

1. No Japanese ! English Only!?

Theoretical Inquiry into Communicative Approach

Big Questions

Communicative Approach is a popular concept in English teaching in Japan but there is no in-depth discussion about what it is and it is not. There is tendency to believe that communicative approach is a new *method*, which would solve all the problems in English language education.

The assumption is that communicative approach is a set of ways of teaching English with concrete syllabus, design and curriculum. What is communicative approach? Do we have a ready-made syllabus to follow?

In communicative approach should we use only English in the classroom?

Common reasons for supporting these fallacies

*Yes, we should use only English, because that is how children learn a language.

*Yes, because if students have a lot of exposure to English they would learn it naturally.

In communicative approach, we should not teach Grammar?

Common reasons

*We should not teach grammar, communication means letting the students talk even if they make mistakes. Grammar is bad. If we think about grammar we can't speak.

*We don't have to teach grammar, children don't learn grammar.

2. Changes in English Language Teaching in Japan

What is the background of this communicative movement? We are seeing a shift toward placing more emphasis on communication because Japanese English education failed to produce enough proficient English speakers after so many years of learning. Thus, the changes we are seeing now.

- Super English Language High School
- English as an official language?-Report by an advisory committee to Prime Minister
- Listening comprehension test required for center exam
- TOEFEL, TOEIC scores required for English teachers
- Strategies to increase Japanese people with English skills (2002)
- Teaching English in Elementary School (2002) "The Period of Integrated Studies"
- Shift to *communicative teaching* from traditional approach

3. Communicative Approach? Method?

- What has changed about the way we teach?
- How do we teach communicatively?

Let's get it straight! Tell me how to teach communicatively! Give me a textbook with set of ideas and ready-made lesson plans! I am confused!

4. Methodology

Sorry!!! But we don't have a ready-made syllabus, approach is not about what to teach but is a belief about how people learn a language. What tells you what to teach in class is a method.
ex. Audio lingual method, silent method, etc... But not communicative method..

●Methodology; approach, design, procedure

approach : belief on how learners learn

design: curriculum, syllabus, what to teach

procedure: Concrete ideas on how to teach

5. Communicative Approach

So what is the belief of communicative approach on language acquisition? How do they think we should learn a language?

- 1) Interaction is carried out in the target language
- 2) The materials are authentic and meaningful
- 3) Emphasis placed on process rather than product
- 4) Personalized topics: relevant to students interests
- 5) Activated outside the classroom
- 6?) Classes should be taught only in English!

- 1) Students should interact in English during the class. Students should be exchanging ideas and information but just repeating sentences without any meaning.
- 2) Materials should have real-life setting and context, and they should have meaning for students.
- 4) Topics should be interesting for the students, and they should be the level of students. They should not be too difficult, too easy.
- 5) English should be used outside the classroom for practice.

Wait a minute!

Why doesn't Nunan say anything about mother tongues? How can Japanese students use English outside the class? Where can they do that?

6. Problems with Communicative Approach (Developed for ESL)

Let's not too excited, yet. Nunan's model is not applicable directly to Japanese English educational setting. This model was developed for educating immigrants students immigrating to the United States, so the educational environment differs from that of Japan. Are there any differences between English education in North America and Japan? Are these differences important? YES!

- Differences between ESL, EFL, EOL
- ESL : English as a second foreign language
- EFL: English as a foreign language
- EOL: English as an official language

*ESL refers to educational setting in countries such as America, Australia and England where English is used as the main medium of communication.

*EFL refers to educational settings in countries like Japan, Korea, and China. English is used only in the classroom only and not a medium for official communication.

*EOL refers to countries like Singapore, India, where English is afforded an official status and used as a medium of communication in various settings.

7. ESL vs. EFL

● ESL: Target language used outside the class, multicultural, multilingual, intrinsic motivation

● EFL: Target language not used outside, monolingual, homogeneous backgrounds, extrinsic motivation

In ESL setting, the biggest difference is that students have exposure to the target language so the quantity of input far exceeds that of EFL.

Students are from different cultural backgrounds and don't share a language except for English, so they must speak in English.

Mother tongue is not important because the main focus is mainstreaming the immigrants students.

So teaching only in English is the cheapest way. You can't hire teachers with different linguistic backgrounds. Too expensive.

