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Team teaching: Four barriers to native English speaking assistant teachers' ability to model native English in Japanese classrooms

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Abstract:

In Japan and other countries around Asia and the world, local English teachers sometimes instruct their students by sharing teaching duties with native English speaking assistant teachers. This team teaching, as it is known, has grown in popularity in Japan since its introduction in the 1980s. According to most literature, the assistants' primary role in the classroom should be to provide students with a model of native English (Brumby & Wada, 1990). Previous research has shown that team teaching motivates Japanese students to learn English as the assistant teacher may be one of the few people they know who speaks English as a native language. Less research has been done on the assistants' classroom practices, especially with regards to whether or not they are used effectively as models of native English.

For this research 19 Japanese teachers of English were interviewed. Using a discourse analytic approach, the interviews revealed that there were in practice four barriers to the assistants' ability to model native English in the classroom: an over-reliance on in-class translation, the assistants' use of simplified English and foreigner talk, the use of scripted talk, and the assistants' use of their limited Japanese language skills.

Introduction

Every year thousands of people, the majority of whom are in their twenties, travel to Japan to take up appointments as members of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) programme

(CLAIR, 2011). JET participants are mostly employed to act as assistant English teachers (AETs), working in teams with Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) in Japanese secondary school classrooms. The AETs' primary purpose is to assist JTEs with oral communication classes, although the Japanese Ministry of Education's (Monbukagakusho, 2002) policy emphasises the need for the two teachers to work together vis-à-vis setting lesson goals, choosing teaching materials and deciding on teaching methods.

The two teachers are to work together by taking on various roles: modelling pronunciation and communication between two English speakers, acting as resources for expanding on textbooks, evaluating students' progress, and organising lessons, teaching materials and homework. Brumby and Wada (1990, p. 12) recommend that each teacher take on certain roles to a greater extent than others, with the role of pronunciation model and model of "real communication" being listed as "the most accepted role of the AET". It is this role, that of acting as a native English informant and conversation partner, that is the primary concern of this research. In practice, as Fujimoto-Adamson (2005) has pointed out, the JTE may find it necessary to take on the majority of these teaching roles, as AETs often have neither teaching qualifications nor comprehensive knowledge of the students' linguistics abilities.

There are various typical lessons during team taught classes (McConnell, 1996). The AET may discuss his or her home country and ask students for similar information about theirs, while the JTE provides translation when necessary. The JTE may instruct students about a particular point of grammar, model its use with the AET, then circulate with the AET to help students as they practise using it. Both teachers may lead students in the playing of English-medium games such as hangman or crossword puzzles, for example, that purport to give students an opportunity to use their English skills for a purpose that is unusual in the classroom context.

The JET programme is open to participants from numerous countries, and some participants are hired to assist with the instruction of languages other than English, but in 2010 more than 90% (CLAIR, 2011) of the assistant language teachers hired for the programme came from countries where English is the dominant language: The United States of America, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland.

Team teaching in other Asian contexts

The Japanese government is not the only one in East Asia to hire native English speakers (NES) and NES teachers for language teaching purposes. In China the government does not run a national level programme, but individual regions do hire NESs to work in Chinese schools (Jeon & Lee, 2006; Qiang & Wolff, 2003; Liu, 2008). In Hong Kong, the Native-speaking English Teachers Scheme brings native English speakers (NESs) to work as teachers in primary and secondary schools (EDB, 2012). Participants in the Hong Kong programme must be trained teachers with teaching experience, unlike JET participants who need only be NESs with a university degree in any discipline (Lai, 1999). In South Korea, where the desire to learn English has been called a “mania” (Park & Abelman, 2004, p. 646) and “fever” (Jeong, 2004, p. 40), the government hires NESs to work in secondary schools through the English Program in Korea, although on a much smaller scale than the JET programme. In Taiwan the government licenses recruiting agencies to hire NESs, but does not do any hiring on its own (Jeon & Lee, 2006).

Despite the introduction of these other plans to bring NESs into public secondary school classrooms around Asia, the JET programme remains influential in the field in terms of its longer history, the greater number of participants involved, the commitment to putting NESs into classrooms in all areas of the country, and the programme’s willingness to embrace team teaching as an innovative, if not necessarily effective, teaching method. (On the other hand, the JET programme does not require AET participants to hold teaching qualifications, so it is not necessarily a leader in terms of pedagogical rigour.) For these reasons any analysis of team teaching in Japan can also be seen to be relevant for others educational contexts in East Asia and elsewhere.

Team teaching as a pedagogic device

Current research generally supports the idea that team teaching is beneficial to student learning, although “definitions of team teaching in the literature are based on a cacophony of voices arising from a variety of pedagogical contexts” (Anderson & Speck, 1998, p. 671). The generally positive attitude present in most relevant literature is apparent in Buckley’s (2000, p. 4) enthusiastic assertion that team teachers “share insights, arguing with one another and perhaps even challenging students to decide which approach is correct. This experience is

exciting. Everybody wins!" Team teaching has been used to teach a range of subjects at all levels of education in various countries. It is perhaps because of this that it is difficult to arrive at a single definition of what it means to team teach. Referring to team teaching by pairs of instructors, Jang (2006, p. 177) said the "primary concern is the sharing of teaching experiences in the classroom, and [teachers'] co-generative dialoguing with each other." Pugach and Johnson (1995) advocate full equality between the two teachers, while Aline and Hosoda (2006) are less concerned with the equal sharing of duties, arguing that one teacher can be in charge of the class and that both teachers do not have to be in front of the class instructing jointly at all times. Studies like these focus on team teaching as a small collaborative project involving two teachers who are present for most parts of the teaching: lesson planning, content delivery and evaluation. The duties may be shared unequally, but there is an expectation that both teachers will participate in most aspects of the teaching.

