

An analysis of lesson plans developed to meet the Japanese Ministry of Education's

"English Activities" Mandate

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Abstract

This project was undertaken to examine one Japanese primary school's English lesson plans, created to meet the goals of "English Activities" issued by the Japanese Ministry of Education. This project was based on the fact that The Japanese Ministry of Education has not developed concrete curriculum for "English Activities," even though "English Activities" will be a core subject from 2011 in primary schools.

Four lesson plans were analyzed based on a framework consisting of communicative competence, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and language learning in general. In the categories, the following components are included: sociolinguistic and strategic competencies; instructional materials; teacher as facilitator; student-centered learning styles; sociocultural backgrounds; scaffolding and risk-free environments.

In conclusion, it has been shown that teachers in the primary school respond to the government's goals by designing lesson plans which emphasize communication abilities in English. In addition, in the larger context, it is evident that in-depth lesson plans, teaching materials, learning environments and teachers' training need more attention. Two critical issues are also proposed: The first is the importance of assessment; the second is the importance of introducing words and phonics. The issues

are proposed for better English teaching in primary schools. This project will contribute to moving toward the achievement of the Japanese Ministry of Education's goal of "English Activities" in primary schools in Japan.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This paper focuses on an analysis of the new English teaching objectives of primary schools in Japan and will focus on the lesson plans of one school and its response to the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT)¹. In the past, MEXT has been reformed and has already changed school curricula to improve English education in both middle and high schools. However, in 2008, MEXT announced a further mandate so that by 2011 English (a Foreign Language Activity) would be a mandatory subject for Grades five and six in primary schools. Primary schools include students from Grade one (six-year-olds) to Grade six (twelve- -year-olds). MEXT 's overall goal in Foreign Language Activities is:

To form the foundation of pupil's (sic) communication abilities through foreign languages while developing the understanding of languages and cultures through various experiences, fostering a positive attitude toward communication, and familiarizing pupils with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign languages.

(MEXT, 2009, p. 1)

MEXT has further framed Foreign Language Activities for Grades 5 and 6 as follows:

1. Instruction should be given on the following items in order to help pupils actively engage in communication in a foreign language:

(a) To experience the joy of communication in the foreign language.

(b) To actively listen to and speak in the foreign language.

(c) To learn the importance of verbal communication.

2. Instruction should be given on the following items in order to deepen the experiential understanding of the languages and cultures of Japan and foreign countries:

(a) To become familiar with the sounds and rhythms of the foreign language, to learn its differences from the Japanese language, and to be aware of the interesting aspects of language and its richness.

(b) To learn the differences in ways of living, customs and events between Japan and foreign countries and to be aware of various points of view and ways of thinking.

(c) To experience communication with people of different cultures and to deepen the understanding of culture. (MEXT, 2009, p. 1)

Thus, MEXT emphasizes the importance of communicating in a foreign language and an understanding of different cultures. As an English teacher in Japan for 17 years, I believe that before implementing English teaching in primary schools, several issues have to be considered. In particular, one of the key challenges surrounding MEXT's

new mandate is the lack of a definite curriculum. In addition, MEXT has not indicated how teachers' training for teaching a foreign language will be conducted. The problem is that teachers at primary schools did not learn approaches for teaching a language when they took their teachers' certificates because they were not assigned to teach a foreign language at primary levels. As well, assessment, although critical to the teaching-learning process, has not been addressed.

In this paper, I examine how one primary school has addressed the question of curriculum for English teaching by designing original lesson plans that its teachers believe matches MEXT's new ideas. In addition, I hope to illuminate the gaps between the government's new educational policy and practical issues raised in primary schools.

I seek to address two main questions:

- 1) In what ways has one primary school in Japan demonstrated MEXT's objectives for "Foreign Language Activities" as evidenced in the design of their "Foreign Language Activities" lesson plans?
- 2) In what ways do the lesson plans align with the language methods or approaches for the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL)?

In order to contextualize the changes mandated by MEXT, I first describe a brief history of English education in Japan as it profoundly relates to English language

teaching. In Chapter 2, I examine literature which is relevant to English as a Foreign Language teaching. In Chapter 3, I analyze four lesson plans from one primary school to address research questions one and two. Finally, in Chapter 4, I draw conclusions from my analyses and make recommendations for future primary level EFL teaching in Japan.

History of English Education in Japan

Two important turning points can be identified which have affected English education in Japan: the Meiji Restoration and Globalization. The Meiji Restoration (1867-68) refers to a series of historical events from the destruction of the Tokugawa Shogunate to the establishment of the new Meiji government. After more than two hundred years of “national isolation” (1639-1854) under the Tokugawa Shogunate Government, Japan decreed the Meiji Restoration. The Meiji Era (1868-1911) is historically important because the national Ministry of Education was established in 1871. From the beginning of the new era, English was taught in middle schools (now, they are secondary schools) and national universities (Sasaki, 2008). However, at that time, the population who entered middle schools and universities was very small. In this sense, English was a language limited to the elite. Thereafter, the Ministry of Education established a national School System in 1881, and English was introduced officially in

middle schools and open to all students (Imura, 2003).

In accordance with the opening of the country to the world, the public realized its lack of progress in relation to Western countries. This lack of progress included the economy, politics and systems of government, technology, and academic fields (Kitao, Kitao, Nozawa, and Yamamoto, 1985). Japan tried to catch up with the rest of the world, and so learning foreign languages such as English, French, and German was considered important (Butler, 2007) as it often seems to be today. In the Meiji Era, English was not considered the only important language. Aso and Amano (1972) pointed out that 170 foreign teachers taught in Japanese schools during this era. Teachers' nationalities varied, for "the leaders of those days believed the only way to develop Japan rapidly was to receive guidance from foreigners" (p. 9), regardless of their country of origin.

However, as English was recognized "as the one tongue which would best open the door to form contacts of commercial, legal, political, and social value" (Brownell, 1967, p. 41), English became the most important language in school education. Since the Meiji Era, "the English language has been taught continuously in Japanese schools [in the middle and secondary schools], except for a brief interruption immediately preceding and during World War II" (p. 43). However, until 1945 only 20% of elementary graduates went to middle school where students could receive English

education; therefore, English education was still for the elite (Sasaki, 2008). In 1947, two years after World War II ended, English education restarted in Japan. Furthermore, in 1947, nine-year compulsory education (six-year elementary; three-year middle school education) was mandated and, at the same time English became a compulsory subject in middle schools. In 1947, the release of the policy document “Suggested Course of Study for English for Lower Secondary Schools” announced a policy shift and definite expectations that English would be taught in Lower Secondary Schools (middle schools). This was not an unusual move as Japan has a national Course of Study which is the standard for school curricula from kindergarten to high schools, and has been prescribed by MEXT.

English education has also been influenced more recently by “globalization”. Giddens (1990) has defined globalization as “the intensification of the worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (p. 64). Over the past two decades, people in Japan have understood the importance of acquiring a common language for globalization. Block and Cameron (2002) have pointed out the significance of language acquisition for global communication as follows:

Distance is not an issue for these non-local networks, but language remains an

issue of some practical importance: global communication requires not only a shared channel (like the internet or video conferencing) but also a shared *linguistic* code. For many participants in global exchanges, the relevant code(s) will have been learned rather than natively acquired. (p. 1)

In tandem with a flood of “globalization,” the Japanese Ministry of Education recognized the importance of English and decided to introduce a new subject, “oral communication” in the Course of Study for Secondary Schools in 1989. In the context of introducing “oral communication,” the Ministry of Education considered that to learn a common linguistic code in globalization, the Japanese need to strive to learn English well as a means to further the opportunities of the Japanese on the world stage.

Contemporary Perspectives on English Instruction in Japan

English is highly important in Japan for several reasons. Here, I focus on the contemporary significance of English in the context of school. English is taught as one of the important subjects from grade seven in middle schools in Japan. The language continues to be taught until the end of secondary school (Grade 12). Before entering secondary schools and universities, students must take an English examination. At these stages, reading and writing (reading comprehension and translation from Japanese to English) skills are the main focus, even though almost all public and private secondary

schools set several listening questions in the entrance examination of secondary schools. Teachers have traditionally emphasized grammar and vocabulary to comprehend the textbook in the classroom with little emphasis on speaking and listening.

Of critical note are the significant discrepancies between the goals of the Course of Study issued by MEXT which have been heavily influenced by current scholarly views of how to teach English and what teachers actually do in classrooms. The English classes are mainly *yakudoku*, translation (direct translation) from English sentences to Japanese (e.g. O'Donnell, 2005; Gorsuch, 1998). Duke (1986) pointed out that in the typical English classes:

The overwhelming number of classroom teachers of English employ the direct translation method, which is based primarily on translating written English passages into Japanese. Studying in Japan is thus based heavily on a laborious memorization of grammatical rules and English vocabularies in their Japanese equivalent. Very little oral English is used during the English class. (p. 153.)

Furthermore, Duke raised the importance of considering the viewpoint of native speakers of English. Native speakers think that “it is senseless to teach written English without a base in verbal skills. ...because they [English classes] fail to provide verbal skills essential for an effective understanding of written English” (p. 154). However, it

is true that the *yakudoku* instruction still prevails in English classes, even though the “oral communication” class has been allotted once a week in secondary schools since 1989. The dilemma of students is that they want to improve their English for communication skills, but they also have to study English to pass the entrance examination.

