they are told to do so implies that this might be the way the school taught students. To develop an active attitude, it would be also necessary for teachers to teach in a way to let students work actively.

4.4.6. Advantages of HRTs Conducting EA

In the interview with CA3, she referred to the responsibility for teaching EA. She stated that EA may work better if HRTs teach the class. She pointed out that the advantage of HRTs is that they know each student well. She stated that they will be able to ask the right kind of questions according to students' background such as experience and knowledge. Therefore, she suggested that the class would go more smoothly.

That is to say HRTs might be able to lead the class better according each student's character. For example, when students work in pairs, it will be possible for HRTs to realise that a certain student who takes good care of classmates might be able to work well with, for instance, a very introverted student.

As we have seen, the point CA3 suggested was emphasised later in the next Course of Study, which was partially introduced from 2009. It clearly states that the role of HRTs is vital in EA because they have a deep understanding about each student (see 1.5.). Thus, the opinion from CA3 and the statement by the government suggest that it is likely that there would likely be some problems in classroom interactions in EA with ALTs who are dispatched from other schools.

4.4.7. Conclusion

In this section, we have examined the target schools teachers' viewpoints on EA and current students.   The following points were focused: (1) the response to 'to be familiar with English and English culture in EA', (2) students' communication skills at school, (3) students' attitude towards learning at school, and (4) advantages of HRTs to lead EA.

Firstly, CA2 offered a viewpoint to position EA as a part of 'the ability to exchange thoughts' in a broad framework of elementary school education.   When this interview was conducted, I had no knowledge about this term.   I thought that this would be a special phrase used only in the school he introduced, but it turned out later that it was actually a very common phrase in Japanese elementary school education, especially in light of mother language education (Japanese).

He reminded that it might be a stranger's viewpoint to try to focus on EA within the framework of EA.   As he explained, EA is actually one element among various subjects and activities taught in elementary school education.   In addition, such subjects and activities are interrelated to other subjects, and also to the government's educational policies.   Therefore, we can say that you can only understand the actual role of EA if you examine various factors interrelated to the class. Thus, his perspective was beyond my expectation, and actually widened my viewpoint towards EA in this research.

Secondly, the episodes that CA1 and CA3 introduced suggest that students' inadequate communication skills seemed acknowledged as a serious issue in their school as the government does.   The issues emerged in the interview suggested that students tended to lack: sympathy towards other classmates, skills to clarify the messages, and skills to speak in sentences.   Parents' excessive nurturing also seemed to cause negative effects on students' communication skills.   To sum up, we can say

that students seem to lack the following qualities:

    a. The ability to cope with people who have a different set of values and meanings
    b. The ability to care about other people
    c. The ability to express one's thoughts clearly

It is notable that these are the abilities that EIU emphasises (see 1.4., 1.5.). That is, the abilities needed for communication in English are likely to be applicable for elementary school students' communication in their daily life.

Thirdly, in the interview with LB1, she described students' attitude towards learning at school. It was found that she perceived no significant link between the introduction of EA and students' attitude towards their study in the library. In addition, her comments suggest that students were likely to be passive regardless of subject. We can say that her viewpoint on students' passive attitude for learning at her school fits the government's description on current students' inactive attitude towards their study (see 1.2.).

Her description that students tend to start working after they receive instructions from their HRT suggests that the way HRTs' teach may also enhance students' inactive attitude. CA2's comment that students in general tend to be more willing to learn in EA compared to other classes also implies that their regular classes with the HRT might not be taught to motivate their students. If HRTs teach their classes without considering various measures to stimulate their students, it seems difficult for students in a sense to develop active attitude towards learning in general.

Fourthly, although students seemed to be motivated in ALT's classes, the importance of HRTs in EA also appeared to be acknowledged. CA3 suggested in the interview that HRTs may work better than HRTs to teach EA. She stated that because

HRTs know each student well, they can adjust the contents to fit their students.   That is, she suggests that when ALTs teach EA, the limitations as a leader should be taken into account.

To sum up the issues emerged in this section, we can say that EA can serve as an education to teach communication in a broad sense.   That is, it seems possible to see EA as education to focus on basic communication skills for smooth interaction, applicable regardless of language.   This viewpoint reflects the current students' reality, the fact that they tend to have inadequate communication skills in their daily life.   In addition, it also corresponds to the aim of EA, to develop an active attitude to communicate through interaction (see 1.5.).

4.5.   Students' Perceptions of EA

4.5.1. Introduction

This section focuses on students' perceptions of EA.   Interviews and questionnaires to the target school students were undertaken to clarify the following two points:

1.   Is students' learning in EA proceeding in the classroom in light of the three aims of learning in EA; an active attitude to communicate, self-confidence, and understanding about languages and cultures (see Chapter 1 and 3)?

2.   What factors exist that facilitate or inhibit students' learning of EA?

The following aspects were examined to illuminate these two points:

- Positive and negative perceptions of EA
- Understanding of languages and cultures in EA
- Reasons to learn English after school
- Reasons why some students may feel a sense of inadequacy in EA

Although data in the figures in this section were shown quantitatively, the main point here was to present various examples of the students' learning rather than to focus on numbers by statistical analysis.

4.5.2. The Questionnaire on Students' Positive and Negative Perceptions of EA

A questionnaire was prepared to understand students' negative and positive perceptions of EA.   It was carried out on a day when they had an EA class in February 2007 at school A, and in January 2007 at school B.   Students' HRTs were asked to conduct the questionnaire after EA was taught.   The questionnaire asked which points made them feel satisfied and unsatisfied about the lesson held that day (see Appendix 17 and 18).

Table 13 Summary of the Questionnaire on Students' Positive and Negative Perceptions of EA

Points to be clarified:	● Students' progress in EA ● Factors that facilitate or inhibit students' learning of EA
Method:	Questionnaire
Respondents:	● School A: Students in Year 3 (65 students in 2 classes) Age: 8-9 ● School B: Students in Year 4 (98 students in 3 classes) Age: 9-10
Date:	School A: 2 January 2007 School B: 23 January 2007

4.5.3. Satisfying Points in a Lesson of EA in School A

The following is an example of the contents of the lesson on that day:

Table 14　Contents of the EA Lesson on 2 January 2007 at School A

Date:　　　Friday 2 January 2007
Period:　　2nd period (9.45-10.30)
Class:　　　Class 2, 3rd grade
Instructor: ALT (Male) from the United States

Time	activity	
09.45	Greetings	
	Self-introduction about himself and his hometown in Texas	Introduction of his family, hobbies, favourite food, hometown, and countries he travelled.
10.05	Introduction of new phrases	How are you?　I'm fine, thank you. I'm cold/ hot/ happy/ fine/ sad/ tired/ hungry..
10.10	Game activity 1	Card game using practiced phrases
10.20	Game activity 2	Game using practiced phrases
10.30	Greetings	

Students' answers on satisfying points in the lesson were classified into the seven categories (see Figure 16).　Many students referred to game activities (item a and f). Item a (the enjoyment of the games) was the most common category:

- The game about greetings was exciting, and interesting. (SA10)
- Games were interesting, and they remain in my heart. (SA11)
- What I enjoyed was the games.　We played with a rugby ball and a basketball.　It was very interesting. (SA21)
- What I was pleased about was that I enjoyed the class!　He arranged English games for us. (SA41)

Some students seemed to be satisfied with the result of the games (item f):

- I was happy because I was the person who got the most cards in the card game. (SA35)
- I was happy to get five cards in the card game. (SA59)

- What I was pleased about is that I became a champion in the card game. (SA 62)

Figure 16　What Made you Feel Satisfied in EA Today? (School A)
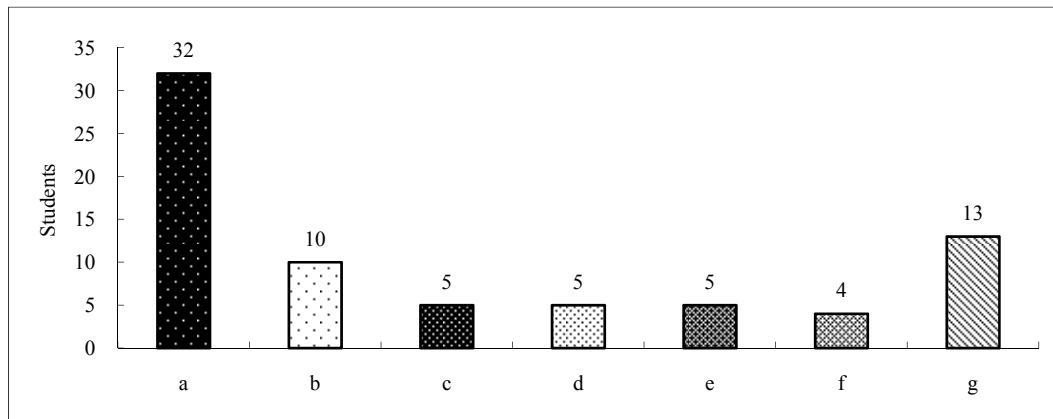
N = 65 (2 classes)

    a. enjoyed the games
    b. got to know English words and culture
    c. had physical contact with ALT
    d. ALT knew Japanese and Japanese culture well
    e. spoke English in front of the classmates
    f. satisfied with the result of the games (e.g., We won the game, I could get many cards, etc.)
    g. other

The second most common answers were about languages and cultures, which the government emphasises to focus on in EA (e.g., MEXT 2001b, MEXT 2008c, see 1.6.).　It seemed pleasant for some students to have learned new English words and culture (item b), and to have noticed the ALT's rich knowledge of Japanese and Japanese culture (item d):

Item b:
- I want to thank to him for teaching new words for us.　Before meeting him, I thought I knew many English words because I learn English outside school,

but I found I didn't.   (SA12)
- I learned a lot about Texas, and really enjoyed the class. (SA28)
- I was happy that I was able to catch English words such as 'puppy'. (SA37)

Item d:

- He was kind to talk to us in Kumamoto dialect cheerfully.   People won't believe that he is a foreigner.   (SA12)
- He knew about Japan very well. (SA8)
- He was from a different country, but he was good at writing Katakana (= Japanese phonetic characters) and Chinese characters. (SA15)

In addition, physical contact with the ALT (item c), and to have spoken English in front of the classmates (item e) were also pointed out:

Item c:

- I was happy to be able to shake hands with him.   (SA2, SA7)
- I was happy to touch him. (SA31, SA32, SA33)

Item e:

- I got a chance to say my answers when we did the game to pass balls.   It was fun.   (SA5, SA18, SA23, SA52)

Thus, an active attitude to communicate, and the main point to develop in EA (see 1.5., 1.6.), appeared in the students' answers classified as item c and e.   For students aged nine to ten, comments in item c suggest that physical contact was likely to serve as an important role in their communication.   These students seemed satisfied to be able to communicate with the ALT in such a way.

Students' comments in item e also show their willingness to communicate.   In addition, it seemed to be a pleasure for these students to say their answers in front of

the classmates.   Through such experience, their self-confidence was also likely to be developed.   As we have outlined in the literature review chapters, the importance of developing self-confidence has been frequently pointed out in the Japanese education system (municipal school education, EIU, and English language teaching. see 1.2., 1.4. and 1.6).

As to the answers classified as item g (other), satisfaction with the ALT and his teaching tended to be referred to:

- I was happy to meet him.   (SA8)
- We played games, but they gradually became more study-like.   This was a pleasure for me.   I learned a lot through them. (SA9)
- We had a very good time although we only had a short time. (SA13, SA30, SA31, SA41)
- He was very funny, gentle, and interesting. (SA15)
- I was happy that everything I did in the lesson went perfectly. (SA46)
- I was pleased that he kindly taught us a foreign language. (SA64)

Thus, it seems that students in school A found various elements to make them feel satisfied in the lesson.   It is notable that such positive perceptions covered each aim of EA.   That is, we can say that students' progress in EA was confirmed.

4.5.4. Unsatisfying Points in a Lesson of EA in School A

Students' answers on less satisfying points in the lesson were classified into the three categories (see Figure 17).   Figure 17 suggests that not many students seemed to feel unsatisfied in the lesson.   The most popular answer was the lack of opportunities to speak (item a).   The followings were some examples:

- I had just one turn to speak in front of my classmates. (SA8)
- It was a pity that I could not ask questions to the teacher.   I want to do it

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when another ALT comes next time. (SA26)

- I wanted to receive a ball to say my name (in a game), but I couldn't. (SA28)
- I really felt frustrated when I asked a question to him, as he didn't notice me. (SA53)

Thus, their answers suggest that they had willingness to communicate, but they did not have enough opportunity to talk in front of the classmates or to talk to the ALT.

Figure 17 What Made you Feel Unsatisfied in Today's EA? (School A)
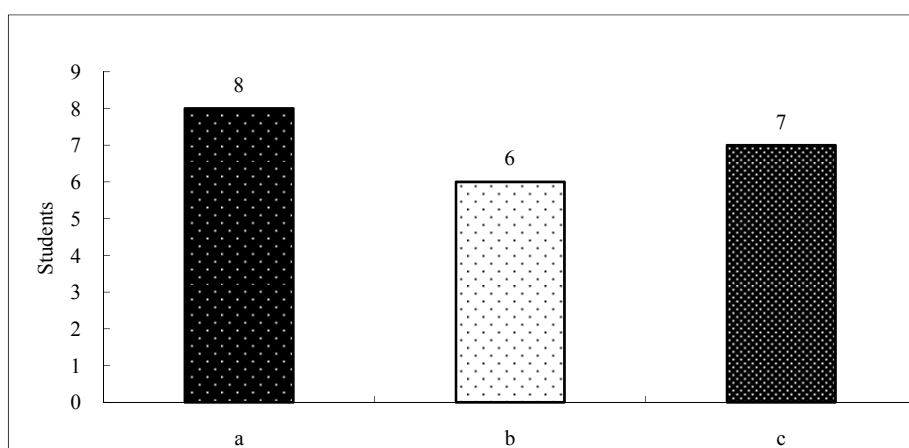
N = 65

   a. did not have many chances to speak
   b. did not have enough time to enjoy the content
   c. other

For some students, it seemed a pity that they did not have enough time to enjoy the contents (item b):

- We could only do the greeting game for a short time at the end of the class. (SA6, SA16)
- It was a pity that the class ended quickly. (SA13, SA33, SA44)

- It was a pity that we only had a short time for today's lesson.   I wanted to have more time to enjoy the contents. (SA14)

We can say that students were mainly unsatisfied because they did not have enough time to interact or enjoy the contents.   It could have been better if the instructor introduced one game activity to give more opportunities for students to speak and to enjoy the content.