In EFL setting, the issue is quality of input. The teachers share the same language as students, have the same experiences as second language learners and share the same cultural backgrounds. All the students speak the same language and face similar difficulties.

<In practice>

*All the students speak Japanese, so by getting the students to compare English and Japanese, we can get the students to figure the difference in grammar by themselves. Very intellectually stimulating activity. Japanese can be a big help.

*Complex words meanings can be translated easily. How do you explain pneumonoultramicroscopicilicovolcanokoniosis? 肺塵炎! That's it!

8. Teaching in ESL Settings

- Target language as the only way of communication
- Target language as the only way of instruction
- Monolingual teachers
- Teachers with different cultural backgrounds
- English only is the most efficient way (for whom, and why)

9. Axis of Evil?

- Translation
- Grammar instruction in mother tongue
- Japanese
- Hidden agenda behind ?

Is translating always bad? If you can get the students to understand some abstract concept in Japanese, is it bad?

Is teaching grammar a bad idea? Do we learn the same way as children do? What do researches on language acquisition say about it?

Why is using Japanese bad? Who said such a thing!?

言語習得についての3つの考え方

10. No L1! Linguistic Perspective

Behaviorist Approach

- Verbal Behavior B.F. Skinner (1957)
- Language behavior is the production of correct responses to stimuli
- Reinforcement, habit formation
- Children learn to speak by imitating

People who believe in not using Japanese in class may be thinking that

*learning a language is about imitating so using only English and making students repeat it is the best way.

*using Japanese is not good because English and Japanese are different languages and they collide with each other.

*children learn to speak naturally so let's just get my students listen to English, someday they will be perapera.

11. Products of Behaviorism

- Audiolingual Method (Direct Method)
- Learn by imitation
- The more difference between L1 and L2, the more difficulty in learning
- Predicting learners' mistakes (Contrastive Analysis)
- L1 to be avoided at any cost

Based on Skinner's theory, direct method emphasized repeating and pattern practice. Students' L1 was avoided. They believed, the more differences there are between L1 and L2, students would have more difficulties.

12. Nativist Approach

- Chomsky's criticism of behaviorists' theory
- Degenerate input
- Poverty of stimulus
- Creativity of language
- Universal Grammar, Language Acquisition Device
- L1 learning and L2 learning not too different?
- Language Module

チョムスキーの言語理論

言語は生得的であり、習慣形成によって習得されるものではない。習慣形成ならば幼児の言語は一度両親から聞いたことのあるものばかりであるはずだが幼児の言語は創造的である。また、幼児になされる言語インプットも文法的なものばかりではないのに幼児は文法的に言語を話すことができるようになる。したがって、人間には言語を習得する機能(LAD)が生まれたときから備わっており、ただインプットを受けるだけで言語の構造も自然に理解できるようになる。言語はそれ自体で発達するもので胃が消化器系の一部であるのと同じように、言語機能は認知機能の独立したモジュールである。

13. Implication for teaching

- Acquisition order : Do learners learn grammatical items in set order?
progressive (ing) before past tense?
- Mistakes are rule governed?
- Route of learning vs. *rate* of learning
- L1 learning and L2 learning similar?
- Interlanguage Theory

According to this theory, using Japanese in class would not interfere with student's development of English language. Input triggers the language acquisition device and the brain will take care of itself.

So the implication for classroom is that using Japanese is OK.

Common misunderstanding

*Making mistakes are ok because the brain will take care of itself.

*Just speak in English, students will learn English naturally, no need for teachers.

14. If we have LAD, we should just teach in English! We will be all happy!

There are pitfalls in applying Chomsky and Skinner's theory to language teaching. Their subjects of study was young babies and not second language learners. We need to ask if we learn to speak second languages like children. The time seems to be against us....

- Critical Period Hypothesis (An episode of Jane)
- Medical Implication (Linguistic disability)
- Rate and Route of learning
- Route possibly similar
- Rate is on adults' learners' side?

The ability to learn a language naturally by being exposed seems to end after puberty. People who had a damage to their brain after puberty don't seem to regain the linguistic ability but those who had a damage before tend to recover soon.

So teaching only in English to students who are after puberty doesn't seem to be ideal.

Common misunderstanding

*So why not teach English since our kids are two years old!? Remember, LAD works only when there is enough exposure, having that kind of exposure in Japan is difficult. You need a right environment and right people to provide input. SLA is different from EFL!