2003 Action Plan to Cultivate “Japanese with English Abilities”

To reform English education with respect to communication skills in the context of globalization, MEXT established a policy “Regarding the establishment of an Action Plan to cultivate ‘Japanese with English Abilities’” (hereafter “Action Plan”) into Japan’s Course of Study in 2003. The rationale of the Action Plan was the necessity of communicative English ability for all Japanese students. MEXT emphasized the importance of English and communication abilities in English:

For children living in the 21st century, it is essential for them to acquire communication abilities in English as a common international language. In addition, English abilities are important in terms of linking our country with the rest of the world, obtaining the world’s understanding and trust, enhancing our international presence and further developing our nation. (MEXT, 2003)

The goal was for all Japanese students to develop practical English communication skills depending on their level of education. The goals issued by MEXT outlined below were targeted for students in lower secondary (junior high school) and secondary school (high school). As the MEXT Action Plan states:

- (1) On graduation from a junior high school, students can conduct basic communication with regard to areas such as greetings, responses, or topics relating to daily life. (English-language abilities for graduates should be the third level of The Eiken Test in Practical English Proficiency (STEP) on average.²)
- (2) On graduation from a senior high school, students can conduct basic communication with regard to topics; for example, relating to daily life. (English-language abilities for graduates should be the second level or the pre-second level of STEP on average.) (MEXT, 2003)

MEXT also set some goals for reform in terms of improvement of teaching methods, teaching materials, teaching ability of English teachers, and motivation for learning English. Even though the results of an action plan in the Course of Study has not yet been shown, “English Activities” in the primary school curriculum have been introduced. Of significance, the directives of the curriculum lowers the initial age of English learners from lower secondary school students to Grade 5 students in primary

schools.

“English Activities” in Primary Schools in Japan

The 2003 Action Plan was not the first major reform affecting English instruction to be instituted by the government in recent decades. In October 1998, MEXT announced a revised course of study which had been changed drastically compared to the previous version. In this Course of Study (1998), MEXT stressed the significance of communicative competence: “In order for students to develop practical communicative competence in the target language, great emphasis will be placed on the practice in the situations where the target language is actually used. Listening and speaking practice will be particularly emphasized at lower secondary school” [middle schools]. Thus, MEXT has reformed the Course of Study to focus on students’ communicative competence in a foreign language. In addition, in the revised course of study, time allotment for major compulsory subjects such as: Japanese, mathematics, social studies, and science was reduced. In the time that was saved, children in primary schools from Grades 3 onwards learn “International Understanding” in the period of “Integrated Study”, one of the new school subjects. The overall objectives of Integrated Study were to help

children develop capability and ability to discover problems by themselves and

solve those problems properly. [...] [Integrated Study] also aims at helping children learn how to learn and reason, develop mind [sic] to independently and creatively cope with problem-solving activities and/or inquiring activities, and deepen their understanding of their own way of life (MEXT, 1998).

Integrated Study is comprised of topics such as Environmental Studies, Welfare Studies, Information Gathering and International Understanding. All areas in Integrated Study are instructed in Japanese. Children have Integrated Study three blocks a week for 45 minutes per block.

The table below provides information about area, example activity, and what children do in Integrated Study. For example, in environmental studies, children do field work. As their practical activity, they visit a car factory.

Table 1: Integrated Study

Area	Example Activity	What children do
Environmental Studies	Field work	Children visit a car factory. Children reap a field.
Welfare Studies	Volunteer activities	Children visit senior citizens' homes.
Information Gathering	Computer skills	Children retrieve and gather necessary

		information using Internet.
International Understanding	English Activities	Children engage in songs and games in English.

Even though “International Understanding” was one of the subjects in Integrated Study, MEXT did not provide a specific concrete curriculum for “International Understanding”. Therefore, primary schools had to design their own curricula. However, MEXT issued the goal of “International Understanding”, which was “to expose children to foreign language and help them get familiar with foreign life and culture” (MEXT, 1998). According to MEXT’s goal, teachers were to teaching English in “International Understanding”.

Later, MEXT revised a part of The Course of Study in December 2003. This became The New Course of Study and this term is used widely in the field of education at present. In The New Course of Study, MEXT changed the title “International Understanding” to “English Activities”. That is, “English Activities” was placed under the umbrella of the larger frame of Integrated Study. The government restricted its offering to Grades 5 and 6 school children respectively. However, as most primary schools could not stop teaching “International Understanding” abruptly, schools continued to teach the subject. The problem was that MEXT did not issue any curricula

for “English Activities,” so each school had difficulties in introducing the subject.

More importantly, in April 2008, MEXT announced that “English Activities” would be stipulated as a compulsory subject in primary schools from 2011—a highly controversial proposal. Prior to 2008, there had been long and considerable controversies with respect to teaching English as a compulsory subject in primary schools. Controversy surrounding “English Activities” as a core subject arose. The most influential opponent was the newly inaugurated Minister of Education, Bunbei Ibuki. Just before the announcement of the New Course of Study, he opposed the government policy to lower the age for primary students to study English as a compulsory subject in the curriculum. He insisted that primary schools had no place teaching English, and that the first requirement was that students understand Japanese history and culture, and achieve high levels in Japanese language competence (“Shuyou kakuryou,” 2009). In spite of the opposition, the full implementation of The New Course of Study starts in 2011 with a built-in three-year transitional period from 2008 to allow teachers to make the required adjustments. In Japan, it is common for teachers to receive teachers’ manuals, guides and textbooks. However, still, no in-service preparation has been outlined to help teachers with these adjustments and no curriculum documents have been prepared. Therefore, no distribution for teaching materials makes teachers feel

uneasy about teaching “English Activities”. Individual teachers within individual schools have been left to their own devices.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Best Practices in Second Language Education

In this chapter, I review the literature on second language teaching because it is critical to review theoretical approaches to teaching to recognize the best ways that teachers can teach English effectively. I will also use my findings to examine the lessons prepared by the teachers. Considering the situation in Japan, practically, students learn English in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, not in an English as a Second Language (ESL) context because they have rare opportunities to use English outside of the classroom. Even in the classroom, students generally concentrate on the content of the text by employing translation. Even though much of the literature has been conducted in an ESL context (ex. Asian students in American classrooms) much of this research literature is still applicable to the Japanese/English teaching context and the MEXT's educational goals for English language learning in primary school. The chapter has three parts: first, I discuss communicative competence; second, I examine communicative teaching approaches; and last, I talk about underlying theoretical perspectives on EFL teaching.

Communication Competence

The main goal of MEXT is for students to be able to communicate in English.

Here, I discuss communication competence which is emphasized in the goal of Foreign Language Activities. Communication competence is “a term originally proposed by the sociolinguist Dell Hymes” (as cited in Brandl, 2008, p. 276). Hymes (1972) states that when a person acquires a language, “he or she acquires knowledge not only as grammatical but also as appropriate” (p. 277). That is, he or she acquires “competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner” (p. 277). Thus, Hymes’ consideration of communication competence entails linguistic knowledge such as grammar and vocabulary and knowledge of how a language is used in a social and a contextual situation. Communication competence is now generally considered as “proficiency in another language [that] includes much more than knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, or linguistic competence” (as cited in Brandl, p. 276). Further, Canale and Swain (1980) state that communication competence can be thought of in four distinct ways: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic. Below is an explanation of each of these.

- 1) Grammatical competence: this competence is “understood to include knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence- grammar semantics, and phonology” (Canale & Swain, p. 29).
- 2) Sociolinguistic competence: this competence consists of “sociocultural rules of

use and rules of discourse” (Canale & Swain, p. 30). These rules are important when the understanding “between the literal meaning of an utterance and the speaker’s intention” (Canale & Swain, p. 30) is vague. This competence is also to know when to start, end conversations and to say something appropriately in a certain social situation (Hymes, 1972).

- 3) Discourse competence: this competence is “the interpretation of individual message elements in terms of their interconnectedness and of how meaning is represented in relationship to the entire discourse or text” (Richards & Rogers, p. 160).
- 4) Strategic competence: this competence to “communicate effectively” (Brandl, 2008, p. 6). This competence is comprised of “verbal and nonverbal communication strategies” (Canale & Swain, p. 30). They supplement communication interruption because of “performance variables or to insufficient competence” (Canale & Swain, p. 30, see also Celce-Murcia; Dörnyei, & Thurell, 1995).

Of critical note, communication competence is not only to acquire language usage and grammar but also to acquire strategies on how to use the language in a social context.

To put it more broadly and fully, communicative competence “entails the ability to

interpret and enact appropriate social behaviors and requires the active involvement of the learner in the production of the target language” (Boyd & Maloof, 2000, p. 165; Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurell, 1995). Based on these conceptions of communicative competence, second language scholars have come to emphasize the importance of the social context of learning. In what follows, to achieve the goal of communication language skills, I discuss communicative language teaching.

Communicative Teaching Approaches

The common criticism of English education in Japan is its lack of facilitation of “communicative abilities, in particular, oral skills, that is, speaking and listening” (Butler, 2005; Ellis, 1996; Hirata, 2008). As a consequence, students cannot speak English after a six-year English education program (Ellis, 1996; Hirata, 2008). Therefore, MEXT has been reforming the Course of Study to enhance students’ communicative abilities since 1998.

According to Chamot and O’Malley (1994), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) “emphasize[s] the development of interpersonal communicative skills as the major goal in language learning” (p. 86). The goal of CLT is “to promote the development of real-life language skills by engaging the learner in contextualized, meaningful, and communicative-oriented learning tasks” (Brandl, 2008, p. 22). In CLT,

the curriculum is organized “around the language functions needed for interactive communication (for example, greeting, requesting, apologizing) and semantic topics and notions (time, location, frequency, and so on), rather than a strict grammatical sequence” (Chamot & O’Malley, p. 86). Of note, in CLT, “often there is no text, grammar rules are not presented, classroom arrangement is nonstandard, students are expected to interact primarily with each other rather than with the teacher, and correction of errors may be absent or infrequent” (Richards & Rogers, 2001, p. 166). In this learning style, teachers’ roles are guides and facilitators (Breen & Candlin, 1980; Dubin & Olshtain, 1986; Richards & Rodgers, 2001) and they also support and encourage learners. Broadly speaking, as Brandl (2008) notes, CLT does not “adhere to one particular theory or method” (p. 6). Rather, it is a “diverse set of principles that reflect a communicative view of language and language learning” (Richards & Rogers, 2001, p. 172). Practically, in western countries, CLT has become “the dominant teaching approach for second language acquisition” (Hirata, 2008). Yoon (2004), for example, researched CLT practices in classrooms and showed its effectiveness in the EFL curriculum in Korea where English was introduced in primary schools from 1997. As well, in Japan, CLT is gradually introduced in secondary schools “to impose a communicative approach to language teaching” (Cross, 2005; see also Butler, 2005).