Some examples of the answers classified as item c (other) are as follows:

- It was a pity that I couldn't touch him. (SA23)
- I felt frustrated about not being able to win the card game. (SA54, SA55)
- In the card game, I was not able to get a card at all at first.   I really got nothing at first. (SA60)

Thus, the result of the games tended to be referred to.

4.5.5.   Satisfying Points in a Lesson of EA in School B

An example of the contents of the class on that day appears in Table 15.   It seems that students' positive perceptions of the lesson were mainly about the game activities (see Figure 18, item a, b, c).   The following comments are some examples:

Item a:
- I was happy to get three cards in the card game. (SB1)
- We won first place in the typhoon game. (SB5)

Item b:
- I was pleased to play the card game.   (SB18)
- I enjoyed the class because we did various games. (SB44)

Item c:

- I got five cards in the card game and got a gift, so I was pleased. (SB2)
- I was happy because I got many cards in the card game, and was given a sticker. (SB31)

Table 15   Contents of the EA Lesson on 23 January 2007 at School B

Date: Tuesday 23 January 2007
Period: 4th period (11.45-12.30)
Class: Class 1, 4th grade
Instructor: ALT (Male) from Canada

Time	activity	
11.45	Greetings	
	Introduction of new words	Words about stationery
12.00	A game activity	Card game using words about stationery
	Introduction of new words	Words about vegetables
12.15	A game activity	Card game using words about vegetables
12.20	Introduction of new words	Words about foods
12.25	A game activity	Game using words about foods (the typhoon game)
12.35	Greetings	

An advantage of game activities is that English could be used not as a purpose but a means to accomplish a mission.   Students' comments on item a, b, and c suggest that they were likely to undertake communication activities more naturally in this sense.

In addition, positive impressions of the ELT were also referred to (item d):

Item d:

- English is easy to remember in this class, as the teacher teaches us through card games and other games. (SB12)
- I like the teacher because he introduces interesting games and activities, and tells interesting stories simply.   He cares about us, and does all kinds of things for the class. (SB22)

Figure 18   What Made you Feel Satisfied in EA today? (School B)
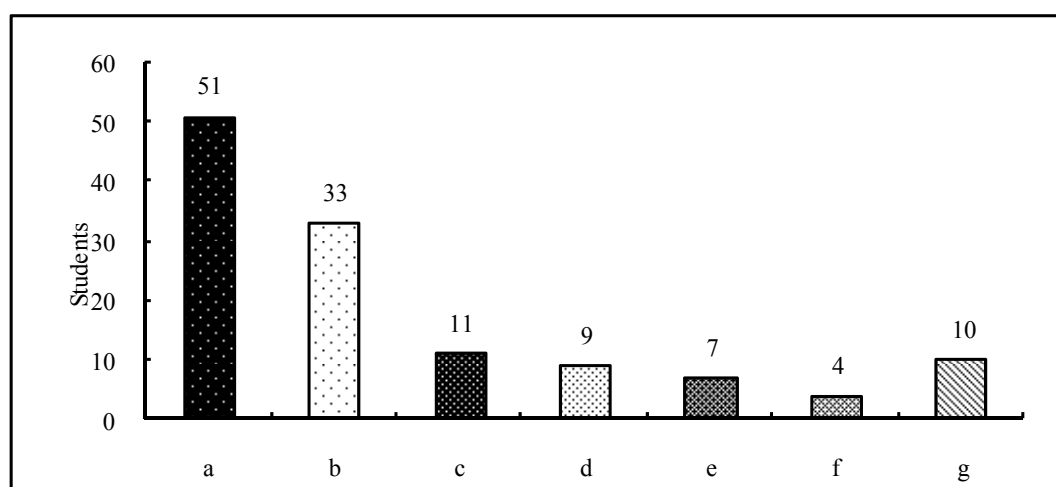
N = 98

a. satisfied with the result of the games (e.g., We won the game, I could get many cards, etc.)
b. enjoyed the games
c. got a sticker as a prize
d. had a good impression of the ALT
e. got to know new English words
f. was able to understand English
g. other

A few students referred to what they learned about English, the aims of the lesson (item d, e):

Item d:

- He taught how to say fruits and vegetables in English. Among them, I was especially happy to know 'pear' in English. (SB3)
- The teacher taught us how to say the names of fruits, stationery, etc. in English. (SB49)
- It was interesting to remember English sentences like "We like XXX!". (SB88)

Item e:

- I could understand some English (SB18)
- I was able to catch the words like 'apples' and 'bananas'. (SB29)

As to the answers classified as item g (other), various comments appeared.

Some students expressed that they were happy to have interaction with classmates:

- It was fun to play those games with everyone. (SB8)
- I was pleased that my classmate XXX often asked me in the games, "What action shall we take next?" (SB78)

Other students' comments in this category were as follows:

- It was fun to play the games with everyone. (SB8)
- I was especially pleased to have time to learn English. It's cool to speak English fluently, so I hope to be able to speak smoothly soon. (SB28)
- Today's lesson was very interesting. (SB40, SB41, SB66, SB67)
- Before having today's lesson, I didn't like English words about fruits, vegetables, and stationery, so I didn't know them well. My mother then sometimes suggested me learning English. I began to like English a little after today's lesson.
- I was pleased that I could say so many English words today. (SB95)

4.5.6. Unsatisfying Points in a Lesson of EA in School B

Figure 19   What Made you Feel Unsatisfied in EA today? (School B)
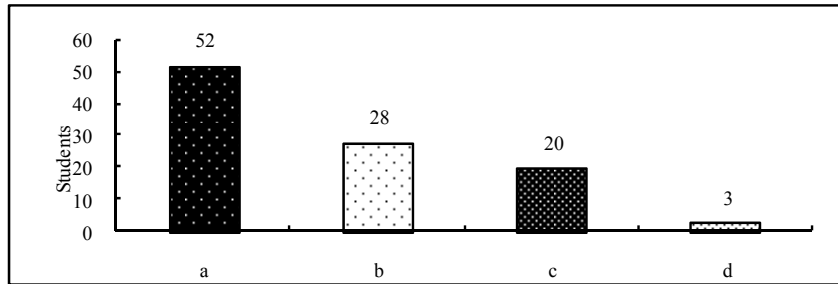
N = 98

a. lost in the games
b. was not able to get a sticker as a prize
c. was not able to understand English
d. other

Students' negative perceptions also tended to be about the result of the games. Many students seemed to be disappointed that they lost in the games (item a).   There were also students who were disappointed because they could not have a sticker as a prize from the ALT (item b):

Item a:
- I was not able to get many cards in the card game! (SB11)
- I felt frustrated because we lost in the typhoon game. (SB24)

Item b:
- I took five cards in the card game, but only people who got more than seven were given a sticker.   It was a pity that I couldn't get a sticker. (SB44)

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- It was a pity that I couldn't get a sticker, as there were classmates who got more cards than I got. (SB62)

In the analysis of the answers classified as item b, it appeared that students in one class tended to be disappointed at not being able to have a sticker (19 answers classified as item b out of 28 were from the students in one class).　It was found that in this class, the HRT had a policy not to give stickers in her classes, and this could be one reason why students were primarily interested in having stickers.

Difficulties to understand English were also referred to (item c):

- I couldn't understand English when we did the typhoon game.　All I understood was how many points we got.　(SB36)
- I don't understand English very much, so I took the wrong cards and did other mistakes in the card game. (SB48)
- To be honest, English is difficult for me to understand.　The reason is that even if I thought I understand, the correct answer is often slightly different from what I thought. (SB66)

The following students seemed to face trouble with remembering new words:

- I felt it's hard to remember new words, so I want to have EA more frequently. (SB9)
- It's difficult to remember various words in class.　I can't remember them if we don't have EA every day. (SB30)
- English is difficult to remember.　I want to remember English as much as possible. (SB61)

Observing this class, the difficulty to remember new words seems understandable.　In the lesson, three different types of new words were introduced in 45 minutes (words about stationery, vegetables, and foods).　First, they practice these words, and then try to remember as many words as possible to play the games.　Finally,

winners in each game will get a sticker.   It seemed that this ALT tended to teach content in this way every month.

Students' comments suggested that there seemed to be several issues in this way of teaching.   Firstly, it was likely that students who learned English outside school normally win the games and get a sticker:

- There were classmates who were not able to take the cards in the games, as they were taken by other classmates who take private English lessons after school.   I felt sorry seeing this situation.   (SB12)
- In the card game about stationery, I got seven cards.   I was given a goldfish -shaped twinkling sticker.   I learn English outside school, so I thought it's natural to get a sticker.   I was very pleased to get a sticker.   In my group, there were some classmates who got about three cards.   I thought they did a good job. (SB54)
- I study English outside school, so I was pleased to be able to get seven cards.   I was even given a sticker.   I was very happy about it. (SB63)

In this situation, some students appeared to be frustrated in the games:

- I don't understand English well.   Some classmates in my group learn English outside school, and they easily took the cards one after another.   I thought this was terrible. (SB39)
- I couldn't get a single sticker.   In my group, some classmates learn English after school, and I could get almost no cards. (SB47, SB52)

Secondly, rewards for winners in a game could give a false impression to students that the aim of EA is to be given a sticker.   With this perspective, students might become only keen on the result of the games, and might not eagerly pay attention to language and culture, although these are what they are expected to develop in EA. Actually, as we have seen, only a few students in the questionnaire in this school commented on English language.   In addition, there were a few students who might already have developed inappropriate viewpoints towards learning in EA:

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- I don't like EA very much, so I was not able to get many cards.   I wanted to have a sticker, though.   I then try to study English hard to get a sticker. (SB42, SB53)

It appears that SB42 and SB53 seem to have a twisted goal towards the class.   Their goal in EA was not likely to develop skills to learn English, but to obtain a sticker.

As to the answers classified as item d (other), one student suggests that some assistance might be needed for students:

- There was one point I was not very happy about.   It could have been better if he could help me in Japanese, as I don't understand English. (SB21)

Other comments in this category were as follows:

- It was bit of a pity that I couldn't speak English well. (SB37)
- XXX, my regular group member, took part in another team today, and he looked pleased about it.   This was bad. (SB94)

4.5.7.   Other comments on a Lesson of EA in School B

In school B, twelve students gave extra comments.   An active attitude to study English was mainly referred to (n=7):

- What I felt today was that I want to continue learning English a lot. (SB28)
- I hope my English becomes good, and want to go abroad. (SB34)
- I come to think that I want to learn English outside school someday. (SB65)
- I want to keep interest in English, and want to enjoy studying it. (SB80)

4.5.8.   Cultural Understanding on Differences and Similarities Between Japan and the US

In school A, a different ALT came to teach EA every time.   For this reason,

ALTs tended to introduce cultural aspects such as their home country in the first ten to fifteen minutes.   Therefore, when the questionnaire on students' negative and positive perceptions of EA was conducted in this school in February 2007, it also asked about their perceptions of such aspects.   The question was as follows:

Question:
Please let me know any aspects you found in today's EA that were different from Japan or similar to Japan.

As the ALT on this day introduced various elements which were very different from Japan, it seemed that students were able to notice such differences easily.

4.5.9. Cultural Understanding on Similarities Between Japan and the US

Nineteen students out of 65 found similar points to Japan.   Their answers were classified into the two categories: similarities in (1) commercial products and people's lifestyle, and (2) the respective ALT's behaviour.

In the first category, there were students who wrote about a chain hamburger shop.   The ALT introduced several hamburger shop chains in his home country, and one of them was the MacDonald's, which is also a common chain shop in Japan:

- What I was surprised was that there are the same hamburger shops. (SA12, SA40, SA41, SA61, SA62)

Some other students referred to the games they played on that day:

- The games we did together were the same as Japanese ones. (SA40, SA42, SA43, SA63)

There were also some students who found similarities in lifestyles:

- A similar point is that we also have football and baseball in Japan. (SA34)
- We both have hamburgers, basketball, and can see night views at Christmas time. (SA41)

As to the second category, students found similarities in the ALT's behaviour. Firstly, the ALT spoke very fluent Japanese with slightly strong Kansai dialect, the direct spoken around Osaka area.　Therefore, in their logic, it seemed that this characteristic had a sense of familiarity for them.

- He speaks Kansai dialect, and he speaks very fluent Japanese. (SA1, SA10, SA45, SA47, SA50, SA55, SA59)

Some students noticed that he has similar daily habits to them:

- He has pets like us, speaks Japanese, eat Japanese delicious food, enjoy sports, etc.　I thought he is like Japanese. (SA1)
- What is similar to Japan is that he is friendly, funny, and is a fluent Japanese speaker. (SA10)
- Both the ALT and I like playing sports.　Coincidently, I like basketball very much. (SA11)

One student thought that his appearance is similar to Japanese:

- As his face looks like Japanese, at first I thought he was Japanese.　I was surprised to learn he wasn't. (SA53)

There was one student who noticed that both he and the students met halfway for a better communication:

- He does not understand Japanese well, and we do not understand English well.   Then we tried to communicate in English if we knew the words. We had a good time. (SA2)

It seems that SA2 had already developed sympathy towards other people.   To borrow Machi (1998), SA2's attitude is actually an example of "communication needs collaboration" (p. 65) (see 1.5.).   As the failure of communication was not just one-sided, but on both sides, she was likely to take responsibility and cooperate for creating a better relationship.   She implies that the ALT also tried to cooperate as she did, and therefore, both sides seemed similar for her.