15. Cognitive Approach "Japanese can be useful."

- Behaviorist model : Two languages, two thinking systems
- Cognitive model: Underlining cognitive system (Language learning as a part of general learning)
- SUP (Separate Underlining Proficiency) いちたすいちにはに &One and one makes two.
- CUP (Common Underlining Proficiency)

認知的アプローチによる言語習得理論

チョムスキーは言語は認知機能から独立して発達すると考えたが、認知的アプローチでは言語はその他の学習と同じように周りの環境と認知機能との相互作用において言語が発達すると考えられている。たとえば、子供が発話する言葉は子供のその時点での思考、認知理解度をあらわしているといえる。(Piaget)

一方 Vygotsky によると思考は幼児の中での内言であり、発話は社会的活動において起こると考えた。

カナダの言語学者カミンズは言語とはそれだけで独立して発達するものではなく、言語の裏にそれを支える認知機能があると考えている。日本語で話しても、英語で話しても根底にある概念、意味は同じで違う暗号を使ってその概念を表しているに過ぎない。この考えに基づけば、大人のほうがはるかに子供より認知的能力が優れているので子供の第一言語と大人の第二言語を比べればおとなの第二言語のほうがより深く、より言語として洗練されているはずである。こどもが早く言語を習得するように見えるのは子供の発音だけに目を取られているからではないだろうか。言語習得の成功度を発音だけでなく、多角的に分析する必要がある。

16. Adults Learn Faster ?

- Being able to handle more cognitively complex tasks
- Being able to apply grammar instruction
- Being able to understand more than here and there(Limit of TPR)
- Intellectually motivated
- Metalinguistic Ability
- From practice to automaticity

What implications does cognitive approach have on L2 learning?

*Adults learners have more cognitive capacity so they can benefit from it. They are able to convey what they know and what they understand given the right instruction.

*Adults already know about their mother language and they can talk about language that metalinguistic ability will help them analyze L2.

*Adults don't have a lot of exposure like babies to L2 but there are many good English speakers. Why?

<Research>

In 1978 Catherine Snow compared a group of 12-15 years old students, 18-60 years old students and 3-10 years old. They all received instruction on the target language.

Their tests on phonology, morphology, sentence repetition, translation, grammar, comprehension were compared. Except for phonology, adolescents scored the best.

Instruction facilitates learning. From this research, we can say teaching grammar can actually help students who have passed critical period.

17. In Practice (Only English?)

- Rain in Spain mainly *fall on* the plain.
- Instructor: **Nouns** usually precede *verbs* and prepositions are followed by nouns.
- 先生：名詞は普通は動詞の前、前置詞は名詞の前にくる。分かったか！おい、寝るな。

Which is easier to understand?

18. When to use English

Now we know that adults are capable of complex tasks and thoughts, how does that relate to the issue of using English and Japanese? When do we use Japanese and when do we use English?

BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills)

- Context Embedded (Here and now)
- Simple questions, classroom English :Which do you like better, ..or..?
- Simple tasks and games
- Display questions

BICS

When dealing with cognitively undemanding tasks that are easy to understand, there is no need to use Japanese. When simple pictures or examples suffice, why use Japanese? Our students don't have enough input to start with. Let's say it in English if they can understand.

Ex.

1. Classroom English(Open your textbook. Be quiet. Please read the next sentence. Please stand up. Etc...)
2. Simple questions that can be answered with yes, or no.
Do you like ~? Did you ~? Are you ~
3. Questions whose answers are already known (display questions)
What day is it today? What time is it? Who is your English teacher?

19. Possibly in Japanese?

- CALPS (Cognitive Academic Linguistic Proficiency Skills)
- Grammar instruction that requires explicit explanation(Simply not shown by examples)
- Giving instruction before problem solving tasks (Solving the tasks is the goal! Episode from an elementary school)
- Preparing for discussion and debate
- Eliciting student's thinking process
- More and more

CALPS

When dealing with complex tasks, Japanese can be useful. It can tap into students knowledge about the world.

1. Grammar instruction (Showing that Japanese is different from English and getting the students to *notice* the grammatical points.)