However, even at the secondary school level, literature on successful teaching of CLT is in Japan is still scant.

In the following section, I describe instructional materials of three kinds to explain how a wide variety of materials support CLT. Richards and Rogers (2001) consider that materials have “the primary role of promoting communicative language use” (p. 168). Instructional materials can be text-based, task-based, and realia (Hwang, 2005; Richards & Rogers, 2001; Wesche & Skehan, 2002). Text-based materials are various kinds of textbooks “designed to direct and support Communicative Language Teaching” (Richards & Rogers, 2001, p. 169). Task-based materials consist of “[a] variety of games, role plays, simulations, and task-based communication activities” (p. 169) to support CLT. Realia include “[...] signs, magazines, advertisements, newspapers, or graphic and visual sources around which communicative activities can be built, such as maps, pictures, symbols, graphs, and charts” (p. 170). Besides, Brandl (2008) suggests other realia such as: “real-life telephone conversations, messages left on answering machines or voice mail” (p. 13). Even if children cannot readily understand real-life conversations by native speakers of English, to listen to and experience authentic materials is a worthwhile endeavor. Wilkins (1976) advised using authentic materials which “have not been specially written or recorded for the foreign learner, but

which were originally directed at a native-speaking audience” (p. 79). Other researchers have also pointed out the significance of using authentic materials in the ESL classrooms focused on the CLT approach (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986; Hwang, 2005; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Wesche & Skehan, 2002). When I consider the context of Japanese primary schools, usage of task-based materials and realia is essential because role playing, simulations and reading signs and advertisements are practical activities to facilitate oral language competencies which MEXT emphasizes. Furthermore, Chamot and O’Malley (1994) think “authentic reading materials such as advertisements, menus, newspaper articles, and signs are preferred” (p. 87) even for beginners. Authentic material will enhance children’s interests to know different types of advertisements or restaurant menus in English speaking countries. Therefore, although the emphasis of CLT has shifted educators away from strictly text-based, grammar-focused instruction, reading and writing are still important components.

In summary, considering the two sections briefly reviewed above, researchers consider CLT an effective teaching approach to acquire communicative competence. In practice, CLT is implemented in East Asian countries as well as in the West for foreign language acquisition. In the Japanese context, it is important for primary school teachers to know how to introduce CLT in the classroom. MEXT has to support in-service

teachers wholly by providing courses to introduce communicative language teaching because “to prepare effective language teachers, it is necessary to have a theory of effective language teaching” (Richards, 1990, p. 4). It is for this reason that the focus of my project is an analysis of lessons for “English Activities” designed by one primary school in Japan.

Best Practices: Teaching in General

There are a few best practices from the general literature on teaching that are also relevant to primary EFL teaching. This is particularly so given that children in Grades 5 and 6 need plenty of support to tackle a language that they seldom – if ever – encounter in their home communities. First, I describe the underlying theoretical approach to ESL teaching. In recent years, sociocultural considerations have influenced language teachers all over the world. For example, Canale and Swain (1980) consider that language learning requires knowledge of linguistic rules of the language being taught and various social and cultural characteristics (see also Lantolf, 1996; van Lier, 1994). That is, language learning relates to understanding that society or culture. Culture is a way of life and it is defined as “the ideas, customs, arts, and tools that characterize a group of people in a given period of time” (Brown, 2007, p. 188). Culture affects people’s behavior, way of thinking and judging. Thus, culture

as an ingrained set of behaviors and modes of perception, becomes highly important in the learning of a second language. A language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture (p. 189).

In other words, to learn a new language is also to learn a new culture (Brown, 2007; Watts-Taffe & Truscott, 2000).

As well as sociocultural considerations, researchers have also highlighted the significance of teachers' scaffolding students' learning and maintaining a risk-free learning environment. For example, Lee, Butler and Tippins (2007) believe that scaffolding students in language learning, especially students' learning in a foreign language, is very important (see also Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; Ellis, 1998). Scaffolding, a technique used widely in general classroom learning, is "the process by which experts assist novices to achieve a goal or solve a problem that novices could not achieve or solve alone" (Boyd & Maloof, 2000, p. 185). Thus, scaffolding helps learners move from one level of learning to the next (Watts-Taffe & Truscott, 2000). In the context of Japanese English education, children need effective scaffolding in learning a foreign language.

A risk-free learning environment is very important for learning in general. Particularly, language learners worry about learning a new language (i.e. Drucker, 2003; Lee, Butler & Tippins, 2007; Watts-Taffe & Truscott, 2000; Williams, 2001; Young, 1996). It has been shown that students can successfully acquire second languages in a risk-free environment, where the focus is on communication skills (Miele, 2007). Therefore, teachers' responsibility include lessening students' anxiety and fear in learning new languages (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986). Teachers need to create an atmosphere where students do not "feel shy about speaking or asking questions" (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986, p. 77). In addition, teachers should not call on students individually so as not to make students timid or insecure (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986). Also helpful is when teachers sometimes use their first language for instruction to support students. Together, sociocultural considerations, scaffolding and a risk-free environment are relevant to the teaching of Japanese students in Grades 5 and 6, who are required to learn English as a foreign language for the first time.

In addition, in the context of Japan, the issue of *katakana*, loan words, has to be referred to in a foreign language learning. *Katakana* are the words which have the same meaning as and similar pronunciation to original English words and are used as Japanese words. To teach loan words in "English Activities" in primary schools is

another important task. According to Honna's research (1995), English words "constitute 10% of the lexicon[s] of a standard Japanese dictionary" (p. 45); 13% of English words are used in daily conversations; and he points out that "60-70% of new words in the annually revised dictionaries of neologisms are from English" (p. 45). The influx of English words which are used in the form of *katakana* tend to confuse children about whether *katakana* is derived from Japanese or English words. Primary school children need to recognize that a large number of *katakana* words are borrowed from mainly English and all *katakana* words do not always fit in the Japanese context. In such circumstances, it is essential for children to know about *katakana* and to understand the pronunciation of the original English loan words.

Finally, I need to refer to another issue in the context of Japanese English education. As I mentioned earlier, children rarely have opportunities to speak English outside the classroom. It would seem necessary then for children to learn English letters and words even at the primary level to facilitate linguistic competence, for reading is also another skill in communicative competence. I will discuss this issue in chapter 4. In the following sections, disadvantages of CLT in the Japanese primary school context will be discussed as a general commentary.

Disadvantages of CLT in the Japanese Primary School Context

In conducting CLT to acquire communicative competence in Japanese primary school classrooms, three problems have to be considered. First, the issue of class size; second, the issue of the linkage between “English Activities” in primary schools and English lessons in middle schools; third, the issue of the linkage of language learning in the classroom and language outside the classroom. Three issues are discussed in the following.

1) The issue of class size

In Japan, a classroom has about 40 children and their desks are neatly arranged facing the black or white board (Lewis, 1996). Therefore, it is a problem for conducting interactive classroom activities. As it is desirable to do pair or group work in “English Activities”, the teacher has to consider class arrangement. Teachers’ challenge in Japanese primary schools is to reconsider managing classroom organization in order to scaffold children’s learning and interact with children during the lesson as much as possible.

2) The issue of the linkage between “English Activities” in primary schools and English lessons in middle schools

Since there is no unified and concrete curriculum of “English Activities”, currently each school designs characteristic programs in English Activities classes. As a

consequence, children's interests and motivation for learning English and proficiency in English will vary. Therefore, one of the challenges for teachers is to bridge the gap among children in terms of English proficiency. For this reason, the linkage between what children have learned in primary schools and what students will learn in secondary schools in the district imperatively has to be considered.

The critical problem lies in the fact that the ultimate goal of studying English in middle schools is to pass an entrance examination for high school. For that reason, students study English focused on grammar, memorize vocabulary, and practice comprehension questions. Accordingly, it seems useless for children to learn "English Activities" in primary schools if children cannot learn English which focuses on communicative competence in middle schools. Teachers should consider the linkage between "English Activities" in primary school and English classes in middle schools. According to MEXT, students will study English one more class per week in middle schools. That is, one English class will be added in the curriculum in the New Course of Study from 2012 onward. (see Appendix 1 and 2). Although MEXT does not mention how middle schools should design lesson plans so far, each middle school should use the additional English class effectively. If teachers think students should enhance communicative competence which students have learned in primary schools, teachers

have to design curriculum which have the linkage between English lessons in primary schools and those in middle schools.

3) The issue of the linkage of language learning in the classroom and language outside the classroom

Nunan (1991) points out five characteristics of CLT. One of them, which is not referred to in Chamot and O'Malley's literature (1994), is that to enhance communicative competence, "an attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom" is necessary (Nunan, p. 279). This characteristic is problematic in the Japanese school context. As Japan is a monolingual country, people rarely have the opportunity to speak English unless they have to use English for business purposes. In reality, students from primary schools to high schools do not have any opportunities to use English which they learned in classrooms. Teachers have to consider this problem seriously. As "English Activities" is stipulated as a core subject for enhancing communicative competence for children, if they learn the subject, they need to keep their acquired competence. One possible solution is that schools support after-class activities such as an English Speaking Society (ESS) where children keep and enhance their English communicative competence. ESS is a popular after-class activity from primary schools to high schools in Japan. Students in ESS are

intended to communicate with other members in English. English teachers or teachers who are interested in teaching English instruct and supervise the activity.