4.5.10. Cultural Understanding on Differences Between Japan and the US

Most students found different points from Japan (n=55 out of 65).   Their answers were classified into the two categories: (1) information-oriented differences such as the weather and people's lifestyles, and (2) differences in the ALT such as his appearance and behaviours.

In the first category, students tended to comment on the weather, the size of their hometown, and food:

The Weather (n=12):
- Unlike Kumamoto, it's warmer in Texas, and it doesn't snow much. (SA6)
- I learned that Kumamoto is colder. (SA12)
- A difference is that the last time he saw snow there was when he was three years old.   This is different from Japan. (SA22)

The size of his hometown or his home country (n=19)
- I didn't know that Texas is bigger than Japan. (SA49)
- Unlike Japan, the US is much wider.   This was a surprise. (SA36)

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Food (n=6):
- I felt that foods are different between Japan and his country. (SA3)
- He said that meat from the breast of a cow and a pig are delicious, which was a surprise. (SA16)

As to the second category, students tended to comment on the differences in his way of talking and his pronunciation:

His way of talking (n=7)
- The way he spoke was a bit different from Japanese.   It was a very American style. (SA14)

His pronunciation (n=3)
- A difference from Japan is pronunciation, as they speak English. (SA17)
- A difference from Japan was his pronunciation.   This was interesting for me. (SA45)

In addition, one student pointed out his deep knowledge of the US, and another one commented on his fluent English: They seemed to view the ALT as a person, rather than distinctly as an American:

- He knows well about the states of the US.   He has a lot of knowledge about each state in the US, and where they had wars in his country. (SA1)
- A difference was that he could speak English fluently.   He was more cheerful and funny than Japanese. (SA10)

Considering their age (9-10 years old), they might not have a clear concept of nationality yet.

4.5.11. Students who Learn English After School and who Have feelings of Inadequacy in EA: Introduction

The interview on students' negative and positive perceptions of EA in January and February 2007 revealed the presence of students who studied English outside of school.   It also showed that there were a number of students who felt that they were weak in EA at school.   What are the reasons for studying English after school?   Why do some students feel that they lack ability in EA?   To clarify factors which facilitate or inhibit students' English learning, an interview was conducted in school A and B.

At the end of March 2007, the teacher at school B who assisted me in conducting this case study had retired, and the headteacher also had also moved to another school.   Due to these changes, it became necessary to reduce the scale of the remaining research at school B.   In this situation, there were difficulties in arranging enough time for conducting this interview at school B, and the data obtained was insufficient.

Therefore, this section will exclusively focus on the results of school A.   One of the classes was selected to conduct the interview (see Table 14 for Summary of the interview).

In the middle of the research, I was offered a position at a university in another prefecture.   For this reason, it took more than one year to resume the case study. Time went by, and the Year 3 students at school A in 2007 were to finish Year 5 when the follow-up interview was conducted.

Prior to the interview, I visited the class in the lunchtime break to explain the nature of the interview.   I felt sorry about taking up their time during a lunch break, but the students welcomed me saying they were "We'd be absolutely delighted to!" after listening to my explanation.

Table 16 Summary of the Interview on the Reasons for Learning English After School and Feelings of Inadequacy in EA

Points to be clarified:	● Factors that facilitate or inhibit students' English learning
Method:	Interview
Respondents:	● School A: Students in Class 2, Year 5 (36 students) Age: 10-11
Period	Lunch break (12.50-14.00)
Date:	School A: Monday 16 March 2009

The interview was conducted in a classroom for teaching Japanese as a second language. Students who felt weak in English, and who were/ had been learning English were asked to come to the classroom after lunchtime.

4.5.12. Reasons for Learning English After School

It was found that almost half of the students in this class (n=16) had experienced some kind of English learning outside of school.   In short, they tended to learn English because their family or their friends had encouraged them to do it, rather than because they wanted to learn English themselves (see Appendix 21 for the summary).

It was found that they were mostly influenced by factors related to society and their home environment.   Firstly, the majority of students seemed to be influenced by their family members or friends to start learning English outside of school (n=10).

Factors related to their friends and family members:
● My family member(s) suggested learning English (SA6, SA65, SA51, SA80, SA44).
● My friend(s) suggested learning English (SA35, SA11).
● I learn English at an English school because my elder sister was studying

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there (SA64).
- My mother was in the US before, so I was familiar with English since childhood (SA31).
- My elder brother and sister were learning English, and they seemed to be enjoying it (SA82).

It was also found that some students had practical reasons to study English:

Factors related to preparation to go to a private lower secondary school:
- I learned English when I went to Open Campus in a private lower secondary school for prospective students. (SA35, SA61)
- I learn English because I want to go to a private lower-secondary school. (SA46)

These students learned English outside of school to prepare for going to a private lower secondary school.   This may be a viewpoint only of students in higher grades.   Two of them (SA35 and SA61) went to the target school on an open campus day, and took an introductory English session.   SA61 said they learned about Halloween, as the open campus was held around that time.   The other student (SA46) went to three different cram schools.   In these schools, he was taking four subjects (maths, social studies, science, and Japanese) to prepare for private lower secondary school entrance examinations.   Furthermore, he was also learning English in each cram school to be able to keep up with English classes in lower secondary school in the future.

There were some other students who were learning English because they already saw a link between English and their future:

Factors related to students' active attitude to study English
- English would be useful in the future (SA15, SA6, and SA81).
- I like English, and I want to talk in English (SA64).
- English would be useful when I go abroad in the future (SA34).

- I want to go to a private lower-secondary school (SA46).

These students began learning English by themselves (SA64 was also influenced by his parents.).

4.5.13. The Contents of English Learning After School

How do/did they learn English outside school?   As shown in Appendix 21, most of them learned English in cram schools (n=12).   For SA31 and SA48, the main purpose at a cram school was to study Japanese and maths.   They took English lessons because these lessons were free of charge.

SA15, SA34, and SA11 went to a family-run English school.   Students and CA1 explained that the school teaches English based on phonics focusing on the relationship between sounds and spelling.   The school is in their school community, and seemed well known among local people.

The school SA64 and SA6 attended is also a well known chain English school, and there are branches all over the nation.   It stresses practical communication skills. SA81, SA80, and SA46 were learning English at a well known nationwide school where an individualized learning is stressed.   SA51 had taken an introductory English course during a summer vacation at cram school.   SA44 was studying English at school on a one-on-one basis.

SA65, SA31, and SA82 were learning English at home.   SA65 explained that he had bought some textbooks to practice words.   He was also studying English pronunciation with a pc.   SA31's mother was in the US previously, and therefore she had taught her English since childhood.   She also said that she had practiced English songs, words, and conversation using CDs.   SA82 was watching self-study videos in English.

4.5.14. Reasons for feelings of inadequacy in EA

Seven students out of 36 stated that they felt weak in English, which was far more than I expected.　Their answers were as follows:

- I don't like pronunciation.　I don't like reading English words. (SA74)

- I don't like English, because I easily forget what I learn.　I can't read what ALTs write. (SA27)

- I don't like writing the alphabet.　Speaking is OK. (SA41)

- I don't like English these days.　I like typing English with a computer, but I don't like speaking it.　I feel embarrassed. (SA51)

- Pronunciation is difficult after Year 4.　I easily forget how to say things. (SA62)

- Pronunciation is difficult. (SA83)

- I don't like speaking, remembering, or writing. (SA30)

SA51's viewpoint may be related to his age (11 years old), as students tend to become quieter as the school year goes up.　Other comments about feeling weak in English seem to be related to remembering.　As we shall show in the next section, these students' negative perspectives were likely to be related to the ALT's inadequate understanding about his students.

4.5.15. Conclusion

So far we have examined students' perceptions of EA in the target schools. Interviews and questionnaires were carried out to clarify (1) students' progress in EA, and (2) factors which facilitate or inhibit students' learning.

Firstly, students' comments in school A suggest that they tended to have a willingness to interact with the ALT and their classmates.   However, such opportunities were limited in the lesson because different activities were introduced one after another in just 45 minutes.   A possible solution to this problem could be to reduce the number of activities in one lesson to let students have more chances to communicate.

Secondly, it was also found that students appeared to have negative perceptions towards EA when they had to remember various types of new words.   It seems necessary for instructors who teach EA that the main point of this class is not to remember new words, but to interact with their classmates and teachers.

Thirdly, the use of rewards in the class could give a false impression to students that the aim of EA is to earn stickers.   With this perspective, students appeared to be only keen on the result of the games, and did not eagerly pay attention to language and culture, although these are what they are expected to develop through EA.

Fourthly, students' perceptions of similarities and differences suggested that they tended to focus on information-oriented aspects such as food and the weather.   It should be noted, however, that there was one student who was likely to have developed sympathy towards other people.   For her, both she and the ALT offered collaboration for better communication.   It seems to be a good practice to share such a discovery in the classroom.   For example, it might be possible for her HRT to teach her finding in another class, as the time for EA is limited.

Finally, most students who learned English outside school tended to have passive reasons to have started their English study.   It appeared that they started learning English simply because their family or their friends had recommended they do so, rather than because they had become interested in English in EA at school.

4.6. EA in Actual Practice

4.6.1. Introduction

This section focuses on EA in actual practice.   Interviews with students and teachers, questionnaires to students, and observations in the target schools were utilized to clarify the following two points:

1. How far does EA in actual practice go in meeting the aims of EA: development of an active attitude to communicate, self-confidence, and understanding about languages and cultures. (see Chapter 1 and 3)

2. What factors exist that facilitate or inhibit students' learning of EA?

The following aspects were examined to illuminate these two points about students:

- Students' reactions to EA in EA classes
- Students' reactions to EA outside of their EA classes

4.6.2. Reactions to EA After Class: Introduction

Do students practice English with someone after they had an EA lesson?   To ascertain students' interactions after they had EA, another questionnaire was conducted in the case study schools.   The questionnaire asked if they had talked about EA with their family, friends, and/or other people after they had an EA lesson (see Appendix 19 and 20).   They were also asked to explain who they talked to, and what they talked about.   I asked the target classroom HRTs in both schools to carry out the questionnaire one week after the EA lesson taught in June 2007.

As previously explained, it became necessary to reduce the scale of the remaining research at school B from April 2007 onwards (see 4.5.).   In school B, therefore, this questionnaire was conducted in just one class.   The summary of the

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questionnaire is as follows:

Table 17 Summary of the Questionnaire on Students' Reactions after EA

Points to be clarified:	● Students' progress in EA ● Factors that facilitate or inhibit students' learning of EA
Method:	Questionnaire
Respondents:	● School A: Students in Class 1 and 2, Year 4 (67 students) Age: 9-10 ● School B: Students in Class 1, Year 5 (28 students) Age: 10-11
Date:	June 2007 in both schools

4.6.3. Reactions to EA After Class: School A

Table 18   Summary of the Interview on Students' Reactions at School A

Class: Class 1 and 2, Year 4
Age: 9-10
Students attended: 67

Figure 20 suggests that EA relatively kept up students' interest after class.   It was found that 25 students out of 67 (37%) had talked about the last EA with someone. These students tended to speak to their family such as parents, brothers, and sisters (see figure 21).

Figure 20   Reactions After Class: Result at School A (1)

Have you talked about the last EA with your family, friends, etc.?

Yes, 25

No, 42

Figure 21   Reactions After Class: Result at School A (2)

Who did you talk to?

20 — Mother/ father
11 — Brother/sister
4 — Other
0 — Not specified

(Students)

Figure 22   Reactions After Class: Result at School A (3)

What did you talk about?

a. Told what I learned

b. Did practice together on what I learned

c. Other

24 — a
10 — b
0 — c

(Students)

The contents of the talk were classified into the three categories above. The most common answer seemed to report what they learned at the class. There were also students who practiced what they learned with someone. The following were some examples:

Item a:

- When I went back home, I told my mother that we had EA today, and that I had a good fun. (SA2)
- I talked to my mother. I said, "Mr XXX came to our class again! He is the teacher who came to our class before! We enjoyed games, too". (SA16)
- I told my mother that we learned expressions about weather today. (SA76)
- My mother asked me what I learned at the class, and I told her about it. (SA15)

Item b:

- I talked in English about today's and yesterday's weather with my elder sister. (SA71)
- I talked with my mother, and she gave a quiz. My younger sister tried to copy what I answered, but she failed. (SA33)
- I talked with my mother starting, "I'm going to say words about the weather, so please listen to me!" (SA32)
- I tried to say the phrases that I learned in the last lesson aloud so that my elder sister could hear them, and asked her the meanings. (SA15)

The descriptions appeared in item b particularly suggest that these students were likely to have enjoyed the lesson, and their active attitude to study still remained even at home. It also appeared that their parents and brothers and sisters also seemed to be actively involved to help these students to practice English.