I have a friend *whose father is a teacher*. Head first

私にはお父さんが先生である友達がいます Head late

2. Getting the students to prepare for a debate (brain storming ideas)
3. Giving instruction on pair work or games.
4. Getting the students to organize their thoughts before writing an essay
5. Getting students to make inferences about a writing in English, guess the outcome
6. Questions whose answers are unknown (how, why)
7. Analyze the writing style of English
8. Using Japanese to for English composition
J1 あのレストランはおいしいですよ。
E1 That restaurant is delicious.* (Common error from direct translation.)
J2 あのレストランの食べ物おいしいですよ。(Guiding the thinking process in Jap.)
E2 Food at that restraint is great.
9. Giving out Japanese translation first and use the text for practicing English
No need for word for word translation!
10. Translating Japanese things to English.
ルースソックス、こたつ、初詣
11. Watching a Japanese TV commercial and translating into English. No literal translation, students could use Japanese to discuss the cultural background and come up with appropriate translation in English.

20. Other myths in English Teaching

- Japanese should not be used in English class
- Using Japanese would lead to making more mistakes (linguistic interference)
- Native speakers are better teachers
- We should listen to model speeches to be proficient in the target language*
- Grammar is not so important / Exposure is enough.*

21. Exploring the Myths from Sociolinguistic Perspectives

- What is the model we are talking about?
- Who are the native speakers of English?
- Do all the native speakers have the same competence?
- Who benefit from these assumptions?
(Publishers, backpackers..?)

Now that everyone is talking about communicative approach, what is the goal for our students? What does it mean by linguistic proficiency needed for people in the globalized world?

Myth Our goal is to be like a native speaker because they are who speak English the best.

Objection:

What is the definition of a native speaker? Is our goal a 3 year-old native English speaking child? How about an English speaker from a region with heavily accented English? Chomsky as our model native speaker?

The definition of a native speaker is very broad and there is no such thing as a native speaker that can be defined easily. There are only individual speakers of the language and they have different competence. ***The notion of a native speaker is not so much linguistic but it is a social notion to refer to a group of speakers of the same language with different competence.***

Myth Grammar is not important in the globalized world. We just need to be able to talk to people from different countries.

Objection: Can we really talk without grammar? That children receive grammar instruction doesn't mean they don't have grammar. They do! They just don't have the awareness of it.

22. Model Speaker

- Grammatical competence
- Sociolinguistic competence
- Strategic competence
- Discourse competence

(Canal, Swain)1980

Is there such a perfect speaker?

Now we know that the notion of a native speaker is a social concept and that the degree of competence in a language differs from each other. So how do we define competence and what does it involve?

Swain suggested competence consist of the four factors listed above. Grammatical competence refers to knowledge of the language, without which it would be impossible to produce any meaningful sentence. Sociolinguistic competence refers to ability to understand the social context and know what is ok to say and what is not. Strategic competence is the ability to repair a conversation when it breaks down. Discourse competence refers to ability to organize your thoughts and plan your conversation.

Grammar is thus a very important part of linguistic activities and we cannot say grammar is not important. If grammar is not important we would be speaking in a language that has no syntax, no morphological inflexions!

Is there ever a person who has achieved these four skills to perfection? Is this goal reachable for our students even for *native* speakers?

23. Who are the native speakers?

●Ireland, U.S., England, Scotland, Wales, India, Virgin Islands, Australia, Guam, Zambia, Singapore, India, Sri Lanka, Philippine, Bahamas, Malaysia, other countries where English is used as L2

Future of English (Crystal, 1997)

Whose standard are we learning?

The notion of a native speaker is now fishy, the goal of a perfect speaker seems too far-fetched and there are so many speakers of Englishes! Whose English are we learning now!? Can there be Japanese English? Would English break down and become incomprehensible to each other like Latin?

Maybe no. There are subtle differences among so called different Englishes but the perceived differences are minor and they are not linguistic issues but rather political. Is there a clear linguistic difference between American English and British English? The answer is no. The differences in grammar are minor and the perceived difference is due to the speakers wish to be seen differently.

24. Place of Grammar in the World of Englishes : Grammar as a tool for empowerment

- What holds together the Englishes as English
- Identity & membership, perceived differences more political
- Robert Louth's book on grammar (1767) theologian, professor of poetry at Oxford
- Louth's influence on social mobility
- William Cobbett (1763-1835) "Advice to Young men, incidentally to Young Woman"
- Not as a tool of colonists and prescriptive but as flexible and negotiable entity (communicability)

Why is grammar more important than ever before?