Above, the issues of communicative competence, communicative language teaching (CLT) approach and English language learning in general are discussed. It is shown that CLT and essential components in teaching a foreign language in general facilitate learners acquiring communicative competence. On the other hand, it has also been shown that disadvantages and difficulties exist in implementing CLT in the Japanese primary school context. In the next chapter, four lesson plans will be analyzed which are being introduced during the built-in three-year transitional period before English is fully implemented as a core subject. I examine the lesson plans in terms of the important frameworks found in the literature on communicative competence, the CLT approach and teaching a foreign language in general.

Chapter 3: Analyses

In this chapter, a content analysis is employed to examine four lesson plans of Ohmama Primary School. Content analysis is a standard method to examine textual information. As Weber defined, content analysis is “a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text” (as cited in Neuendorf, Sage Publications, 2002). I examine whether the lesson plans meet the goals of “English Activities” issued by MEXT. As I stated in Chapter 1, the research questions are:

- 1) In what ways has one primary school in Japan demonstrated MEXT’s objectives for “Foreign Language Activities” as evidenced in the design of their “Foreign Language Activities” lesson plans?
- 2) In what ways do the lesson plans align with the methods or approaches of the teaching of English as a Second Language as outlined in the literature review?

To answer these questions, I chose Ohmama Primary School’s curriculum for my analysis. The school is in Gunma Prefecture, Kanto Region in Japan. MEXT designated 614 primary schools in 2008 (MEXT, 2008) as pilot schools which designed their original “English Activities” classes; Ohmama Primary School was one of the schools. I surveyed all pilot schools’ curricula to which I had access. I chose Ohmama’s curriculum because Ohmama Primary School constructed detailed yearly lesson plans

and designed original lessons for their school.

For the analyses, four lesson plans were translated from Japanese into English and were examined according to the criteria which were derived from the categories of communicative competence, CLT and teaching a foreign language in general. The main criteria correspond with the research questions: 1) whether each lesson plan provides sufficient activities and instructional materials to facilitate the development of children's communicative competence, and 2) whether teachers provide appropriate guidance and support for children and whether teachers provide a risk-free learning environment, which are both significant in a foreign language learning.

Items in the framework are categorized in the following:

1. The first framework is based on communicative competence, including:
 - a. Sociolinguistic competence: the ability to say something appropriately in a certain social situation; the ability to know when to start, end conversations and to say something appropriately in a certain social situation
 - b. Strategic competence: the ability to communicate effectively; the ability to use verbal strategies and to know how to use nonverbal communication strategies effectively.

Although Canale and Swain (1980) presented grammatical competence and discourse competence, as they are difficult competencies to introduce in the primary level, I cross them off the framework. With respect to grammatical competence, teachers incorporate English words and expressions that are relevant to “lexical items, rules of syntax and phonology” (p. 29) in grammatical competence. However, teachers introduce English words and expressions not underlining grammatical aspects but incorporating them rather as rote. Therefore, an analysis in terms of grammatical competence is omitted.

2. The second framework is based on communicative language teaching (CLT), including: instructional materials, teacher’s roles and student-centeredness.
 - a. Instructional materials: they are comprised of text-based, task-based and realia.

Text-based: textbooks which are designed to direct or support CLT.

Task-based: games, role plays, simulations and task-based activities.

Realia: authentic instructional materials
 - b. Teacher’s roles: the teacher’s role is a facilitator or guide to enhance children’s learning.
 - c. Student-centeredness: the lesson should be designed to emphasize meaningful communication from children’s point of view. As well, a communicative-oriented learning task emphasizes interaction between children

rather than with the teacher.

3. The third framework is based on language learning in general, including:
 - sociocultural background, scaffolding and a risk-free learning environment.
 - a. Sociocultural background: the knowledge of linguistic rules of being taught and various social and cultural characteristics.
 - b. Scaffolding: the teacher's assistance to help children to move from one level of learning to the next to achieve their goals.
 - c. A risk-free learning environment: a learning environment where children do not feel anxiety or fear.

In my analyses, I selected the 1st, 12th, 20th, and 35th lessons out of a possible 35 “English Activities.” This was a purposeful sample based on the following criteria. The first and the last lessons, lesson one and 35, were selected because it is important to see how English is introduced at the beginning of the term and how it evolved at the end of the year in terms of children's activities and teachers' support. Lesson 12 was selected because gestures vary according to cultures; thus, it is beneficial to examine how this topic was incorporated in the lesson plan. Gestures (non-verbal communication) are also an important aspect of strategic competence. As well, lesson 20 was selected because children were familiar with a lot of loan words through *katakana* in their daily lives. It

is crucial to see how teachers introduce and teach original English words transformed into loan words.

Analysis 1: Lesson1

Lesson 1: Let’s introduce yourself

Objectives	Tell your favourite sports and food. Introduce yourself to your classmates.
Achievement criterion	To learn how to introduce yourself, and how to exchange greetings.
Expression	I like ~.
Materials	Color cards, food cards, name of sports

Procedure

time	Children’s activities	The roles of Home Room Teacher	The roles of Assistant Language Teacher (ALT)	Teachers’ support	Instruc-tional materials
5 min-utes	*Greetings. Hello. Good morning. How are you?	*Greetings.		*Create a good atmosphere for learning.	
35 min-utes	*Listen to ALT’s self-introduction. *Students practice the sentence,	*Ask the ALT to do self-introduction. *The teacher shows food cards and name of	*Introduce him/herself using expression “I like ~”. *The ALT pronounces	*The teacher encourages	*food cards

	<p>“I like ~” using the following words.</p> <p>Pizza, hamburger,</p>	<p>sports to children.</p>	<p>colors, food cards and name of sports.</p>	<p>children to speak out the words.</p>	
	<p>spaghetti, steak, curry and rice/ baseball, soccer, tennis, basketball/red, white, yellow, black blue, green</p> <p>*Children introduce themselves using today’s expressions and words. E.g. Hello. My name is ~. I like (sports). I like (food). I like (color). Good bye.</p>	<p>*The teacher talks with the ALT as the model. *The teacher asks children to talk with ten classmates.</p>	<p>*The ALT talks with a HRT as the model. *The ALT supports and encourages children. The ALT demonstrates right pronunciation to children.</p>	<p>*Teachers explain explicitly.</p>	<p>*color cards *the cards of name of sports</p>
5 minutes	<p>*Reflection on today’s lesson *Greetings. Good bye.</p>			<p>*Teachers point out good points in today’s activities.</p>	

	Framework		Lesson 1
Communicative competence	Sociolinguistic competence		√
	Strategic competence		√
CLT	Instructional materials	text-based	×
		task-based	√
		realia	×
	Teacher's role: a facilitator or a guide		√
Student-centered		√	
Language learning in general	Sociocultural background		×
	Scaffolding		√
	A risk-free learning environment		√

In lesson 1, first of all the teacher says “Hello” and continues to “How are you?”. Then, the teacher demonstrates the objectives of lesson 1. In the category of language learning in general, the introduction of sociocultural background is missing. As lesson 1 is the first English class for children, it is advisable to refer to greetings in Japanese. In addition, the teacher can demonstrate the difference in greeting between Japan and Western countries, for Japanese greet by bowing. In terms of a risk-free learning environment, the teacher creates a good atmosphere. As well, the teacher and the ALT scaffold and support children while children practice and demonstrate conversations between friends for 35 minutes. Both teachers also demonstrate the right English pronunciations while children engage in their activities. In the category of CLT, task-based materials are fully incorporated. The teachers show how to do self-introduction and direct children to talk with ten classmates. While children do their activities in student-centered ways, teachers scaffold and encourage children. In terms of instructional materials, teachers show color cards, food cards, and names of sports but they do not use realia. As Richards and Rogers (2001) consider, we also recognize realia is important to support CLT, it is effective to introduce “‘authentic’, ‘from-life’ materials in the classroom” (p. 170). For example, teachers can use various kinds of fruits in this lesson. Or, teachers can use supermarkets’ or grocery stores’

advertisements so that children can realize similarities and differences of fruits or methods of advertising between Japan and English speaking countries. In the category of communicative competence, sociolinguistic and strategic competences are used. Children learn verbal strategies by introducing themselves and sociocultural rules by experiencing how they start and stop conversations. If I add one expression for natural conversation based on sociocultural rules of discourse, I introduce “How about you?” to ask a friend’s favorite color, food and sports before saying “Good bye” to end their conversation.

Analysis 2: Lesson 12

Lesson 12: Let’s learn about gestures.

Objectives	Children understand that gestures are important in communication. They know that there are various kinds of gestures in different cultures.
Achievement criterion	Children understand different gestures in different cultures. They communicate with classmates using gestures.
Expressions	Hello. How are you? I’m ~.
Materials	Children use their English notebooks.

Procedure

time	Children’s activities	The roles of Home Room Teacher	The roles of Assistant Language Teacher (ALT)	Teachers’ support	Instructional materials

5 minutes	*Greetings. Hello. Good morning. How are you?	*Greetings.	*Greetings.	*Create a good atmosphere for learning.	
35 minutes	*Children listen to teacher's explanation. *Children try to answer some gesture questions. e.g. beckon, money, pointing at something.	*The teacher explains lesson's objectives. *The teacher and the ALT talk with gestures. They show good and bad examples.	*The ALT shows children some gestures. e.g. "hungry", "sleepy". *The ALT takes part in children's	*Teachers talk clearly. *Teachers support children who have difficulties in communication with gestures.	*English notebooks *gesture cards
	*Children in pairs talk with gestures. A: Hello. How are you ~? B: I'm fine/ OK/ good/ so so/happy/ hungry/ sleepy and				

	etc.	*The teacher monitors children and supports them.	activities.		
5 minutes	*Greetings with gestures. Good bye.	*The teacher reflects on today's lesson.		*Teachers point out good points in today's activities.	

Gonensei Shoidou Keikaku. [Lesson Plans for Grade 5]. Translated by Kurosawa.