4.6.4.   Reactions to EA After Class: School B

Table 19   Summary of the Interview on Students' Reactions at School B

Year: Year 5, Class 1

Age: 10-11

Students attended: 28

Figure 23   Reactions to EA After Class: Result at School B (1)

Have you talked about the last EA with your family, friends, etc.?
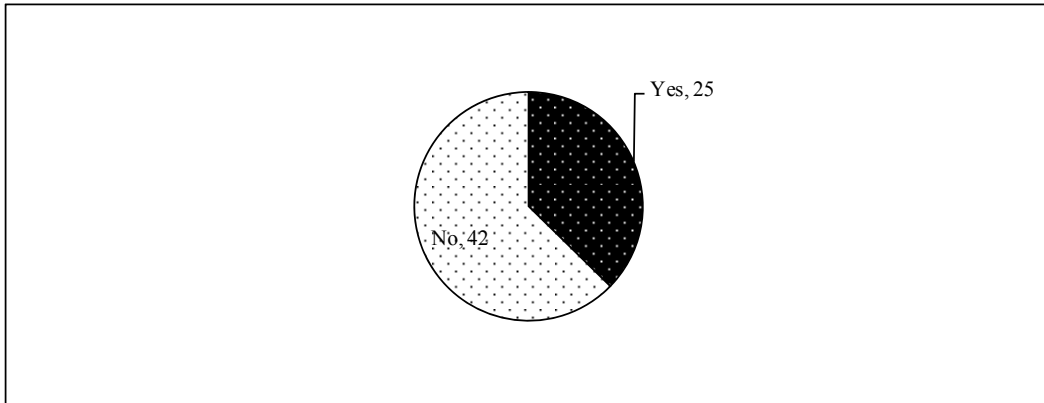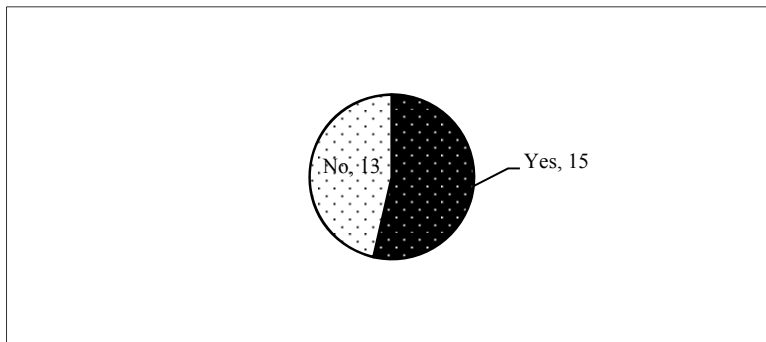

Figure 24   Reactions to EA After Class: Result at School B (2)
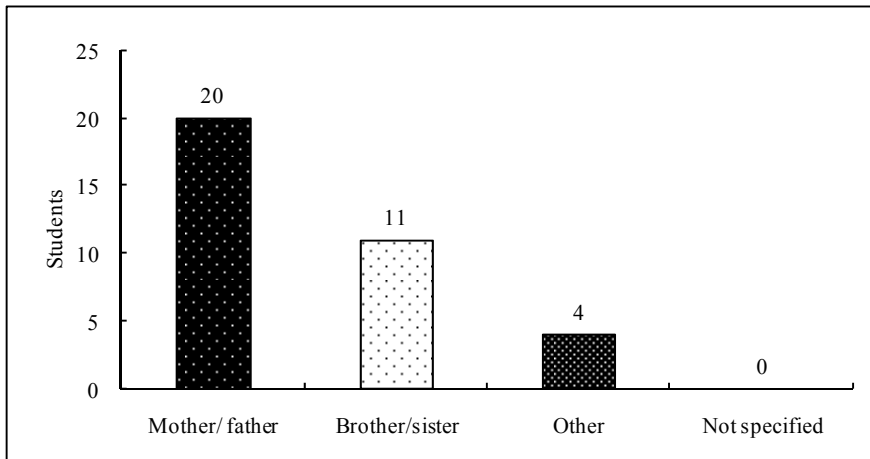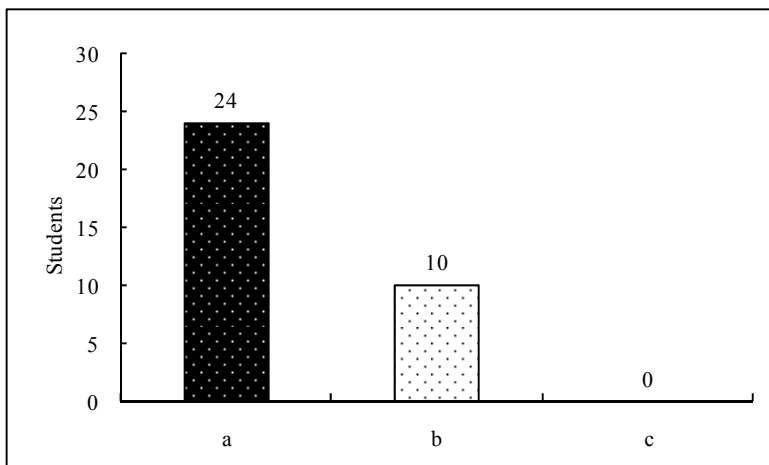
Who did you talk to?
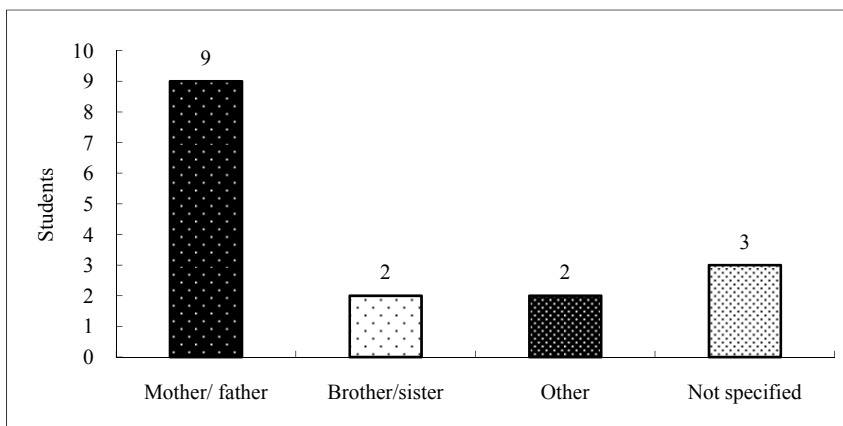
Figure 25　Reactions to EA After Class: Result at School B (3)

What did you talk about?

a. Told what I learned

b. Did practice together on what I learned
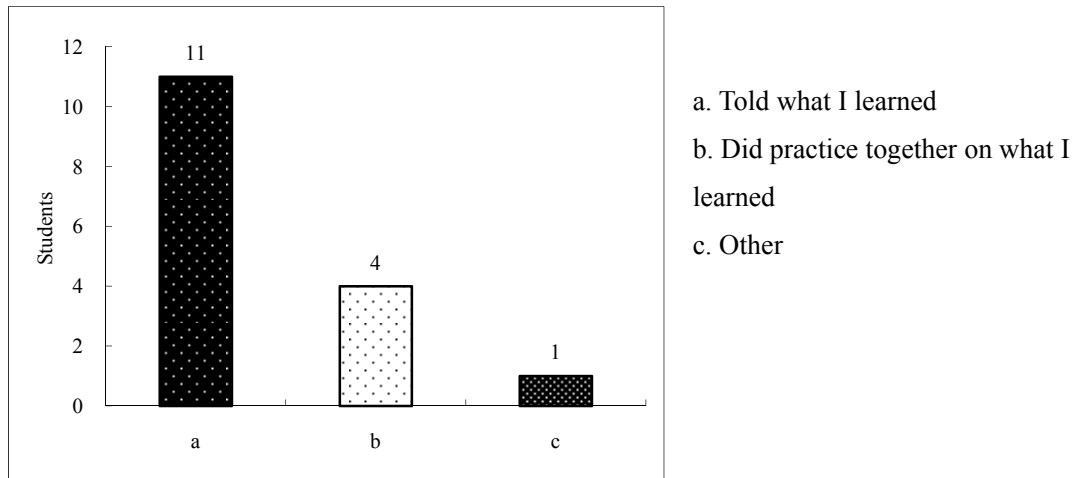
c. Other

The followings were the examples of students' answers:

Item a:

- I told my mother that we did "the chicken dance" today. (SB43)
- I told my mother that we did a game after learning numbers, and it was fun. (SB8)

Item b:

- I taught my mother how to differentiate "ty" and "teen". (SB92)
- I taught my little sister how to say each month in English. (SB80)
- I sang a song that we learned at the class with my elder brother and then with mother. (SB73)

Item c:

- I told my friend that the class made no sense to me whatsoever. (SB42)
- I told my teacher at private English school about EA when I had her lesson. (SB66)

These results suggest that EA in this school also kept up students' interest after class.　It was found that more than half of the students in this class (54%) had talked

about the last EA with someone.   They also tended to talk to their family members.

4.6.5. Relationship Between Students, HRT, and ALT: Introduction

In the course of the group interview at school A in 2009 to clarify why students learn English after school or feel weak in EA, one group happened to mention several issues on communication between students, ALTs, and HRT.   The following points emerged:

- Their ALT seemed to have inadequate understanding about his students.
- Students seemed confused because they often could not understand the class.
- Their HRT might not be able to play her role well in EA.

Therefore, I asked the students in this group to explain these points in detail, which will be shown in the following sub-sections.

4.6.6. The Quality of ALTs

As far as I remember, they seemed to be enjoying EA when they were in Year 3. Therefore, I asked them if there were some changes between Year 3 and Year 5. Students' opinions suggested that the same ALT taught every time those days, and he might not have enough understanding about teaching English at elementary school level.   One group started talking about some difficulties to follow what he said:

SA11:   His English is difficult to understand.   He speaks too fast, like 'telhimtha' 'telhimtha' [= Tell him that].

SA46:   Difficult to understand.

Yohei: Isn't it possible to ask him to speak a bit slowly?

SA46:   We can't say it in English.

SA11:   We can't.   We can't say it in English.

Yohei: Oh, I see.

SA11: I learn English after school, but I've not reached that level.

Yohei: He doesn't understand Japanese, does he?

SA46: He doesn't understand very much.   He sometimes understands, but he doesn't understand complicated sentences.

It seems that students did not understand what he said very much because he spoke English naturally.   What made their understanding more difficult seems to be that they could not ask questions to him.   They explained on this point in more detail as follows:

SA46: ALTs who came before the current ALT understood Japanese a bit, but now, the current teacher hardly understands Japanese.

SA11: And, as soon as he enters our class, I feel he doesn't know much about teaching.   He starts speaking English from the beginning. This is why we feel difficult to remember and write words.

SA46: Because he can't write [words] in Japanese much, he will only use English until the end of the class.

SA44: He wants to write only in English until the end, and we can't read well.

SA11: I guess he thinks we understand what he says.   He doesn't know that the way he speaks is difficult to understand for students.   This is I think, why he speaks fast.

Yohei: Who speaks so fast?

SA11: The ALT.

Yohei: The ALT?!

SA11: Yes, right?

SA46: He speaks 'naturally' than 'fast'.

SA11: Naturally?

SA46: I can't catch the words, anyway.

SA11: When he speaks fast, well, it's difficult to understand what he says.

Yohei: Ummm... Er… Oh, so even if you want to say something to him, you can't.   Right?

SA11: That' right.   Well, he moves on to the next activity very quickly. So, like, I have no idea when to say, "Excuse me!".

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In this situation, even if the students could ask a question to the ALT, they might not be able to understand his answer, as he would explain it in English.

Several students referred to another difficulty in his class.   They said that they sometimes could not answer to the ALT's questions because the questions were too sudden which were not based on the lessons they learned before.   Therefore, they suggested that it tended to be only a few students who were able to answer to his questions every time.   They talked about the most recent example of this problem:

SA46:   For example, as soon as he comes to our class saying, "Let's begin", he starts asking about today's topic without giving knowledge to us.
Yohei: What is a recent example of a 'sudden question'?
SA11:   Well, let me see.   Once his class started by a sudden question; say 'Year 2009' in English.
S?:   How it's possible to say that!
SA11:   We were totally hopeless to respond to that question.
S?:   And about the weather, too.
SA11:   Ah, yes.   Like 'kumori' [= cloudy].
SA46:   When we couldn't say kumori [in English], He kept saying, "Oh dear".
SA11:   Yes.   He kept saying like, "Oh dear".

It seems that the ALT did not know what they had learned previously.   That the students were not able to answer his 'sudden questions' should not be their fault. However, his reactions to repeat "Oh, dear." could lead them to lose their confidence. They could have felt positive if the ALT said, "It's a good chance then, to get to know words about the weather today".

Compared to this ALT, they seemed to be far happier with their previous ALTs. The topic focused on one of their former ALTs:

SA11:   Her nickname was "XXX".   She asked us to call her "XXX", and

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everyone did so.

Yohei: Was XXX able to speak Japanese?

SA11: Yes.　Her Japanese was very good.

SA82?: And she used to join us playing together.　For example, during the lunch break.

SA11: Yes, we played together with her, and her English was very easy to understand.

SA46: If we couldn't understand, she was kind enough to rephrase it in Japanese.

SA11: Yes.　I was so happy with the ALT at that time.

SA46: The ALT before her also understood Japanese, too.

SA11: Yes.

Yohei: Don't you play with the current ALT?

SA11: Well, he is like…

SA46: He doesn't eat lunch with us often.

SA11: True.

Yohei: So, do you mean you had lunch with your previous　ALTs?

SA11: Yes, we used to eat together.

The students suggest that an ALT's character would greatly affect students' attitude to interact with him/her.　Their former ALT seems to be a good example. Several positive points appeared in the way she taught her class.　Firstly, her communication was likely to be interactive and supportive in the true sense of the terms.　Students suggested that she was careful about the students' understanding, and gave feedback in Japanese if necessary.　Thanks to such support for her students, they were likely to be able to understand the class without much confusion.

Secondly, we can say that she had an active attitude to communicate with students outside the class, too.　It appeared that she used to have lunch with students, and play together.　This attitude is what the government stresses to develop in EA, and she was teaching such an attitude, not by forcing students to do so, but by demonstrating it herself.

Some might say that it is not appropriate to use Japanese in an English class.

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However, the interview suggests that it seems acceptable to use some Japanese to avoid students' confusion and to better understand the content.

4.6.7. Role of HRTs

The students' comments in the interview also illuminated that HRT's support in the class could significantly affect the quality of the class.   In their class, it seemed that students were not very willing to ask questions to their HRT.   It was also likely that their HRT would not be good at listening and speaking in English.   In this situation, the HRT seemed to have no significant role in assisting her students to better understand the class.   Furthermore, her way of looking at things also seemed to prevent the ALT from gaining a real understanding of his students.