With increasing number of English speakers, we need a standard we share in order to communicate with each other. Whose standard is it? American, British?

The answer is we already have a standard, we already understand each other even we are from different English speaking backgrounds. The key to the standard is "communicability" if a speaker from Scotland can have a communication in English with a Singaporean English speaker, there is a standard. If he can't there is no standard, so there needs to be a fine tuning on the spot, so the standard is not a set of rules or grammar but it is a fluid concept that needs constant compromising and fine-tuning.

Do we have to find the standard from the scratch? Luckily, English is a codified language with dictionaries and books on grammar, so the foundation of the language is pretty solid. So the fine-tuning is not such a big deal.

By studying grammar students are engaging in learning the foundation of the language and that would allow them to communicate their ideas to people from different cultural backgrounds. This is empowering the students. If they don't learn grammar, they cannot express their ideas, being subjugated to those who can.

25. English for What?

Data on Incoming Foreigners

- Korea 25.4 %
- Taiwan 15.9%
- America 13.5 %
- China 8.4 %
- G.B. 3.9 %
- Hong Kong 3.5 %
- Philippine 3.5 %
- Others 25.9 %

People coming into Japan come from mainly non-English speaking backgrounds. What are the implications? What skills do Japanese people need?

False Assumption

What needed is ability to be friends with foreigners and have a cup of coffee. We don't need to be able to talk about anything difficult. Broken English is OK.

26. From a Fishbowl to Open Seas

- From Fishbowl to Open Seas Model (吉田研作 2000)
- Fishbowl : teacher dependent, prescriptive, ideal native speaker model, knowledge centered, inflexible
- Open Seas : autonomous, independent, practical, flexible, adaptability

Objection to the false assumption

What is not needed is not ability to have a simple chat over a cup of coffee. The world the students are getting into is the world filled with conflicts of interests. Not all the people around you share the same idea, and if you want to get some serious work done you need a lot of negotiation to convince your partners. Knowing the language is not enough, what is important is what will be represented with the language. Expressing complex thoughts with broken grammar is impossible.

Just like goldfish in a fish bowl students until now were given prescriptive grammar to follow and they were dependent on the teacher for all the input. But from now on, the standard is getting blurred so the grammar can't be totally prescriptive as before. It will involve a lot of negotiation between the two interlocutors and students will have to put up with gray zones. Fishbowl is always kept clean by the teacher but the open sea is not always clean and there are many different kinds of fish. To live in this environment needs great flexibility and adaptability.

27. Japan and English

- Falling birth rates
- Immigration
- Reports on crimes committed by 外国人
- Being able to speak English equals 国際化？
- What is the goal? BICS or CALPS?
- Identity of Japanese
- English as a tool or and an end?
- Place of English Education and multiculturalism

Where will our English education take us? The globalization is here to stay, will the wave of globalization lead to more severe competition? What is needed in this cut-throat environment? What is the goal? In the open sea, students will face a big whale or a shark, and the shark may not want to be friends with you. You need to convince the shark that you are not tasty and there are things you can do rather than just becoming sharks' dinner. The globalized world is not a happy place for everyone, there are cunning fish hanging out there, and you need to deal with them. What is needed is CALP level literacy and this needs a solid foundation in our students' education. English is not a goal, it is a tool to cultivate that literacy. Blind belief on English superiority should be avoided. Cultivating the foundation of the language is also important.

Does globalization only mean more competition? No, compassion toward others? With falling birth rates and insecurity about social welfare, Japan might have to deal with immigrants to our country. What would happen when these immigrants become **Japanese**? No more homogeneous Japanese identity? What will being Japanese mean? Current waves of reports by the authority on crimes committed by foreigners will have no meaning at all. Will we still keep this us against them mentality? Is Japan ready for multicultural identity? What is kokusaika we often hear about?

What is needed for globalization is not just being able to speak in English but flexible mind set and ability to negotiate and compromise with those from different backgrounds. Surely there should be rooms for other foreign languages besides English. Without dealing with various issues regarding globalization and talking about globalization as some kind of international cultural festival is short-sighted. Globalization means conflicts of interests, and conflicts of cultural norms. We need people who can handle this without resorting to force but with logical thinking and compassion for fellow human beings. Real globalization requires people who can find commonalities out of the differences. And English is just one of the tools.

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