	Framework		Lesson 12
Communicative competence	Sociolinguistic competence		√
	Strategic competence		√
CLT	Instructional materials	text-based	×
		task-based	√
		realia	×
	Teacher's role: a facilitator or a guide		√
	Student-centered		√

Language learning in general	Sociocultural background		√
	Scaffolding		√
	A risk-free learning environment		√

In lesson 12, with respect to communicative competence, sociolinguistic and strategic competences are incorporated. Children learn nonverbal communication strategies by using gestures in appropriate situations and manners (sociocultural rules of use). Children recognize the gestures in different countries and try to communicate with others not only by using words but also by using gestures. As well, children acquire sociolinguistic competence by conducting conversations between children. In terms of CLT, task-based activities and conversations between children by using gestures are fully incorporated. Children's activities are student-centered and teachers facilitate children's activities. In terms of the category of language learning in general, sociocultural background is covered in the lesson, for children learn various kinds of gestures in different cultures. In addition, teachers scaffold and monitor children's activities. Naturally, teachers create a good atmosphere for learning. However, teachers do not use realia which is an important component of CLT. Although it is difficult to draw gestures in the picture, it is effective if the teachers introduce a book about

gestures such as *Gestures: The do's and taboos of body language* (Axtell, 1991). For example, teachers can make several photocopies of gestures and post them on the blackboard which are not demonstrated by the ALT and show them to children to recognize different gestures in diverse cultures.

In this lesson, the ALT's role is larger than the homeroom teacher because even the homeroom teacher may not know about various kinds of gestures in different cultures thoroughly. In that sense, this lesson is challenging even for the homeroom teacher. The ALT shows some gestures in the western countries. Probably, one of the most typical examples is "beckoning". People in Japan move their palm in a downward direction and move their fingers in an inward direction if they beckon to the person to come closer. On the other hand, in USA and Canada, people use their palm in an upward direction and move their fingers in an inward direction. Due to the different usage of gestures, a person will face an awkward situation in a different culture.

Recognition of various kinds of gestures makes children realize that people in the world live in different cultures. This lesson about learning gestures is beneficial for children to know sociocultural rules of situations and manners by learning gestures.

Analysis 3: Lesson 20

Lesson 20: Let's learn about Loan words

Objectives	Children recognize the different pronunciation between loan words and the original English words.
Achievement criterion	Children notice differences between loan words and the original English words. Children try to pronounce original English words consciously.
Expression	Teachers use some loan words.
Materials	Picture cards. List of loan words. The World Map.

Procedure

Time	Children's activities	The roles of Home Room Teacher	The roles of Assistant Language Teacher (ALT)	Teachers' support	Instructional materials
5 minutes	*Greetings. Hello. Good morning. How are you? *Children answer some questions raised by teachers.	*Greetings. *The teacher asks a few questions to children.	*Greetings. *The teacher asks a few questions to children.	*Create a good atmosphere for learning.	
35 minutes	*Children think and give some loan words. (<i>katakana</i> words)	*The teacher explains lesson's objectives. *The teacher directs			

	<p>*Children try to find out and identify loan words by listening to ALT's pronunciation.</p> <p>e.g. banana, cabbage, lemon, tomato, cake, donut, milk, glove, gorilla, koala, kangaroo, camera, calendar, piano, guitar</p>	<p>children to give some loan words.</p> <p>*The teacher hangs the poster on the blackboard in which picture cards are shown.</p> <p>*The teacher supports children.</p>	<p>*The ALT pronounces loan words on the poster on the blackboard.</p> <p>*The ALT checks answers. As a next activity, the ALT pronounces countries' names and their typical dish or food. e.g. 1 Hi, I'm Ken. <i>Sushi</i> and <i>sukiyaki</i> are from Japan.</p> <p>e.g.2 Hi, I'm Chongi.</p>	<p>*Teachers talk clearly.</p> <p>*The ALT pronounces clearly.</p>	<p>*picture cards</p> <p>*the list of loan words</p> <p>*the world map</p>
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5 minutes			<i>Kimchee</i> and <i>bibinba</i> are from Korea. e.g. 3 Hi, I'm Maria. <i>Pizza</i> and <i>spaghetti</i> are from Italy.	*Teachers point out good points in today's activities.	
	*Reflection on today's lesson *Greetings. Good bye.				

Gonensei Shoidou Keikaku. [Lesson Plans for Grade 5]. Translated by Kurosawa.

	Framework		Lesson 20
Communicative competence	Sociolinguistic competence		√
	Strategic competence		√
CLT	Instructional materials	text-based	×
		task-based	√
		realia	×
	Teacher's role: a		√

	facilitator or a guide		
	Student-centered		√
Language learning in general	Sociocultural background		√
	Scaffolding		√
	A risk-free learning environment		√

In the category of communicative competence, sociolinguistic and strategic competences are incorporated in lesson 20. Children know how to greet, when to start and end conversations by acquiring sociolinguistic rules. Children engage in verbal communication between each other to improve their strategic competences. As children have had experience with more than half of all “English Activities” lessons at this stage, they know what they are doing and what they should be doing. The homeroom teacher and the ALT also are accustomed to their roles at this stage. Besides, they may notice some children who need teacher’s support to accomplish his/her task. In this lesson, children learn loan words. In terms of the category of language learning in general, the lesson is designed to teach children sociocultural differences by introducing loan words. Some of the loan words may be difficult to recognize for children because of the difference of intonation between the original pronunciation of words and the loan words

used in Japan. As children have already recognized many loan words which they encountered in textbooks of other subjects (Appendix 3), it is effective for the teacher to show the spellings of loan words at this stage. Introducing letters and words at this point may enhance children's learning achievement. In addition, teachers scaffold children during task-based activities and create a good atmosphere for learning. In terms of the category of CLT, teachers play roles as facilitators to promote children's activities, and children's activities are student-centered. However, with respect to instructional materials, teachers do not use realia, although they use picture cards.

Analysis 4: Lesson 35

Lesson 35: Let's talk about my dream in the future.

Objectives	Children talk about their dreams in the future.
Achievement criterion	Children can talk about their dreams in the future. Children can ask friends' dreams in the future.
Expression	What do you want to be in the future? I want to be ~.
Materials	Children use their English notebooks. Teachers use picture cards in which various kinds of occupation are drawn.

Procedure

time	Children's activities	The roles of Home Room Teacher	The roles of Assistant Language Teacher (ALT)	Teachers' support	Instructional materials

5 minutes	<p>*Greetings. Hello. Good morning. How are you? How is the weather today?</p> <p>*Children challenge crossword puzzle.</p>	<p>*Greetings.</p> <p>*As an introductory activity, the teacher presents crossword puzzle which children already tried in previous lessons.</p>	<p>*Greetings.</p> <p>*The ALT responds to children's questions.</p>	<p>*Create a good atmosphere for learning.</p>	
35 minutes	<p>*Children listen to teacher's explanation.</p> <p>*Children repeat after the ALT. Each child practices pronunciation of his/her favourite occupation. E.g. teacher, doctor, nurse, baseball player, soccer player, cook, singer, police</p>	<p>*The teacher explains lesson's objectives.</p> <p>*The teacher shows picture cards on the blackboard.</p> <p>*The teacher</p>	<p>*The ALT pronounces each occupation on the blackboard.</p>	<p>*Teachers talk clearly.</p> <p>*Teachers</p>	<p>*picture cards</p> <p>*English notebooks</p>

	<p>officer, fire fighter, engineer, bank clerk, librarian and so on.</p> <p>*Children make groups of 5 or 6. The first child asks the next child about his/her dream in the future. Then the second child asks the next child about his/her dream in the future. Children continue this activity until the last child talks about his/her dreams in the future.</p>	<p>and the ALT show an example.</p> <p>*The teacher monitors children and instructs individually.</p>	<p>*The ALT participates in children's activity.</p>	<p>support children who have difficulties in pronouncing words.</p>	
5 minutes	<p>*Greetings. Good bye.</p>	<p>*The teacher reflects on today's lesson. *Greetings.</p>			

Gonensei Shoidou Keikaku. [Lesson Plans for Grade 5]. Translated by Kurosawa.

	Framework		Lesson 35
Communicative competence	Sociolinguistic competence		√
	Strategic competence		√
CLT	Instructional materials	text-based	×
		task-based	√
		realia	×
	Teacher's role: a facilitator or a guide		√
	Student-centered		√
Language learning in general	Sociocultural background		×
	Scaffolding		√
	A risk-free learning environment		√

In the category of communicative competence, sociolinguistic and strategic competencies are incorporated. At this stage, children acquire sociolinguistic strategies.

Children know when to start and end conversations by practicing with each other. As well, they learn verbal communication to enhance strategic competence. As lesson 35 is the last lesson, the teachers and children have already understood and established their roles. Children engage in activities to promote communicative competence. In the category of CLT, teachers play roles as facilitators and they also monitor children and instruct them individually. In addition, children's activities are student-centered. In terms of instructional materials, although the teacher shows picture cards, realia are not used. As it is a significant element of CLT, it is advisable to demonstrate authentic materials such as pictures from magazines, children's books or (online) newspapers. For example, I suggest that teachers show uniforms of police officers and fire fighters in English speaking countries. As well, to use realia in this lesson, children can learn cultural characteristics by recognizing different types of uniforms in different cultures. In the category of language learning in general, this lesson lacks the framework of sociocultural background. However, teachers scaffold children and create a risk-free learning environment.

In the previous section, I analyzed the content of four lessons from Ohmama Primary School based on the framework of literatures on communicative competence, communicative language teaching and language learning in general. The analyses have

illustrated components which are required with respect to learning English, as they focus on communication. The findings are as follows. With respect to the category of communicative competence, four lesson plans match two frameworks: sociolinguistic and strategic competencies. Regarding the category of CLT, four lesson plans match the instructional, task-based materials. However, realia have not been incorporated in any lessons. As realia are considered to be crucial parts in CLT to enhance learners' communicative competencies, it is urgent to think about how realia can be introduced in lessons. The teacher's role as facilitator and student-centered elements are incorporated in all lessons. Regarding the "teaching in general" category, scaffolding and creation of risk-free learning environment frameworks are reflected in all lessons. However, lessons 1 and 35 lack sociocultural considerations.