Understanding how confused the students were in EA, I asked if they have any point that they would like to ask to the ALT about:

Yohei: So, you wanted to say something to him, didn't you?
SA11:   Yes, I did, but the teacher was watching us.   Then I'm sure that everyone must have thought that we would be scolded if we asked such a thing.
Yohei: Oh... How about your HRT?
SA11:   It's our HRT who was watching us.   It's very difficult to ask a question when she is watching us.
Yohei: Er… was the teacher your HRT?   Ha ha ha.   Er, what?!   Why can't you ask things in front of your HRT?
SA46:   She would say, "Why the hell are you asking such a thing!".
All Ss: Yes, yes, yes!
S (girl?): Or say things like, "I can't believe it!".
S (boy?): Or, "That's very rude!".

Students' opinions imply that they might not have a good mutual relationship with their HRT.   As their conversation suggests, they refrained from asking questions to

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the ALT to better understand his directions, because they tended to believe that their HRT would scold them for doing so.

Their HRT's responses to the students' questions also suggest that it was likely that she only wanted to show the positive side of her class to the ALT. She seemed to stop students asking questions to the ALT because she worried that they might give him negative impressions of the group. For example, she would say, "That's very rude!" if a student asks a question which was just answered few minutes before or which was taught in the last lesson. Another possibility is that she might not want to bother the ALT to spend time answering the students' questions. This is because each lesson in Japanese elementary school is for just 45 minutes, and ALTs tend to prepare various activities in such a limited time.

4.6.8. English Skills for HRTs

In this situation, it seemed possible for students to ask their HRT questions. However, the students tended to think that their HRT would not be able to help them anyway even if they asked a question:

SA46:	Even if we ask our HRT a question like, "What is he saying?", she doesn't understand English very much.
SA11:	She won't, really.
SA46:	So, even if we ask her, there is complete silence in the classroom.
SA11:	Exactly!
SA46:	She is like, "Well, …Er….".
SA11:	Gets in a panic a bit, being asked a question.
Yohei:	Who gets in a panic?
SA11:	The teacher.
Yohei:	Your HRT?
SA11:	Yes. When an ALT explains how to do today's game, for example. When we ask, "What should we do?", she says like, "Um….".
Yohei:	Hmm…I see.

In this way, it seems that students tried to be polite with their HRT by not asking questions, and the HRT was careful not to bother the ALT by making her students stay quiet.   Both students and the HRT tried to contribute towards the lesson, but it did not appear to be working well in the end.

4.6.9. Students' English Interactions Before and After Class

Students' English interactions were found not only inside the lesson, but also outside the classroom.   This section introduces some examples of such students' performances.

Firstly, when EA was taught in school B, the ALT was often invited to a class to have lunch together.   He would sit at a lunch table with several students, and would talk with them in Japanese and English.   When they had finished lunch, it also seemed common for him to play together with students in the school field at lunch break.   As previously explained, he taught EA every time in school B and for this reason, it seemed possible for him to establish a good relationship with students.

Secondly, it was often found in both schools that there were students who went to the staff room to meet him before class.   These students escorted him to their classroom, and on the way, they were talking in Japanese and English together.   There were also students after class who were willing to go with an ALT to the staff room.

The interview with the librarian at school B (LB1) (see 4.4.) also suggested that there were students who tried to have conversation in English with her.   It was found that every month when EA was taught, LB1 prepared some messages in English in the library to help to keep students' interest in English.   She talked about this point as follows:

LB1:   When EA are taught, I also try to write things like 'Welcome!' [in

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English] somewhere around here.　Students notice it saying things like, "Oh!", and come inside repeating, "Welcome!" or greeting me with a "Nice to meet you!".

Yohei:　Ha ha ha!

LB1:　Look at that one over there.　I write [a message in English] here, and they show great interest in this kind of things.　They come in saying, "Hi" and so on.　I can see from their responses that they must have enjoyed the class.

She suggested that there might be other teachers besides ALTs and EIU coordinators who try to show what they can do in response to the introduction of EA.

Thus, these examples of students' English interactions outside the classroom suggest that we need a broader viewpoint to understand students' overall progress in EA.

4.6.10. Conclusion

So far we have examined EA in actual practice in the target schools. Interviews, questionnaires and observations were utilised to clarify (1) students' progress in EA, and (2) factors which facilitate or inhibit students' learning.

Some might criticise this system, in that EA taught once a month would merely stay as one-off events with no positive effects on students' learning.　However, the finding emerged in this section revealed students who have reached beyond this level. There were actually students who practiced English after class with their friends and family.　Furthermore, it was found that students had various opportunities to interact with ALTs before and after class.　In school B, the librarian also tried to encourage students to communicate with her in English.

Although we tend to focus on actual practice in the classroom to investigate students' progress in English, evidence of students' interaction outside the classroom suggests that we need a broader viewpoint to understand students' overall progress in

EA.

Several issues on communication between students, ALTs, and HRTs emerged from the interview with students in school A.   In short, inadequate support from the ALT and their HRT was likely to prevent students from adequate understanding the class.   The students suggested that the ALT did not seem to know whether his students truly understood the content or not.   In addition to this, the ALT didn't understand Japanese, and thus the students seemed to be hesitant about asking questions.   To make matters worse, it seemed that the HRT was not able to support her students because she did not understand English.   To solve these problems, it seems necessary to require basic Japanese skills for ALTs, and likewise, better English skills for HRTs.

4.7.   How Each Aspect of the Research is Related to Others, and why the Outcomes Might Happen?

4.7.1. Introduction

So far we have examined the case study in two municipal elementary schools in Kumamoto City.   The research questions were as follows:

1. How far does EA in actual practice go in meeting the aims of EA (development of an active attitude to communicate, self-confidence, and understanding about languages and cultures)?

2. What factors exist that facilitate or inhibit students' learning of EA?

The following five aspects were focused on to illuminate these two questions: students' perceptions of EA, EA lessons in practice, teachers' perceptions of students' learning, whole school action on EA, and school community context.

In the previous sections, five aspects were analysed individually.   This section

attempts to view them holistically to explain why students' progress in EA might happen or might not happen, and to identify factors that facilitate or inhibit students' learning to contribute towards an effective EA programme.

4.7.2. Evidence of Students' Progress in EA

The analyses of data presented in this study suggested some evidence of students' progress in EA.   Particularly, students' active attitudes to learn in EA, and to have interactions, which are the key points to be developed in EA, appeared in this study.   It was found that students had willingness to interact with ALTs and their classmates in the class (see 4.5.).   In addition, students' such interactions were also found outside the classroom.   There were actually students who interacted with ALTs before and after class, and who practiced English after school with their friends and family (see 4.6.).

4.7.3. Factors That Facilitate Students' Learning

What factors exist that facilitate students' learning in EA?   Firstly, the target school teachers suggested that more students are motivated to learn in EA (see 4.4.). One reason was that almost everyone starts learning EA from zero at elementary school.   Therefore, the class, especially in Year 3, the first year of learning EA, may stimulate many students even if they have a complex about other subjects.   The teachers also implied that students in general tend to be more willing to learn in EA compared to other classes.   In EA, ALTs teach the class instead of HRTs, and the central part of the class tends to be activities with interaction.   Such an unusual atmosphere might help to encourage students to learn in EA actively.

Secondly, there were supports for students to learn English.   At school B, HRTs often invited an ALT to have lunch with students.   The ALT tried to find time to

play with students at lunch break.   The librarian there also tried to stimulate students to communicate with her in English (see 4.6.).   At home, it was found that students' parents, and brothers and sisters were actively involved to help to practice English.

4.7.4.   Factors That Inhibit Students' Learning

There were also several factors that inhibit students' learning.   Firstly, students suggested that they sometimes could not understand the contents of a lesson when an ALT did not speak Japanese.   Even if they wanted to ask questions, it was hard for them to tell a message in English.   The ALT was not likely to notice this situation, as he did not understand Japanese.   It seems that this was why the government (see 1.5.) and a teacher in a case study school (see 4.4.) stated that an advantage' of HRT to teach EA is that they can understand each student well.

Secondly, it appeared that ALTs sometimes did not seem to understand the aims of EA.   Students showed a desire to interact with an ALT and other classmates, which is the main goal of EA in the current education system.   In actual practice, however, a lot of time tended to be spent for remembering words and phrases, and therefore they did not have enough time for interactions.

Thirdly, students' inactive active attitude to study may be enhanced in their usual classes.   The librarian at school B stated that students tend to start working after they receive instructions from their HRT (see 4.4.).   This description suggests that the way HRTs' teach may also enhance students' inactive attitude.   A teacher at school A also stated that students in general tend to be more willing to learn in EA compared to other classes.   This comment also implies that their regular classes with the HRT might not be taught to motivate their students.   If HRTs teach their classes without considering various measures to stimulate their students, it seems difficult for students in a sense to develop active attitude towards learning in general.

5.   Conclusions

5.1.1.   Brief Review of the Study

So far we have examined the issues and conditions of EA in Japanese municipal elementary school.   The research questions were as follows:

(1) What does the Japanese education system require from EA?

(2) How far does EA go in meeting such demands in actual classroom context?

(3) What factors exist that facilitate or inhibit students' learning of EA?

Cole argued that all human behaviour must be understood relationally, in relation to its context.   To apply his viewpoint to EA, we cannot understand students' learning in EA until we see it with a broader perspective; EA is a part of the municipal elementary school education system, and the education system is supervised by governmental bodies.   Thus, if Cole's argument can be applicable to EA in Japan, it was likely that students' learning in EA would be affected by various issues that arose from other subjects, the government, and within society.   In this study, therefore, various educational issues which link EA were carefully outlined, followed by the issues on EIU and ELT.

Firstly, we described the current state of municipal elementary school education in Japan.   Municipal elementary schools in Japan follow the Course of Study, the national standard of teaching contents.   It shows required elements in detail in each subject according to the grades.

The Course of Study of 2002 emphasised the following two points: 'free from pressure' and 'zest for life'.   These points were set to correspond to the issues on current students.   The government's documents suggested that current students need

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to develop the following qualities:

- to have self-confidence
- to develop communication skills in Japanese
- to have active attitude towards their studies

Secondly, the analysis of background of EIU revealed that the following three elements should be emphasised in school education:

- to have open-mindedness towards different cultures, and to develop the abilities for living together with people from different cultures
- to have self-confidence
- to develop communication skills in English

Thirdly, in English education at lower and upper secondary school in Japan, practical communication skills in English was emphasised in the Course of Study. English became possible to teach at elementary school in 2002, but no clear goals were presented from the government at first, because English started as an element of EIU, which each school sets its own goals and contents reflecting needs each school has. After the government presented an action plan to foster Japanese people with a good command of English, the development of practical communication skills was further stressed in elementary school English, too. In 2007, the Central Council for Education showed the aims of EA for the first time, and it stated that the fundamental goals to develop in EA are not linguistic skills but the following points:

- to develop an active attitude to communicate with ALTs and others
- to develop understanding about languages and cultures

Thus, each education is rooted in different issues, but highlighted elements

tended to overlap with each other.   At the same time, a sense of English as a part of EIU faded away in English at elementary school, and in the new Course of Study from 2009 onwards, English is taught apart from EIU in the Period for Integrated Study.

Thus, this study revealed that EA is strongly related to various educational issues as Cole suggested.   Considering all these issues, we have concluded that EA is expected to develop particularly the following points:

- to develop an active attitude to communicate through interaction
- to develop self-confidence
- to develop understanding about languages and cultures

Based on the background of the school education system in Japan, the empirical research was carried out in two Kumamoto City municipal elementary schools.   The perspective of language learning adopted in this study was social constructivist in its view of learning through the interaction.   The social constructivist perspectives emphasise the interplay between learners and their peers and their teachers and others with whom they interact, and such interactions are the focus of observation and explanation.

EA views language learning in the same way that social constructivist does. Firstly, the fundamental goal of current EA is to develop an active attitude to communicate through the interactions with peers, teachers, and other people.   Their self-confidence will also be developed through such interactions.   Therefore, this study aimed (1) to describe how far EA goes in meeting the aspect of interaction, and (2) to illuminate factors that facilitate or inhibit students' learning of EA.   Thus, the main focuses of EA and of this research were not linguistic competence but the interaction.   Therefore, the social constructivist approach seemed the most appropriate for this study.

The research was implemented in two stages utilising the survey approach and the case study approach. The survey approach was adopted in the first stage to grasp a general picture of actual EA in the target city elementary schools. The questions in this stage mainly focused on objective matters such as annual teaching hours for EIU and popular contents.

Firstly, the postal questionnaire to Kumamoto City elementary schools teachers revealed that the respondents' schools mainly used EA and international exchange activities as EIU. The total hours for EIU seemed limited, as less than twenty hours a year were used for EIU even from the third grade in most schools.

The respondents' schools tended to teach EIU not because there were needs in their schools, but because it was easy or for other relatively passive reasons. The findings also suggested the necessity to improve the management of EIU at school. It was found that EIU coordinators and ALTs prepared the curriculum alone in half of the sample schools. Teachers' uncooperative attitudes towards EIU were also pointed out in several schools.

Different schools seemed to have different points to develop in EA and international exchange activities, but most respondents perceived positive changes in their students after introducing them. Although EA was the most popular content in many schools, the respondents tended to refer to the development of students' attitudes towards communication with foreign people and towards unfamiliar cultures, rather than the development of English skills themselves such as listening and writing.

The interview to the Teachers' Consultant on EIU at Kumamoto City Board of Education, which was also conducted at this stage, revealed the characteristics of EA in this city. Firstly, EA was the only one element taught as EIU in the educational policy of the Board. Secondly, the objectives for EA that the Board defined also corresponded to the three main points of EA we have suggested based on the review of

the three educational aspects.   Thirdly, it was found that EA was introduced because the government suggested involving them, not because there are any special needs to use English in elementary schools in this city.   Lastly, it was likely that schools in this city relied on ALTs to teach EA.   The teachers' consultant saw this as inappropriate, and they were preparing to improve the situation by providing a guidebook for EA as a first step.