In chapter 4, the findings will be synthesized and the research questions will be answered. In addition, recommendations will be proposed for better English teaching in primary schools in Japan.

Chapter 4: Conclusion and Recommendations

In Chapter 3, the four lesson plans of Ohmama Primary School were analyzed to examine how each lesson used important components to promote students' communication abilities that are emphasized in MEXT's goal. In this chapter, the findings are synthesized according to the frameworks based on communicative competence, CLT and language learning in general. Based on the findings, the research questions are answered. Furthermore, two recommendations are presented for future English teaching in primary schools in Japan.

The categories of analysis include the following components: sociolinguistic and strategic competencies; instructional materials which consist of text-based, task-based and realia; teacher as facilitator, student-centeredness; sociocultural background; scaffolding and a risk-free environment. Below are the findings of the four lesson plans.

	Framework		L1	L12	L20	L35
Communicative competence	Sociolinguistic competence		√	√	√	√
	Strategic competence		√	√	√	√
CLT	Instructional materials	text-based	×	×	×	×

		task-based	√	√	√	√
		realia	×	×	×	×
	Teacher's role: a facilitator or a guide		√	√	√	√
	Student-centered		√	√	√	√
Language learning in general	Sociocultural background		×	√	√	×
	Scaffolding		√	√	√	√
	A risk-free learning environment		√	√	√	√

In terms of the category of communicative competence, four lesson plans match all frameworks. The sociolinguistic component is the competence which consists of “sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse” (Canale & Swain, 1980, p.30). This competence includes knowing when to start and end conversations and when to say something appropriately in a certain social situation (Hymes, 1972). The strategic framework is the competence to communicate effectively (Brandl, 2008). To communicate effectively, this competence entails “verbal and nonverbal communication strategies” (Canale & Swain, p. 30; see also Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurell, 1995). These sociolinguistic and strategic competencies are significant to “interpret and enact appropriate social behaviors” (Boyd & Maloof, 2000, p. 165) in communication.

Children know “when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about” (Hymes, 1972, p. 277) by practicing conversations with each other. As well, children learn how to use nonverbal communication strategies in lesson 12.

Regarding the category of CLT, all lesson plans match the instructional, task-based materials. Children engage in task-based activities, for example, a crossword puzzle or role plays. In terms of text-based materials, MEXT does not provide curricula for “English Activities”, much less textbooks. Therefore, the text-based component of the framework does not appear in the lessons. Realia have not been incorporated in any lessons. Realia are important instructional materials (Chamot & O’Malley, 1994; Hwang, 2005; Richards & Rogers, 2001; Wesche & Skehan, 2002; Wilkins, 1976) to experience real-life communication. Therefore, it is the teachers’ decision how they can incorporate realia in lessons. In terms of the teacher as facilitator and student-centered criteria, both are reflected in all lessons. Activities in all lessons are designed to be student-centered and children actively engage in their roles. Naturally, teachers play roles as facilitators and guides (Breen & Candlin, 1980; Dubin & Olshtain, 1986; Richards & Rogers, 2001) and encourage children.

Regarding the category of learning language in general, scaffolding and maintaining a risk-free environment are reflected in all lessons. Teachers scaffold

children's learning to help them perform their activities and assist them to "move from one level of learning to the next" (Watts-Taffe & Truscott, 2000). As children learn a foreign language for the first time, scaffolding is an especially essential component (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; Ellis, 1998). Teachers also create a good atmosphere and a risk-free environment for learning. Children may feel "anxiety and fear in learning new language[s]" (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986). Therefore, as researchers argue (Drucker, 2003; Lee, Butler & Tippins, 2007; Watts-Taffe & Truscott, 2000; Williams, 2001; Young, 1996), a risk-free environment is critical for foreign language learners.

With respect to sociocultural background, lessons 1 and 35 lack this framework. In language learning, to know sociocultural background and sociocultural characteristics is important (Brown, 2007; Canale & Swain, 1980; Lantolf, 1996; van Lier, 1994). The knowledge of sociocultural background also facilitates students' language learning. It is desirable to incorporate this framework in all lessons.

From these findings, two research questions are answered. To recall, the questions are:

- 1) In what ways has one primary school in Japan demonstrated MEXT's objectives for "Foreign Language Activities" as evidenced in the design of their "Foreign Language Activities" lesson plans?

2) In what ways do the lesson plans align with the methods or approaches of the teaching of English as a Second Language as outlined in the literature review?

Teachers in Ohmama Primary School respond to MEXT's goals which are: "to experience the joy of communication in the foreign language"; "to actively listen to and speak in the foreign language"; "to learn the importance of verbal communication"; and "to become familiar with the sounds and rhythms of the foreign language, to learn its differences from the Japanese language, and to be aware of the interesting aspects of language and its richness" (MEXT, 2009, p.1). They respond to the goals by designing the lesson plans that emphasize communication abilities in English. In practical lessons, children engage actively, and listen to and speak English; children learn both verbal and nonverbal communication in their activities by learning gestures.

Teachers also meet the following goals moderately: "to learn the differences in ways of living, customs"; and "to deepen the understanding of [different] culture[s]" (MEXT, 2009, p.1). In practical lessons, children learn differences between English and Japanese by recognizing that many *katakana* words are derived from English words; children recognize the differences in different cultures by learning about gestures and about food in the lesson. Furthermore, teachers also play roles as facilitators, support children, and create a good learning atmosphere. The teachers incorporate crucial

components in the categories of communicative competence, communicative language teaching and language learning in general. From the analyses of lesson plans, it has been shown that teachers strive to design lessons of “English Activities” to meet MEXT’s goals.

In the following section, crucial components are discussed in a larger framework in terms of teaching “English Activities” as a core subject. According to Canale and Swain’s paper (1980), there are four important areas for teaching a second language: “syllabus design[s], teaching methodology, teaching training, and materials development” (p. 31). If I consider the situation in Japan, although MEXT issued a sample lesson plan for Grades 5 and 6 respectively, MEXT does not direct teaching methodology, teaching training, or materials either both primary schools and teachers. As most teachers in Japanese primary schools do not have English teaching certificates, it is an extremely difficult task to teach English to children. Based on Canale and Swain’s findings, in the first place, three components are essential in teaching English in Japanese primary schools. In teaching methodology, the issues are how teachers design in-depth lesson plans, incorporate appropriate instructional materials (syllabus design and materials development in Canale and Swain’s terms) and create a risk-free learning environment. The importance of in-depth lesson plans, teaching materials and learning

environments are referred to. Furthermore, to design, create and support crucial components in teaching English, teachers' training (Canale & Swain, 1980) is also essential. Each issue is discussed below.

The Importance of In-depth Lesson Plans and Teaching Materials

First, I consider that in-depth lesson plans and the appropriate teaching materials are the basic and important components for language teaching. Many researchers pointed out the significance of using authentic materials in the ESL classrooms focused on the CLT approach (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986; Hwang, 2005; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Wesche & Skehan, 2002; Wilkins, 1976). If teachers use authentic materials in class activities, children will have interest in learning materials and may be motivated to learn more. As well, children can learn sociocultural background in diverse cultures. Children will rarely have opportunity to experience authentic materials from middle schools onward because public schools have to use textbooks designated and authorized by MEXT. Therefore, primary school teachers have to keep in mind that children have an opportunity to experience authentic materials such as supermarket advertisements and various kinds of signboards in English speaking countries during "English Activities" classes. It is necessary for teachers to be always aware of accessing up-to-date issues in the world and get current information for children. In addition, it

will be helpful for the homeroom teacher if the Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) suggests affordable authentic materials which will be used during the class. As Brandl (2008) states, “a well-planned lesson is a way of keeping students focused and on track” (p. 40). Based on in-depth lesson plans, a homeroom teacher and an ALT can play their roles collaboratively and support children in any situation. For example, in Narita Primary School in Narita City in Kanto region, the homeroom teacher and the ALT spend about two hours preparing for one lesson (“Shougakkou to Eigo,” 2009). It goes almost without saying that in-depth lesson plans and the collaboration between the homeroom teacher and the ALT may lead to significant and fruitful lessons for children.

The Importance of Learning Environment

Another crucial component for language learning is a learning environment. As I referred to in chapter 2, a learning environment for students is critically important. Primary school children in Japan feel anxiety, hesitation and embarrassment as well as excitement because they learn English for the first time as a new language. It is important to consider the aforementioned feelings in considering the best learning environment. I believe that the teacher is in charge of creating “a risk-free classroom environment” (Williams, p.752; Young, 1996; Watts-Taffe & Truscott, 2000; Williams, 2001), for children. The teacher should create a supportive and stress-reduced class

environment. In Ohmama Primary School, a teacher creates a good atmosphere for learning and walks around in the classroom to scaffold children's learning (see lesson plans on p. 30, p. 31, p. 35, p.39, p. 40, p. 43, p. 44). In general, in Japan children are silent during class. Shortly after classes end, a few children who have questions about what they have studied in the class come to the teacher and ask their questions. If they were to ask questions during the class, they would perhaps understand more clearly at the time the question is posed. To put it another way, if the teacher allows children to ask questions during the class, this will create a safe environment where children can ask questions and express their opinions more freely during the class and likely learn more English. In "English Activities", children's active participation and performance are expected in a risk-free learning environment.

The Importance of Teachers' Training

Finally, I discuss an essential issue: primary school teachers' training. In introducing "English Activities" as a core subject in primary schools, I claim that the teachers' challenges for teaching English are the most critical problem, which I referred to in the problem statement in chapter 1. Primary school teachers do not know how to formally teach English because they did not take language pedagogy at university, as language teaching was not part of primary schools until now. Butler (2004) argued the

importance of teachers' language proficiencies. She has conducted in-depth research on teachers' English proficiency in primary schools of East Asian countries where English is taught as a foreign language. Based on the research, Butler pointed out the urgency of teachers' professional training which focused on speaking skills in English and which are emphasized by the government policy.

According to Obunsha's 2009 survey, 53% of primary school teachers (500 primary school teachers participated in the survey) answered, "there remain problems which have to be solved, and teachers are anxious about the introduction of English" ("Eigo Shougakkou," 2009). The survey shows that teachers feel uneasy about what they teach and how to teach English in classes. Until now, schools have been hiring ALTs and asking for help from people who are experienced retired teachers in the community to assist teachers.

However, we have to consider English education in primary schools in the long term. To achieve success of the full implementation of English as a compulsory subject, the urgent task is to think about improving the quality of teachers' training for teaching English. Homeroom teachers need constructive and continuous training for teaching English. Since the introduction of "English Activities" in primary schools, schools have been hiring ALTs to help Japanese teachers to instruct English classes. However, the

problem is that some schools cannot hire ALTs because of financial difficulties (“Eigo joshu kakuho,” 2009), as the financial budget varies, depending on autonomy in the prefectures or in the cities. In another case, schools in the peripheral regions or on an isolated island cannot call for an ALT’s support. Furthermore, a recent problem is the quality of ALTs (“Shougakkou Eigo,” 2009). As the Japanese government or MEXT is not concerned in hiring ALTs, the board of education in the prefecture or the city is responsible for it. However, the board of education cannot check all ALTs’ educational backgrounds in the present state of affairs. As another solution for assisting teachers, schools ask people for help in the community. People who studied English but do not have a teacher’s licence, or retired English teachers can support the school. However, the best solution for in-service teachers is to acquire their language proficiency as well as language pedagogy. Teachers also feel the necessity of acquiring skills in language teaching, which is shown in the following survey.

Benesse (2008a) conducted a survey in 2008 (Appendix 4), and 275 teachers answered the following question: what are the important issues in teaching “English Activities” as a compulsory subject? According to the survey, teachers think that they need “the concrete curriculum for instruction” (40.7%); “teachers’ English proficiency” (38.2%); “time for studying the textbook and preparation for the English classes”

(38.2%); and “the courses or the workshops for English education” (31.3%). These responses indicate teachers’ positive attitudes toward preparing for teaching English by themselves instead of relying on ALTs. In addition, it is important to note that the main instructor in teaching English activities has changed. In 2007, 36.8 % of homeroom teachers and 32.8 % of ALTs evenly taught English; on the other hand, in 2009, 69.3 % of homeroom teachers and 8.8 % of ALTs taught English (Benesse, 2008b, Appendix 5). This decreasing percentage of ALTs’ assistance also shows that teachers desire to teach classes on their own. However, if homeroom teachers conduct “English Activities” with an ALT in the classroom, cooperative training for both homeroom teachers and ALTs is necessary.

Some private enterprises like ALC and Oxford University Press offer one-day workshops in the major cities in Japan for in-service teachers to give them ideas for effective English teaching. The boards of education in the prefecture and the city also offer workshops or seminars. However, the frequency of workshops and seminars vary according to the places where teachers reside. MEXT, the board of education in the prefecture, or the city has to consider offering concrete and regular courses for teachers. MEXT needs to take action for pre-service teachers. MEXT enacted the amendment to teachers’ licences for pre-service teachers. It says that starting April 2009 students who

are teacher candidates have to take an “Oral English communication” course (it is 2 units) at university. They will be accredited to teach English in primary schools (Obunsha, 2008).

I believe that primary school teachers have a great number of duties besides teaching various subjects. It may be impossible for in-service teachers to participate in the courses as extra work. However, if we consider English education in primary schools as the basic education for children’s later English education, teachers need to have more specific training in the long-term which aims at language teaching for teachers. Obviously, language teaching is a difficult task because teachers have to plan a program in detail to teach a language effectively. For the language program to be successful, it should contain “a number of levels of planning, development, and implementation” and “goals and objectives for the program have to be developed as well as syllabuses and instructional materials” (Richards, 1990, p. 1). It is time to consider teachers’ training supported by the board of education in the prefecture or in the city and MEXT. It is worthwhile to offer summer courses, intensive courses or online courses in the long-term for in-service teachers so that teachers will have much confidence in teaching and they will have ideas and discretion in devising English activities in their classes. Participating in the courses for language teaching will become

a burden for teachers practically and mentally, but they need to have the concrete background knowledge and practices for teaching English to be successful in the daring plan issued by MEXT: English will be a compulsory subject in primary schools.

In summary, teachers' training is the most crucial of the important issues. Teachers have to have basic knowledge and theory of English language teaching so that they support children to learn. If teachers have confidence, supported by basic knowledge of teaching English, they can teach children effectively. The more teachers have confidence, the more they will be able to cope with difficult teaching situations. Obviously, substantial training and practice creates more effective lessons. The key of success for "English Activities" is teachers' continuous effort and sense of responsibility for teaching children a new language. Above, significant and core issues are discussed for teaching "English Activities" as a core subject. Finally, recommendations are made to improve "English Activities" as one of major and meaningful subjects in primary schools. Below, in the section of recommendations, two major topics: the importance of assessment and introducing words and phonics are proposed.

Recommendations

In implementing "English Activities", to consider about introducing assessment, words and phonics will be necessary in a long-range perspective. Each issue is referred

to in the following.

The Importance of Assessment

At present, MEXT does not consider the assessment or evaluation of “English Activities” even though the subject will be compulsory from 2011. As a result, “English Activities” will be situated as a vague subject if it does not have any assessment built into the program. Furthermore, children will not have any sense of fulfillment if they are not assessed. An assessment motivates children to learn more. In accordance with the introduction of assessment, it is challenging for teachers to grasp how children demonstrate their knowledge and communication abilities in lessons. Therefore, teachers need “valid and reliable measurement of second language communication skills” (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 1) from MEXT or the Board of Education in the prefecture/region such as: rubrics or reference sets.

Considering the characteristics of “English Activities”, the teacher has to assess children’s performance. As Canale and Swain (1980) argue, performance is “the actual demonstration of [the] knowledge in *real* second language situations and for *authentic* communication purposes” (p. 6). As Norris, Brown, Hudson and Yoshioka (1998) state, to assess students’ performance, “it might be more appropriate to think of tests as performance oriented or less performance oriented along a continuum from least

real-world or authentic to most direct and most real-world or authentic” (p. 7). Unquestionably, in CLT, in which students “perform real language tasks and communicative acts” (Brandl, 2008, p. 394), it is not easy for teachers to assess students. Therefore, my suggestion is to introduce interview questions and role-playing variations in oral performance assessment (Brandl, 2008) to let children demonstrate their linguistic achievement. Another suggestion is to assess children’s language acquisition and achievement by taking advantage of portfolios and running records. Most language learners, especially beginners, feel nervous about taking an oral test (Brandl, 2008). As well, it is also difficult for teachers to assess children’s achievement in communication abilities in one oral test. In such a circumstance, teachers need to observe weekly children’s progress during class activities. Thus, it is effective to use portfolios and running records for assessment. Effective teachers have “very clear assessment procedures involving focused observation and systematic record keeping” (Hall, 2003, p. 318). Teachers can point out children’s good points and their positive attitudes in the class and give them feedback which will encourage children to learn English more.

In Omuta City, for example, teachers suggest the introduction of a “Reflection card on ‘English Activities’” (Appendix 6). In this card, children can reflect on themselves after the class. It is effective for both children and teachers. Children can

consider their attitudes during the class and learning achievement after the class. Teachers, on the other hand, can check children's self-assessment and adjust for the next class. In tandem with carrying out "English Activities", schools gradually may try to make a guideline for assessment. However, MEXT or the Board of Education in the prefecture (region) should design the guideline for assessing children in "English Activities" in the long run. For this reason, "English Activities" will be a core subject and established as one of important subjects in primary schools as an introductory English education before entering middle schools. Naturally, as assessment is required in the report card, the concrete guideline of assessment is essential.

The Importance of Introducing Words and Phonics

In this section, the significance of letters, words and phonics is discussed. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, in the spirit of promoting oral competence, MEXT does not consider introducing letters and words in the objectives for "English Activities". I argue that writing letters and words are necessary in "English Activities". At present, because of MEXT's policy guidelines, teachers do not have to teach letters and words. However, this kind of instruction has limitations. In lower grades' children enjoy games and English songs. On the other hand, the higher grades' 5 and 6 children will be shy of doing simple games or conducting simple conversation repeatedly. Mature children

need some activities which stimulate them intellectually. The introduction of letters and words may increase children's eagerness to learn.

There is another reason to introduce letters and phonics. Because in Japan, *katakana*, loan words are all over the place (Honna, 1995) as I referred to in chapter 2: in advertisements, on the signboards, in the newspaper, in magazines and in the textbooks and so on, children use loan words in their daily lives unconsciously without knowing original spelling or pronunciation. For example, 113 loan words are used in the school textbooks of five subjects for 5th graders: arithmetic, Japanese, social studies, science, and calligraphy (Appendix 3). If children are taught original spelling and pronunciation of the loan words in an appropriate situation, they will recognize these words rightly in the context. In addition, this instruction will help children's learning in the later stages. The teachers' challenge is how they can incorporate letters and words in their lessons for children's language learning. Furthermore, the introduction of basic phonics is also crucial because Japanese students in both middle schools and high schools do not learn phonics. As students do not learn the connection between sounds and letters in the early stage, they do not have any clues how to pronounce English words. They only learn words' pronunciation by rote listening to a teacher's pronunciation or listening to a native speaker's English on CDs. Or, competent students

try to decode phonetic symbols to clarify difficult pronunciations such as diphthongs. The fact is that a lot of students do not learn how to read or decode words. As a result, students who are weak in learning by heart tend to be left behind in English learning. If children learn phonetic basic rules or phonics at the primary school level, they will be able to read English words more easily in the later stage. For these reasons, I argue that introducing letters, words and phonics instruction in “English Activities” is necessary.