Based on the findings from the first stage, the second stage served as the main research to explore the research questions in more detail.   The case study approach was adopted in this stage to illuminate (1) students' progress in EA, (2) why their learning is facilitated or inhibited, and (3) how such factors are interwoven.   The following five aspects were focused on: students' perceptions of EA, EA lessons in practice, teachers' perceptions of students' learning, whole school action on EA, and school community context.

The case study was conducted in two municipal elementary schools in Kumamoto City; school A and B.   Firstly, the analysis on school community context suggested that the basic features of these schools were much the same.   They were both located in the north of the city with several concrete buildings, and had approximately 500 students in 2005.   One significant feature on school A was that there were several students from foreign countries, and for this reason, the school served as the centre of teaching Japanese as a second language in the target city.

The analysis on the whole school action on EA clarified (1) the general conditions of EIU and EA, and (2) the teachers' involvement.   Firstly, the basic state of EA in school A and B seemed to be typical, as the lessons were introduced about 10 times a year, as the Board of Education in Kumamoto City planned.   Secondly, EA seemed to be the only one EIU element taught as a subject.   However, several topics such as songs about foreign students' countries were likely to be taught as events, and

they were virtually EIU elements, too.   Thirdly, the comments on teachers' involvement in EA suggested that current EA in this school does not seem to be run by collaboration between ALTs and school teachers.   To seek school teachers' cooperation in EA, it seemed necessary to improve the preparation and the collaboration process between ALTs and HRTs.

The examination of the target schools teachers' viewpoints on EA and current students focused on (1) the response to 'to be familiar with English and English culture in EA', (2) students' communication skills at school, (3) students' attitude towards learning at school, and (4) advantages of HRTs to lead EA.

Firstly, a teacher offered a viewpoint to position EA as a part of 'the ability to exchange thoughts' in a broad framework of elementary school education.   Secondly, teachers suggested that students' inadequate communication skills seemed acknowledged as a serious issue in their school as the government does.   Thirdly, the interview with a librarian revealed no significant link between the introduction of EA and students' attitude towards their study in the library.   In addition, her comments suggested that students were likely to be passive regardless of subject.   Fourthly, although students seemed to be motivated in ALT's classes, the importance of HRTs in EA also appeared to be acknowledged.   A teacher suggested that HRTs may work better than HRTs to teach EA.   She implied that because HRTs know each student well, they can adjust the contents to fit their students.

The aspect 'Students' perceptions of EA' aimed to clarify (1) students' progress in EA, and (2) factors which facilitate or inhibit students' learning.   Firstly, it was suggested that students tended to have willingness to interact with the ALT and their classmates.   However, such opportunities were limited in the lesson because different activities were introduced one after another in 45 minutes.   Secondly, it was also found that students appeared to have negative perceptions towards EA when they had to

remember various types of new words.   It seemed necessary for instructors who teach

EA to understand that the main points of this class are not to remember new words, but

to interact with their classmates and teachers.   Thirdly, students' perceptions of

similarities and differences suggested that they tended to focus on information-oriented

aspects such as food and the weather.   Finally, most students who learned English

outside school tended to have passive reasons to have started their English study.   It

appeared that they started learning English outside because their family or their friends

suggested, rather than because they became interested in English in EA at school.

The aspect 'EA in actual practice in the target schools' aimed to clarify (1)

students' progress in EA, and (2) factors which facilitate or inhibit students' learning.

It was found that there were students who practiced English after class with their

friends and family.   Furthermore, it was found that students had various opportunities

to interact with ALTs before and after class.   In school B, the librarian also tried to

stimulate students to communicate with her in English.   It was also found that

inadequate support by the ALT and their HRT was likely to prevent students from

understanding the class.

5.1.2.   Contributions to our Knowledge

The following points that were drawn from the findings of this study would

contribute to our knowledge of EA.   Firstly, this study offered a new viewpoint to

explain the significance of EA.   The main aim of teaching EA is to develop an active

attitude to communicate through interaction.   It was found that social constructivism

has this perspective, which argues that language develops from social interaction.

In this study, such interactions were observed not only in the classroom, but also

outside such as at lunch breaks and after school.   In social constructivist's viewpoint,

therefore, these interactions are likely to help to develop students' learning in EA.

Secondly, as Cole's 'levels of context' suggested (see 1.6.8.), it was found that EA in practice is related to various educational issues, and we cannot understand what EA is until we see it with a broader perspective. In particular, it appeared that EA is strongly related to the following key issues on current students in Japan: the lack of communication skills, self-confidence, and unwillingness to study. Therefore, EA actually serves an important role to tackle such issues.

Thirdly, although social constructivism and Cole's 'levels of context' are western models, this study revealed that they can be also applicable in Japan.

These points would serve as guidelines to teach EA in practice, as the objectives of EA still seem unclear among teachers.

5.1.3. Limitations of the Research

Although the research was carefully prepared, it involved some compromise in the end. Firstly, there was limitation to a coherence and consistency to the framework of EA. When this study was conducted, the role of EA was in transition. The framework of EIU was emphasised when the first part of the research (the postal questionnaire and the interview to the EIU coordinator) was carried out. The importance of practical communication skills was then focused in the middle of the study, and finally the aspect of interactions became as a vital element of EA. The direction of the study changed accordingly, because one of the purposes of the study was to clarify the aims of EA. For this reason, the contents of several topics in the literature review chapter may not be seen well-balanced.

Secondly, although this study investigated students' progress in EA, the focus tended to be on one aspect (an active attitude to communicate through interactions). In addition, it appeared that the research was not systematically organised in several parts. For example, a lot of time was spent to investigate students' interactions

outside the classroom, and therefore the analysis of the interactions in the classroom was insufficient.

5.1.4. Possibilities for Further Research

Firstly, as I have presented, although EA in practice still seems underdeveloped, some evidence of students' progress in the class was confirmed.   Therefore, we can say that the class is likely to be working for some students.   Possible future research could perhaps clarify why these students were successful so we can consider how to help more to succeed.

Secondly, the generation who learned EA for the first time in the Japanese education system in 2002 are of university age now.   I also became a lecturer at a university to teach English as a part of general education.   As we have clarified in this study, the government and society tended to point out that this generation tends to lack three aspects of learning; an active attitude to study, self-expression skills, and self-confidence.   Working with this generation at university, it seems that these three points are still likely to apply to them.   We can say that university education is also a part of all-round education, and it seems possible to enhance the three aspects in university English classes as a part of general education.

Therefore, in the near future, I would like to consider possibilities of how to apply the framework of language learning in EA to university English classes in general education.   The examination of various factors that surround university students might contribute new knowledge to university English classes.   If the analysis suggests that current university students actually tend to the lack the three aspects of learning, I would like to consider possible ways to better incorporate these aspects in university English classes.

It is believed that the findings and suggestions in this study will greatly enhance students' learning in EA.

Appendix 1

**Covering Letter for Questionnaire on Education for Intercultural Understanding
(EIU) in Elementary School (Translation)**

MPhil/PhD in Educational Studies
Yohei Murayama

Address：XXX
TEL/FAX：XXX
Email: （Japanese）XXX
（English）XXX

To all Principals, and EIU coordinators,
1 February 2006

**A request to teachers for cooperation for the Questionnaire on Education for
Intercultural Understanding (EIU) in Elementary Schools**

I am Yohei Murayama, a second year MPhil/PhD student at the University of York
(UK).   I am writing to ask for your cooperation in my research.

I am currently working on Education for Intercultural Understanding (EIU) at
elementary school level in Japan.   As a part of my research, I am hoping to conduct a
questionnaire to grasp a general picture of the state of EIU.   I would be grateful for
your cooperation

The questionnaire consists of the following three points: in your school, (1) How is
EIU perceived? (2) How is it introduced? and (3) What are the issues surrounding
EIU?

I will maintain the confidentiality of respondents, and any work I write up will only be
published in respected academic publications.   The school name and respondents'
name shall remain anonymous.

I understand that you are busy as the end of the school year is approaching, but your
contribution would be deeply appreciated.   I would be grateful if you could answer
the questions and post it with the envelop enclosed, by Friday 17 2006.

P.S. This questionnaire is approved by the Kumamoto City Board of Education.

Yohei Murayama

Brief background description
● MA in Educational Studies (07 2001)
● Assistant Teacher of English Conversation Activities (AEA) (04 2002 – 03 2004)
● Part-time lecturer at Kumamoto Gakuen University (04 2002 – 03 2004, and 06 2006 -03 2007)

I am hoping to conduct a more detailed research including interviews to teachers in 2006, and I wish to
have your cooperation.   If you don't mind, please let me know your contact information at the above
address.   Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix 2

Covering Letter for Questionnaire on Education for Intercultural Understanding (EIU) in Elementary School (Original)

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

英国国立ヨーク大学大学院
教育研究科・博士課程 2 年
村山陽平

現住所： XXX
TEL/FAX：XXX
E メール： （日本語）XXX
（英　語）XXX

校長先生・国際理解教育担当の先生
2006 年 2 月 1 日

「小学校での国際理解教育に関するアンケート」へのご協力のお願い

拝啓
向春の候、ますます御健勝のこととお喜び申し上げます。

私は、英国国立ヨーク大学大学院・教育研究科・博士課程 2 年に在籍しています、村山陽平と申します。実は先生にお願いがあり、この書類をお送りしました。

私は現在、日本の小学校での国際理解教育について研究しています。その一環として、実際の小学校での国際理解教育の現状を把握するため、アンケートを実施します。誠に勝手ながら、熊本市内のすべての市立小学校を本調査の対象に設定しました。そこで、ご勤務校で国際理解教育を担当されている先生に、ぜひアンケートにご協力頂けないでしょうか。

アンケートの内容は、次の 3 項目についてです。国際理解教育はご勤務校で(1)どのように解釈され、(2)どのように導入されているのか。また、(3)どのような課題があるのか。

本アンケートで得た全ての情報には、細心の注意を払います。お答え頂いたアンケートの内容は、研究のため以外の目的で利用しないことを誓います。また、小学校名や先生のお名前は、匿名として扱います。

年度末に向けてお忙しいことと思います。それを承知でお願いするのは大変恐縮ですが、先生のご協力を頂ければ幸いです。ぜひアンケートにご記入頂き、**同封の返信用封筒で 2006 年 2 月 17 日（金）までに、郵便ポストにご投函くださいませんでしょうか。**お手数ですが、どうぞよろしくお願いします。

なお、本アンケートの実施計画は、熊本市教育委員会の許可を頂いています。

敬具

むらやま　ようへい

略歴
- 英国国立ヨーク大学大学院・教育研究科・修士課程修了 （2001 年 7 月）
- 鹿児島市教育委員会 AEA（Assistant teacher of English conversation Activities）（2002 年 4 月～2004 年 3 月）
- 熊本学園大学・非常勤講師 （2002 年 4 月～2004 年 3 月、および 2006 年 4 月～2007 年 3 月）

2006 年度に、先生方へのインタビューなど、本研究でより詳しい調査を行いたいと思っています。ご迷惑とは存じますが、これらにもぜひ先生にご協力頂ければ幸いです。もし差し支えなければ、大変お手数ですが上記の連絡先まで、お名前と E メールなどのご連絡先をぜひお知らせください。よろしくお願いします。

Appendix 3

A Letter of Introduction by my Supervisor (Original)

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

December 6, 2005

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is a letter of introduction for Yohei Murayama,who is in his second year as a MPhil/PhD student at the University of York.

Yohei is researching issues around the implementation of Education for lnternational Understanding in primary schools in Japan.   He is spending an extended period in Japan collecting data for his thesis, and hopes to interview key personnel as well as to carry out work in classrooms.

Besides being engaged in educational research, Yohei is also an experienced teacher, so he understands issues of practitioner research.   He is very aware of the need to carry out his work to high ethical standards.   As his supervisor, I am totally confident that he will act at all times with complete integrity.   He will maintain the confidentiality of his informants and any work he writes up will only be published in respected academic outlets.

If you are able to help Yohei in his work, your help will be much appreciated, both by him and by the University of York, on whose behalf, l express gratitude as well as my personal thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Jean Conteh (Dr)

Appendix 4

A Letter of Introduction by my Supervisor (Japanese Translation)

（指導教官による学生紹介および調査協力依頼状・日本語訳）

2005 年 12 月 6 日

拝啓
本状は、英国国立ヨーク大学大学院博士課程 2 年に在籍する、村山陽平についての紹介状です。

当学生は、日本の小学校での国際理解教育に関する研究を行っています。彼はこれから、論文執筆のため日本に長期滞在して資料を集める予定になっています。また、可能であれば、鍵となる方々へのインタビューや、教室での調査も実施できれば、と考えています。

当学生は、教育分野での研究活動に加えて、教員としての経験があります。これらの経験から、彼は学校で実践的な研究を行う際に必要な配慮事項についての理解があります。つまり、倫理的な観点を常に考慮しながら研究を行う必要性を認識しているということです。彼の指導教官として私は、彼がこの点について常に誠実に行動すると断言できます。彼の研究に協力して下さる方々に関する情報の機密性は保持され、公表部分は学術的に必要な点のみに限られます。

もしご自身が当学生の研究にご協力頂ければ、本人や本学にとって大変有難く存じます。また、私も本学を代表して、また一個人として、深く感謝申し上げます。

敬具

（署名）

ジーン・コンテ （博士）

Appendix 5
Covering Letter for the Case Study on English Activities in Elementary School (Translation)

The University of York

18 December 2006

A request for cooperation for the Research on Education for Intercultural Understanding (EIU) in Elementary Schools

Background of the research:

A questionnaire was conducted in February 2006 to clarify the conditions and issues on EIU (29 schools out of 80 responded: the collection rate =36%).   It was found that EA was mainly taught as EIU in the respondents' schools.   Although most respondents perceived positive changes after introducing EA, only two teachers referred to students' development of language skills.   Many of them commented on the development of EIU elements such as an active attitude to communicate (n=16), interest towards unfamiliar cultures (n=9), and tolerance towards foreign countries (n=2). (Please see Murayama 2006[1])

Research outline:

Based on these findings on students' positive changes in EA in the questionnaire, in this study, it is hoped to go on to more detailed examinations of students' development in EIU in actual elementary school classrooms.   The students' progress in EIU reported in the questionnaire tended to be based on respondents' broad impressions without specific examples.   In this study, therefore, this progress needs to be ascertained by various classroom data including quantitative statistics and factual evidence about students in light of EIU.