In conclusion, teacher professional development is the most crucial of the important issues. Teachers need to know effective teaching approaches and have to design in-depth lesson plans to achieve the goal issued by the government: the acquisition of communicative competence. Teachers also need to have ideas of instructional materials which facilitate children’s understanding of different cultures. In addition, teachers may need to teach English words and phonics in the future. Teachers who teach a foreign language have formidable tasks and primary school teachers will also take them on beginning in 2011. MEXT has to take positive measures to support primary school teachers and ultimately, to achieve the MEXT’s goals.

Endnotes

¹ The Japanese Ministry of Education changed its name to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology (MEXT) in 2001.

² The Eiken Test in Practical English Proficiency (STEP) is a benchmark test to judge English proficiency mainly in reading and listening comprehension. The classes were from Grades one to four (between these Grades, there are pre-Grade one and pre-Grade two). From Grade three, students take an interview test for speaking proficiency].

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Appendix 1

The New Course of Study introduced in April 2008 by MEXT

The numbers indicate lesson hours in a week.

Grade 5

	Lesson hours per week during 2009 and 2010	Lesson hours per week 2011 onwards
Japanese	5.1	5
Social studies	2.6	2.9
Arithmetic	5	5
Science	3	3
Physical Education	2.6	2.6
Integrated study	2.1~3.1	2
English Activities	0~1	1
Total (hours)	28	29

Grade 6

	Lesson hours per week during 2009 and 2010	Lesson hours per week 2011 onwards
Japanese	5	5
Social studies	2.9	3
Arithmetic	5	5
Science	3	3
Physical Education	2.6	2.6
Integrated study	2.1~3.1	2
English Activities	0~1	1
Total (hours)	28	28

Shin Gakushuu Shidou Youryou [New Course of Study.] (2009, April 25). *Chunich Shinbun Newspaper*, p.16.

Extracted and translated by Kurosawa.

Appendix 2

The New Course of Study introduced in April 2008 by MEXT

The numbers indicate lesson hours in a week.

Grade 7

	Lesson hours per week in 2011	Lesson hours per week 2012 onwards
Japanese	4	4
Social studies	3	3
Mathematics	4	4
Science	3	3
Physical Education	2.6	3
Integrated study	1.4~1.9	1.4
English	3	4
Elective subject	0~0.4	0
Total (hours)	28	29

Shin Gakushuu Shidou Youryou [New Course of Study.] (2009, April 25). *Chunich Shinbun Newspaper*, p.16.

Extracted and translated by Kurosawa.

Appendix 3

The List of Loan Words in the textbooks for Grade 5

Subject	Loan Words in the textbook
Arithmetic (13 words)	carnation, percent, basketball, vinyl house, free-throw, shampoo, shopping, center, toilet, dodge ball, planetarium, paper, rinse
Social studies (53 words)	assistant, antenna, event, engine, kilometer, copy, control, system, showroom, shock, studio, speedometer, sensor, solar-car, zone, chain-saw, child seat, theme, design, desk, television, toilet, trailer, national-trust, news, hybrid car, video, pyramid, facsimile, field-tour, food, plankton, press, hectare, helmet, body, line, rehabilitation, arcade, catch copy, cross-country, container, steak, smooth, pineapple, hamburger, millimeter, mail address, monitor TV, resort, leisure, worksheet
Japanese (33 words)	instant, overcoat, cuffs-button, cream, coffee, sister, suitcase, slim, session, dioxin, time, champion, debate, neck-tie, book, veranda, fork, hotcake, scarf, milk, maker, humor, rugby, wedding, caster, shower, damage, dramatic, hunter, baby-car, bench, boss, minus
Science (8 words)	orchestra, carbon, corn, cylinder, stopwatch, tea, service, lens
Calligraphy (8 words)	campfire, tray, hello, program, pendant, hall, mixer, media

Takiguchi, M. (2009). *Shougakkou Eigo no Tebiki* [A Guidance of Primary School English].

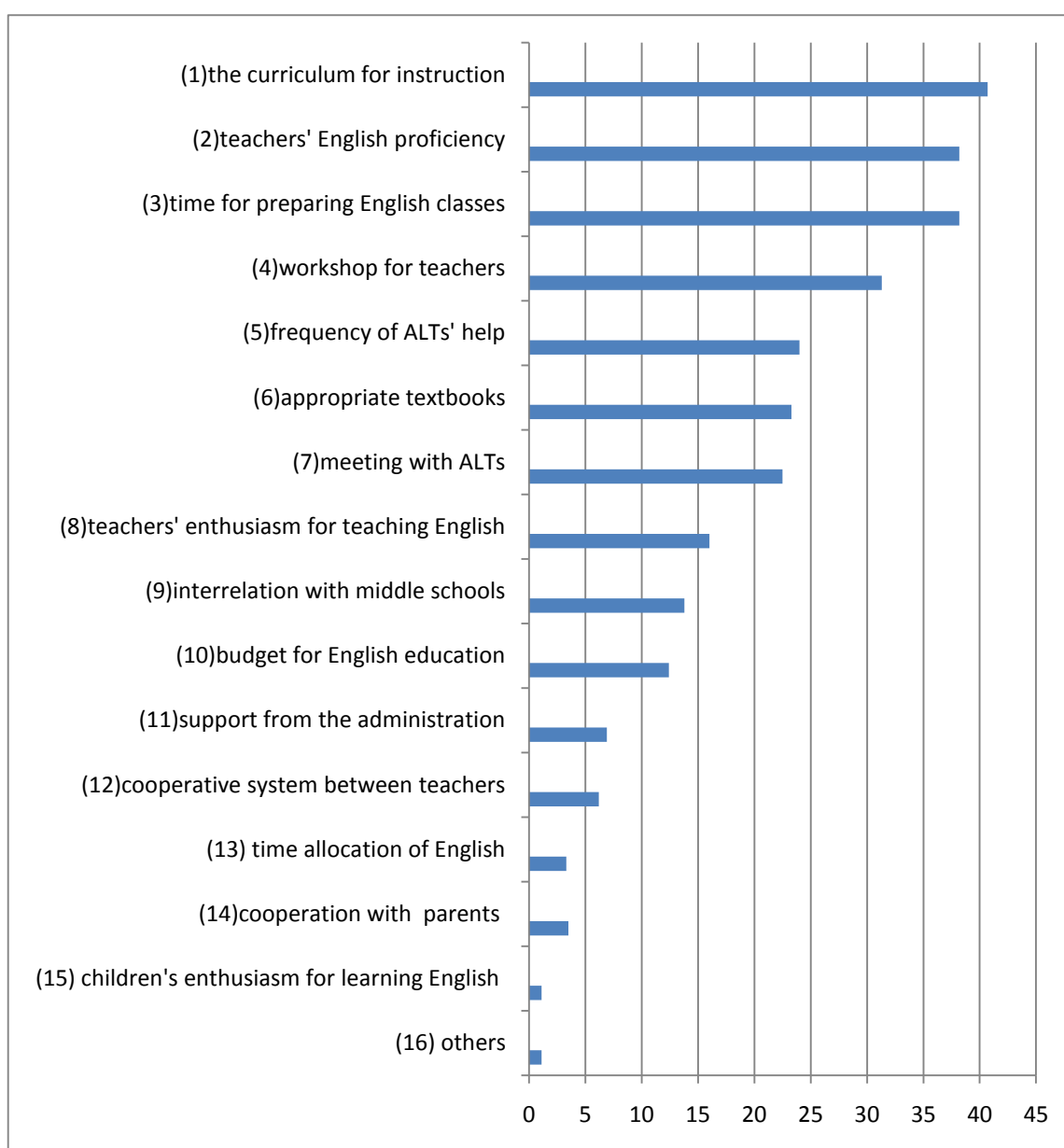
Extracted and translated by Kurosawa.

Appendix 4

Shougakkou eigo kyotenkouno torikumini kansuru chousa: chousakekka datashuu [The survey data on primary school English]. (Benesse, 2008a).

The issues which have to be solved in teaching “English Activities”.

Responses from 275 teachers who were selected at randomly in Japanese primary schools.



Teachers can respond to more than one item. The numbers below show the percentage of the item.

(1) 40.7%, (2) 38.2%, (3) 38.2%, (4) 31.3%, (5) 24%, (6) 23.3%, (7) 22.5%, (8) 16%, (9) 13.8%, (10) 12.4%, (11) 6.9%, (12) 6.2%, (13) 3.3%, (14) 2.5%, (15) 1.1%, (16) 1.1%.

Extracted and translated by Kurosawa from Benesse.

Appendix 5

Shougakkou eigo ni kansuru kihonchousa [The data of survey on primary school English]. (Benesse, 2008b).

The changes of percentage: who taught “English Activities” classes?

	Homeroom teachers (%)	Japanese teachers (%)	English teachers (%)	ALTs (%)
2007	36.8	8.4		32.8
2008	55.7	11.0		15.4
2009	69.3	6.6		8.8

Extracted and translated by Kurosawa from Benesse.

Appendix 6

The Example of a reflection card

Reflection card on English Activities	
	Grade: , Name: , class:
Date:	Today's topic
*Did you enjoy today's lesson?	(^^) Yes. (^_^) so-so. (?_?) No.
*Did you listen to teacher's and friends' talk?	(^^) Yes. (^_^) so-so. (?_?) No.
*Did you speak English actively?	(^^) Yes. (^_^) so-so. (?_?) No.
*Did you sing English songs actively?	(^^) Yes. (^_^) so-so. (?_?) No.
*Write your opinion on today's class.	

Extracted from "Primary School English Activities in Omuta City", n/a, n.d.

Translated by Kurosawa.