I understand that you are busy, but your contribution would be deeply appreciated.

Yohei Murayama

MPhil/PhD student at the University of York (UK)

Part-time lecturer at the department of Economics, and Social Welfare, Kumamoto Gakuen University

Address:

TEL/FAX:

Email: (Japanese)

(English)

[1]Murayama, Y. (2006)   Conditions and Issues in Education for International Understanding in Elementary Schools: An Analysis of a Questionnaire to Kumamoto City Municipal Elementary School Teachers. *KGU Journal of Language and Literature*, Vol.13 No.2. 103-140.

Appendix 6
Covering Letter for the Case Study on English Activities in Elementary School
(Original)

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

2006 年 12 月 18 日

「小学校での国際理解教育に関する調査」へのご協力のお願い

調査背景

2006 年 2 月、熊本市立の各小学校の国際理解教育担当の先生宛に、国際理解教育の現状と課題についてのアンケートを実施しました（80校中、29校が回答、回収率 36％）。この調査では、回答校での国際理解教育は主に英会話活動を中心に行う傾向が見られました。しかし、英会話活動の導入による児童の変化としては、英語力そのものの向上の指摘は2名に留まり、多くの先生が外国の人々と積極的に関わろうとする態度（16名）や、外国への興味・関心（9名）、外国に対する視野の広がり（2名）など、国際理解教育の各要素の向上を指摘されていました。（詳細は Murayama 2006[1]）。

調査概要

英会話活動の実施で国際理解教育の各要素の向上が示唆されたこの調査結果を元に、今回の調査では、この指摘の検証を行いたいと考えています。アンケートでは、児童の国際理解教育の要素の向上は、回答者の主観的な印象によるものに留まりがちでした。そこで本調査では、数的資料、児童の実際の行動の記録など、客観的なデータを多方面から収集する方針です。

お忙しいところ大変申し訳ありませんが、本調査へのご協力を頂ければ幸いです。どうぞよろしくお願いします。

むらやま ようへい

英国 ヨーク大学大学院 教育研究科 博士課程 2 年

熊本学園大学 経済学部・社会福祉学部 非常勤講師

現住所： XXX

TEL/FAX： XXX

E メール： （日本語）XXX

（英 語）XXX

[1]Murayama, Y. (2006) Conditions and Issues in Education for International Understanding in Elementary Schools: An Analysis of a Questionnaire to Kumamoto City Municipal Elementary School Teachers. 熊本学園大学 文学・言語学論集 第 13 巻第 2 号 51– 88 頁 （12 月 30 日発行）

Appendix 7

The Development of the Postal Questionnaire
(the Final Draft Checked by the Teacher's Consultant on EIU
at Kumamoto City Board of Education)

<div align="center">小学校での国際理解教育に関するアンケート</div>

村山陽平
英国ヨーク大学大学院教育研究科
2006年1月実施

ご自身について次の項目にそれぞれご記入下さい。

- 小学校での勤務年数：
- 国際理解教育担当年数：
- 海外で半年以上の居住経験 (選択肢 a, b のどちらかを○で囲んで下さい)：
  a. なし
  b. あり：(簡単に居住目的をお聞かせ下さい)

A ご勤務校での国際理解教育の全般的な実施状況についてお聞かせ下さい。

1. 次の各項目についてご記入下さい。

   - 国際理解教育を実施している学年：
   - 国際理解教育の年間の実施時間数：

2. ご勤務校では、国際理解教育はどなたが立案されていますか？ 選択肢 a - c の中で一致するものを○で囲んでお答え下さい。

   a. 国際理解教育担当者が、各学年のものを立案
   b. 各学年で、それぞれ立案
   c. その他：(簡単にお聞かせ下さい)

3. ご勤務校で国際理解教育を導入されているのは、どのような理由からですか？選択肢 a - d の中で一致するものを○で囲んでお答え下さい。

   a. 事例集、他校の事例など、参考にできるものがあり、導入しやすい環境にあるから
   b. 保護者からの要望があるから
   c. 学校地域の特性・必要性があるから：(簡単にお聞かせ下さい)

   d. その他：(簡単にお聞かせ下さい)

4. ご勤務校では、国際理解教育でどのような態度や能力を育てることを目標にされていますか？簡単にお聞かせ下さい。

<div align="center">1</div>

B ご勤務校での国際理解教育の内容についてお聞かせ下さい。

1. ご勤務校では、国際理解教育についてどのような内容を実施されていますか？特に多くの時間を占める
上位 3 つの項目を、下の選択肢の中から選んでお答え下さい。

- 最も多くの時間を占めるもの：
- 2番目に多くの時間を占めるもの：
- 3番目に多くの時間を占めるもの：

選択肢：
- a．あいさつなどの基本的な英会話　　　b．海外からの人との交流会
- c．ハロウィンなど英語圏の風物紹介　　d．アジア圏の風物紹介
- e．日本についての知識　　　　　　　　f．環境・平和・人権など、世界の時事問題
- g．異文化に心を開くトレーニング（例えば、異文化摩擦の疑似体験など）
- h．その他：（簡単にお聞かせ下さい）

2-1. ご勤務校では、英会話や英語圏の風物紹介など、英語と関連する活動を取り入れていらっしゃいま
すか？選択肢 a, b のうち、一致するものを〇で囲んでお答え下さい。

　　a．取り入れている：　　→設問 2-2, 2-3 にもお答え下さい。
　　b．取り入れていない：　→設問 2-2, 2-3 にはお答え頂く必要はありません。

2-2. 英語と関連する活動は、どのような形態で実施されていますか？選択肢 a－d の中で一致するもの
を〇で囲んでお答え下さい。

　　a．主に担任が実施
　　b．主に ALT が実施
　　c．主に担任と ALT が共同で実施
　　d．その他：（簡単にお聞かせ下さい）

2-3. ご勤務校で英語と関連する活動を導入されているのは、どのような理由からですか？簡単にお聞かせ
下さい。

C 国際理解教育の評価についてお聞きかせ下さい。

1. ご勤務校では、児童の国際理解教育の成果を評価されていますか？選択肢 a, b のうち、一致するも
のを〇で囲んでお答え下さい。

　　a．評価はしていない
　　b．評価をしている：（簡単に評価方法についてお聞かせ下さい）

2

2. ご勤務校では、国際理解教育の導入後、児童の態度に何らかの変化が見られるとお感じになりますか？選択肢 a - c のうち、一致するものを〇で囲んでお答え下さい。

    a. 特に変化は見られない
    b. プラス面の変化が見られる：（簡単にお聞かせ下さい）

    c. マイナス面の変化が見られる：（簡単にお聞かせ下さい）

3. 国際理解教育の評価についてご意見をお持ちでしたら、ぜひお聞かせ下さい。

D 小学校での国際理解教育の課題についてお聞かせ下さい。

1. ご勤務校で国際理解教育を扱う際に、何か困難とお感じになる点がおありですか？選択肢 a − d のうち、一致するものがありましたら、〇で囲んでお答え下さい。また、簡単に内容をお聞かせ下さい。

    a. カリキュラムの作成が困難：

    b. 教室での実際の指導が困難：

    c. ALT や、外部から招く講師との連携が困難：

    d. その他：

E その他のご自由なご意見をお聞かせ下さい。

1. 小学校での国際理解教育についてご意見をお持ちでしたら、ぜひお聞かせ下さい。

ご協力ありがとうございました。

3

Appendix 8

An Example of Observation Notes

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Appendix 9

Questionnaire on Education for Intercultural Understanding
(EIU) in Elementary School (Translation)

Duration: Wednesday 1 February 2006 – Friday 17 February

Please answer to the following information about yourself.

- Years of working experience in elementary schools: _____ year(s)
- Years of experience as an EIU coordinator: _____ year(s)
- Experience to live overseas for more than half a year
  (Please circle an appropriate item from a or b):
    a. No
    b. Yes: (Please describe the reasons briefly.)

A **Please answer to the following questions on the general condition of EIU in your school.**

  1. Please let us know annual teaching hours for EIU in each grade.

      Year 1: _____ hour(s) Year 2: _____ hour(s) Year 3: _____ hour(s)
      Year 4: _____ hour(s) Year 5: _____ hour(s) Year 6: _____ hour(s)

  2. Who is in charge of the curriculum for EIU in your school?　Please circle (O) an appropriate item from a-c below.

    a. EIU coordinator plans the entire curriculum for each grade
    b. Teachers in each grade plan own curriculum
    c. Other: (please describe briefly)

  3. Why does your school teach EIU?　Please circle (O) appropriate items from a-d below.

    a. Because it is easy to teach it, as ready-made examples, examples from other schools, etc. are available.
    b. Because parents request us to teach it.
    c. Because our school or school community characteristics require us to teach it: (please describe briefly)
    d. Other: (please describe briefly)

  4. What kinds of attitudes and abilities does your school aim to develop in EIU? Please describe it briefly.

B **Please answer to the following questions on the contents of EIU in your school.**

  1. What kind of EIU is taught in your school?　Please select the three most popular

contents from the items a-h below.

- The most popular content: ＿＿＿
- The second most popular content: ＿＿＿
- The third most popular content: ＿＿＿

Items:
    a. Basic English conversation such as greetings.
    b. Events to invite people from overseas countries.
    c. Knowledge about customs in English speaking countries such as Halloween.
    d. Knowledge about Asian countries.
    e. Knowledge about Japan.
    f. Knowledge about global issues such as the environment, peace, and human rights.
    g. Activities to promote tolerance (e.g., an activity to understand that there are various viewpoints about one thing.)
    h. Other: (please describe briefly)

2-1. Are EA such as basic conversation involved in your school?　Please circle (O) an appropriate item from a-b.

    a. Yes: → Please answer 2-2 and 2-3.
    b. No: → You do not need to answer 2-2 and 2-3.

2-2. Who teaches EA?　Please circle (O) an appropriate item from a – d.

    a. Usually homeroom teachers (HRT).
    b. Usually Assistant Language Teachers (ALT).
    c. Usually HRT and ALT teach together
    d. Other: (Please describe briefly)

2-3. What are the reasons to teach EA in your school?　Please describe it briefly.

C　**Please answer to the following questions on evaluation for EIU.**

  1. Is EIU evaluated in your school?　Please circle (O) an appropriate item from a-b below.

    a. No.
    b. Yes: (Please describe the ways of evaluation briefly.)

  2. Do you have the feeling that there have been some changes in students after introducing EIU in your school?　Please circle (O) an appropriate item from a-c below.

a. There have been no particular changes.

b. There have been positive changes: (Please give some examples.)

c. There have been negative changes: (Please give some examples.)

3. Please let me know if you have opinions on evaluation for EIU.

D Please answer to the following question on the issues of EIU in elementary school.

1. Are there any difficulties in dealing with EIU in your school?   If there are, please circle (O) item(s) from a – d, and let me know about the issues briefly in each item.

a. Curriculum planning is difficult.

b. Teaching in the classroom is difficult.

c. Cooperating with guest lecturers, ALTs, etc. is difficult.

d. Other: (please describe briefly)

E Please let me know other comments.

1. Please let me know if you have other opinions on EIU in elementary school.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Appendix 10

Questionnaire on Education for Intercultural Understanding
(EIU) in Elementary School (Original)

小学校での国際理解教育に関するアンケート

実施期間：2006 年 2 月 1 日（水）～17 日（金）
英国ヨーク大学大学院教育研究科
村山陽平

ご自身について次の項目にそれぞれご記入ください。

- 小学校での勤務年数： ＿＿＿＿＿ 年
- 国際理解教育担当年数： ＿＿＿＿＿ 年
- 海外で半年以上の居住経験（選択肢 a，b のどちらかを〇で囲んでください）：
    - a．なし
    - b．あり：（簡単に居住目的をお聞かせください）

A ご勤務校での国際理解教育の全般的な実施状況についてお聞かせください。

1．国際理解教育を導入している学年について、その年間の実施時間数をお聞かせください。

1 年生： ＿＿＿＿＿ 時間　　2 年生： ＿＿＿＿＿ 時間　　3 年生： ＿＿＿＿＿ 時間

4 年生： ＿＿＿＿＿ 時間　　5 年生： ＿＿＿＿＿ 時間　　6 年生： ＿＿＿＿＿ 時間

2．国際理解教育についての年間指導計画は、どなたが立案されていますか？ 選択肢 a - c の中で一致するものを〇で囲んでお答えください。

　　　a．国際理解教育担当者が、各学年のものを立案

　　　b．各学年で、それぞれ立案

　　　c．その他：（簡単にお聞かせください）

3．ご勤務校で国際理解教育を導入されているのは、どのような理由からですか？選択肢 a - d の中で一致するものを〇で囲んでお答えください。

a．事例集、他校の事例など、参考にできるものがあり、導入しやすい環境にあるから

b．保護者からの要望があるから

c．学校地域の特性・必要性があるから：（簡単にお聞かせください）

d．その他：（簡単にお聞かせください）

4．ご勤務校では、国際理解教育でどのような態度や能力を育てることを目標にされていますか？簡単にお聞かせください。

B ご勤務校での国際理解教育の内容についてお聞かせください。

1．ご勤務校では、国際理解教育についてどのような内容を実施されていますか？特に多くの時間を占める上位 3 つの項目を、下の選択肢の中からそれぞれ 1 つずつ選んでお答えください。

最も多くの時間を占めるもの： ＿＿＿

2番目に多くの時間を占めるもの： ＿＿＿

3番目に多くの時間を占めるもの： ＿＿＿

選択肢：

a．あいさつなどの基本的な英会話　　　b．海外からの人との交流会

c．ハロウィンなど英語圏の風物紹介　　d．アジア圏の風物紹介

e．海外の人に日本を紹介するための知識　　　f．環境・平和・人権など、世界の時事問題

g．異文化に心を開くトレーニング（ひとつの事柄にも多様な見方があることを理解させる、など）

h．その他：（簡単にお聞かせください）

2-1．ご勤務校では、基本的な英会話などの英語活動を取り入れていらっしゃいますか？選択肢 a，b のうち、一致するものを〇で囲んでお答えください。

　　　　　a．取り入れている： →設問 2-2，2-3 にもお答えください。

　　　　　b．取り入れていない： →設問 2-2，2-3 にはお答え頂く必要はありません。

2-2．英語活動は、どのような形態で実施されていますか？選択肢 a － d の中で一致するものを〇で囲んでお答えください。

a．主に担任が実施

b．主に ALT が実施

c．主に担任と ALT が共同で実施

d．その他：（簡単にお聞かせください）

2-3．ご勤務校で英語活動を導入されているのは、どのような理由からですか？簡単にお聞かせください。

C 国際理解教育の評価についてお聞きかせください。

1．ご勤務校では、児童の国際理解教育の成果を評価されていますか？選択肢 a，b のうち、一致するものを〇で囲んでお答えください。

a．評価はしていない

b．評価をしている：（簡単に評価方法についてお聞かせください）

2．ご勤務校では、国際理解教育の導入後、児童の態度に何らかの変化が見られるとお感じになりますか？選択肢 a－c のうち、一致するものを〇で囲んでお答えください。

a．特に変化は見られない

b．プラス面の変化が見られる：（簡単にお聞かせください）

c．マイナス面の変化が見られる：（簡単にお聞かせください）

3．国際理解教育の評価についてご意見をお持ちでしたら、ぜひお聞かせください。

D 小学校での国際理解教育の課題についてお聞かせください。

1．ご勤務校で国際理解教育を扱う際に、何か困難とお感じになる点がおありですか？選択肢 a－d のうち、一致するものがありましたら、〇で囲んでお答えください。また、簡単に内容をお聞かせください。

a．カリキュラムの作成が困難：

b．教室での実際の指導が困難：

c．ALT や、外部から招く講師との連携が困難：

d．その他：

E その他のご自由なご意見をお聞きかせください。

1．小学校での国際理解教育についてご意見をお持ちでしたら、ぜひお聞かせください。

ご協力ありがとうございました。

Appendix 11

Questionnaire on Education for Intercultural Understanding
(EIU) in Elementary School
Respondents' Background Information

Code name	Working experience in elementary school: year(s)	Experience as an EIU coordinator: year(s)	Experience to live overseas for more than half a year
R1	23	1	0
R2	19	4	0
R3	21	2	0
R4	10	2	0
R5	21	2	0
R6	15	6	0
R7	24	1	0
R8	26	6	0
R9	22	2	0
R10	15	1	0
R11	11	3	0
R12	1	1	0
R13	27	6	0
R14	15	8	0
R15	2	1	0
R16	19	3	0
R17	17	2	0
R18	18	3	0
R19	36	4	0
R20	4.4	1	0
R21	20	2	0
R22	23	3	0
R23	17	3	1
R24	21	1	0
R25	13	1	0
R26	8	2	0
R27	23	5	0
R28	10	2	1
R29	10	1	0

Appendix 12

Question sheet for the Interview to the Teachers' Consultant on EIU
at Kumamoto City Board of Education (Translation)

MPhil/PhD in Educational Studies
Yohei Murayama

Address：XXX
TEL/FAX：XXX
Email： （Japanese）XXX
（English）XXX

Kumamoto City Board of Education

Guidance Division in the department of School Education

Dear Mr. XXX,

An interview on EIU in elementary school education
(In light of the educational policy of Kumamoto City Board of Education)

A. General educational policy on EIU of the Board

 1. How is EIU positioned in your educational policy?

 2. What kind of attitudes and skills does your board aim to develop in EIU in the elementary
   school?

B. Contents of EIU

 1. Does Kumamoto City Board of education provide guidelines o the contents of EIU?

 2. EA is one of the topics of the Period for Integrated Study.　The government's Course of Study
   states that in the Period for Integrated Study, each school is expected to introduce activities that
   reflect the actual conditions of the school.　I understand you send ALTs to various elementary
   schools to teach EA following this point.　How do EA reflect Kumamoto city elementary
   students?

 3. What are the points to teach EA in elementary school, not in lower-secondary school?

C. Perspectives of the current situation and the future direction of EIU

 1. How would you evaluate the current condition of EIU in Kumamoto City municipal schools?
    (successful, or unsuccessful?)

 2. Do you feel there are any pressing issues regarding EA in elementary school in Kumamoto
   City municipal elementary school now?

This is the end of the questions.

Question sheet for the Interview to the Teachers' Consultant on EIU
at Kumamoto City Board of Education (Original)

教育研究科・博士課程 2 年

熊本学園大学 非常勤講師
村山陽平

現住所: 　　XXX
TEL/FAX: 　XXX
E メール: 　（日本語）XXX
　　　　　　（英　語）XXX

熊本市教育委員会
学校教育部　指導課
XXX 先生

小学校での国際理解教育について （熊本市の教育方針としての聞き取り調査）

A．国際理解教育に関する市としての全体的な教育方針について

　１．市の教育方針として、国際理解教育はどのような項目の中に位置づけておられますか？

　２．市の教育方針として、小学校で行う国際理解教育でどのような態度や能力を育てることを
　　 目標としておられますか？

B．国際理解教育に関する具体的な活動について

　１．熊本市教育委員会では、小学校での国際理解教育について、内容に関する指針を示して
　　 おられますか？

　２．国際理解教育は総合的な学習の時間の中にも位置づけられています。国の指針には、総
　　 合的な学習の時間は、学校の実態に応じた学習活動を行うものとする、とあります。熊本市教
　　 育委員会が市内の多くの小学校に ALT を派遣し、英語活動を行っておられるのは、熊本市の
　　 小学生にどのような実態があるからですか？

　３．中学校ではなく小学校で英語活動を行うことの狙いは、どのようなものですか？

C．国際理解教育の現状と今後の方針について

　１．現在の熊本市の小学校での国際理解教育の状況を、どのように評価されますか？
　　 （うまく行っている・行っていない、など）

　２．熊本市の小学校での国際理解教育について、何か課題はおありだとお考えですか？

以上です。

Appendix 14

A Guideline for English Activities in Kumamoto City (Translation)

English Activities in Kumamoto City

In Kumamoto City,

We aim to build the following points through listening and speaking activities

in English:

The foundation of understanding of the world to raise awareness towards languages and cultures in the world

The foundation of communication to develop the attitude to communicate without hesitation

The foundation for character formation to develop the quality to live better in a global society

Widen the students' world through the interaction in English.   The goal is not to develop English skills but to deepen understanding of the world and to develop essential qualities to live better in a global society.   We believe that speaking and listening activities in English in elementary school level are "a language nest egg."   We strive to develop students who are willing to learn and love English.

A Guideline for English Activities in Kumamoto City (Original)

熊本市の小学校英語活動

熊本市では

英語を聞いたり話したりする活動を通して、次のようなことを目指します。

Fine,
thank you,
and you?

Hello!
How are you?

国際理解の基礎づくり
世界の言葉や文化への関心を高めます。

コミュニケーションの基礎づくり
積極的にコミュニケーションを図ろうとする態度を育てます。

人間形成の土台づくり
国際社会においてよりよく生きる資質を養うのです。
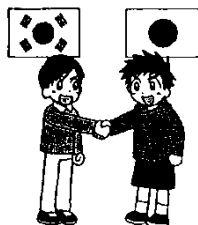
英語にふれることを通して、子どもたちの世界を広げましょう。英語そのものの習得がねらいではなく、世界を理解し、国際社会でよりよく生きる基礎を育てましょう。小学校での英語を話したり聞いたりする活動は、「言葉の貯金」と考えます。もっと英語を学びたい、英語が好きだという子どもを育てましょう。

A Sample Lesson Plan Created by an ALT for School A

Form **3** ( ) Elementary School

LESSON PLANNING FORM				
PERIOD	CLASS	SUBJECT	TEACHER	
3年14年		Numbers	Last lesson	
ACTIVITY			HRT	ALT	MIN

ACTIVITY	HRT	ALT	MIN
I. Greeting			
II. Today's lesson: (Numbers) teach 1-10; if they already know teach 11-20 Practice			
dance		カーム①	
GAME: play music & students walk around. stop the music & shout a number. Students make groups of that number, and sit. Ex: I shout number '3', students make groups of 3 and sit down. check the groups Start over again!		先生が'3'といったら三人組を作って座る	
		カーム②	
GAME: [Sticky Fingers:] (日本語explanation する) 3 Students grab the teacher's fingers. The teacher gives a key number. If the teacher says that number, the students run to the far wall. If the teacher tags a kid, they are out. OR if the student go when the teacher hasn't said the word, they've out. Repeat until only one kid is left... Keep going!		三人ずつおこなう 三人は先生の指をつかむ 先生がキーナンバーを言うと 三人はかべに向かって走る 先生がだれかを タッチ lets 先生がまだキーナンバーを 言ってないとき アウト 行ったら アウト	

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Appendix 17

Questionnaire on Students' Cultural Understanding, and Positive and Negative Perceptions of EA (School A) (Translation)

2 February 2007

XXX elementary school Year 3 Class ＿＿ Name ＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

Please let me know any aspects you found in today's EA that were different from Japan or similar to Japan.

Please let me know satisfied points and unsatisfied points in today's EA lesson.

Thank you for writing a lot of comments!

Yohei Murayama
The University of York

Appendix 18

Questionnaire on Students' Cultural Understanding, and Positive and Negative Perceptions of EA (School A) (Original)

2007 年 2 月 2 日

XXX 小　3 年　　組　　名前

今日の XXX 先生との英会話の時間で、日本とはちがうなあと思ったことや、日本とおなじだなあと気づいたことがあったら教えてください。

今日の英会話の時間で、うれしかったことや、ざんねんだったこと、など、あなたが感じたことを教えてください。

たくさん書いてくれて、ありがとうございました！

ヨーク大学　村山陽平

Appendix 19

Questionnaire on Reactions After Class (School A) (Translation)

June 2007
XXX Elementary School Year 4 Class ___ Name _____

You had EA with XXX on Friday 15 June, and learned about weather.   Could you let me know what you did after that class?

Have you talked about EA on 15 June with someone (your family, friends, etc.) between that day and today?   Please circle (O) one of the following answers:

I haven't talked with someone.

I have talked with someone (→Please answer to the following question!)

If you have talked with someone, please let me know who you have talked with, and what was the talk like.   For example, you can write like "I taught my mother about words on weather".   In this way, please write as much as you remember.

Thank you for writing a lot of comments!

Yohei Murayama
The University of York

Appendix 20

Questionnaire on Reactions After Class (School A) (Original)

2007年6月

XXX 小　4年　　組　名前

6月15日（金曜日）に、みなさんはXXX 先生と英会話の時間がありました。天気の言い方を習いました。その時間のあとのことについて、みなさんに教えてほしいことがあります。

6月15日の英会話の時間が終わってから今日までに、家族や友だちなど、だれかと、この日の英会話の時間に習ったことを話しましたか？次のふたつの答えのうち、どちらかを〇で囲んでください。

・だれとも話さなかった

・だれかと話した　（→下の質問にも答えてください！）

だれかと話したという人は、だれと、どんなことを話したのか、教えてください。たとえば、「お母さんに、天気の言い方を英語で何と言うのかを教えました。」というふうに、思い出せるだけ、いくつでも書いてください。

たくさん書いてくれて、ありがとうございました！

ヨーク大学　村山陽平

Appendix 21

Summary on the Reasons to study English outside school (School A)

	Reasons	Who decided?	Length of study	Where to study
SA15	English would be useful in the future.	By myself	1 year	Family-run English school
SA34	English would be useful when I go abroad in the future.	By myself	1 year	Family-run English school
SA64	I like English. I want to talk in English. Besides, my elder sister was studying there.	By myself	1-2 years	Chain English school
SA6	My parents suggested learning English. I also thought it would be better to learn English for the future.	Parents By myself	4-5years	Chain English school
SA65	I wanted to learn English somewhere before, but I didn't because I didn't have time. Even so, my father said I should learn English.	My father.	2-3 years	Home
SA31	My mother was in the US before. So I was familiar with English since childhood.	My mother	Since childhood	Cram school Home
SA35	I learned English when I went to Open Campus in a private lower secondary school for prospective students.	My friend invited me.	1 day	Private lower-secondary school
SA48	English lessons were free when I took math and Japanese in cram school.	Cram school		Cram school
SA81	I thought English will be useful in the future.	By myself	2 years	Cram school
SA61	I learned English when I went to Open Campus in a private lower-secondary school for prospective students.	Interested in that school.	1 day	Private lower-secondary school
SA51	My mother suggested attending.	My mother	During one summer vacation	Cram school
SA80	My mother	My mother		Cram school
SA44	My grandmother said I should learn English. She taught me English before.	My grandmother	One year	Cram school
SA82	My elder brother and sister were learning English, and they seemed enjoying.	My elder brother and sister		Home
SA11	My friend recommended.	My friend	One year	Family-run English school
SA46	I want to go to a private lower-secondary school.	Myself		Three different cram schools

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Glossary

Term	Meaning
ALM	Audiolingual Method
ALT	Assistant Language Teacher
CAH	Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis
Course of Study	The national standard of teaching contents in Japan
EA	English Activities. Following MEXT (2001b), this study calls English conversation as a part of the Period for Integrated Study in elementary school "English activities".
EIU	Education for International Understanding (*Kokusairikai-kyouiku* in Japanese)
HRT	Home room teacher
Kokusairikai-kyouiku	Original term for "Education for International Understanding"
MEXT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Japan)
MIC	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications
Period for Integrated Study	A cross-curricular subject in the Japanese school education system which stresses involving activities such as learning local food with guest teachers, communicating with people from foreign countries.
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment

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