In spite of years of research pointing out the benefits to students who are taught by non-native English speaking (NNES) teachers (Medgyes, 1992; Sutherland, 2012; Tajino & Tajino, 2000), it seems to be assumed by many people in Japan, and many in other Asian countries that hire NES teachers, that NES teachers are a pedagogical panacea. The following quotation can stand as a summary for this pro-NES sentiment: "The aforementioned five Asian countries [China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea] have found that hiring NSET [native-speaking English teachers] is one of the most efficient ways to improve the local student English proficiency" (Jeon & Lee, 2006, p. 57). This quotation concludes an article on the hiring practices of government and private institutions in East Asia. The article contains no evaluation of NES teachers, yet the authors feel confident in asserting that schools can only benefit from their introduction.

In Japan NES teachers have been introduced as part of team teaching practice, the joint classroom instruction and management by a Japanese teacher and an assistant. This, according to Tajino and Walker (1998), has been the major visible change in the ELT curriculum in Japan since the 1980s, beginning with the inception of the JET programme and other similar schemes. Team teaching has spread from being a rarely seen teaching method in a few test classes to being "one of the standard communicative features of public secondary school English education in Japan" (Miyazato, 2001b, p. 232). It has also become popular with students (Miyazato, 2002) and some JTEs (Browne & Wada, 1998).

NES teachers in Japan must teach in teams, as the law mandates the presence of a Japanese government-certified teacher in elementary or secondary school classes (McConnell, 2000). While the motivation for introducing team teaching was undoubtedly positive, the benefits are largely assumed, as with Jeon & Lee's assumption that NES teachers are undoubtedly beneficial. For example, Benoit and Haugh (2001, no page) make the following claim about team teaching in EFL: "In foreign language teaching, particularly teaching English as a foreign language [...], usually one in the pair is a native speaking assistant of the target language. [...] The main teacher on the other hand, is usually more experienced and not a native speaker of the target language (hence the desire for a native speaking target language assistant)". This assertion is based on the assumptions that, first, an NES teacher is necessary for English teaching, second, team teaching is dependent on the presence of the NES and, third, that team teaching is the best use of the NES and non-native English teachers' time and effort. While there certainly seem to be benefits to team teaching in language education, with perhaps the most important one being that it has been found to be popular with students in a variety of contexts (Miyazato, 2002), some of the assumptions being made about it may be unfounded.

Teachers' roles in team teaching in Japan

Brumby and Wada (1990) suggested roles for team teachers, especially that the NES take on the role of target language model, but it was left for other researchers to clarify what roles the teachers actually took on. Scholefield (1996) summarised a broad questionnaire survey of 121 JTEs' views on what roles AETs played in their classrooms. The most common roles mentioned were AETs as models, speaking clearly and slowly using a simple vocabulary level, AETs as conversation partners, talking with students using gestures and interesting self-introductions, and AETs as cultural informants, bringing realia, maps, photos and so on, to stimulate class interest.

Scholefield claims these three suggestions provide implicit approval for what she calls Western-style teaching, although she perhaps overlooks the fact that the AETs' limited Japanese language skills and lack of teacher training (cf. Fujimoto-Adamson, 2010) limit them to roles of this nature. AETs must use simple English and gesture for elaboration because they typically cannot speak Japanese, and they cannot use textbooks because they are neither likely to be familiar with the contents nor able to read the instructions in them.

Interestingly, few respondents to the survey Scholefield reports on commented on the AETs being native speakers of English. It is of course possible that the AETs' NES status was taken for granted and thus not worthy of commenting on.

Unlike Scholefield, who asked JTEs what roles they thought AETs played, Mahoney (2004) looked at what roles JTEs and AETs thought they *should* each play. He summarised a Japanese Ministry of Education survey to JET programme participants that used both closed and open-ended questions to query JTEs and AETs about their roles in team teaching. This research found that 50 percent of JTEs wanted AETs to act primarily as cultural informants, mostly of their own culture but also of foreign cultures in general. AETs were less likely to see themselves in this role, with only 40 percent seeing themselves as cultural informants. This may have been because the JET administrators try to emphasise the exchange aspect of the programme to JTEs, thus minimising the need for them to think of AETs as language teachers. As to language, only 40 percent of JTEs compared with 50 percent of AETs felt that the AETs primary role was to be a language informant. Other roles suggested by both JTEs and AETs included the desire for AETs to act as lesson planning assistants and student motivators. AETs reported that they expected to act as grammar teachers, but no JTEs shared this expectation.

Tajino and Walker's (1998) research explores students' expectations of JTE and AET roles. Not surprisingly, given the attitudes many students have to Japanese and NES English, students expected AETs to help them primarily with their speaking skills and JTEs to help them primarily with reading skills. They reported the complete opposite with regards to which skills they expected to be helped with least, confirming that AETs are often seen as conversation partners while JTEs are seen as teachers of linguistic accuracy. As for roles, JTEs were expected primarily to teach grammar and explain study skills. AETs were expected to help students improve their conversation skills and teach pronunciation.

In these and other articles on team teaching (Aline & Hosoda, 2006; Anderson & Speck, 1998; Carless, 2006; Gorsuch, 2002) there seems to be relatively firm agreement regarding the main roles JTEs and AETs should play, both from teachers' and students' points of view, although there is some disagreement over minor roles (Mahoney, 2004). AETs are to focus on speaking and promoting spoken interactions with students, and to act as cultural resources, either by explaining their own experiences or by bringing in materials to

use as aids. Japanese teachers are expected for the most part to handle explicit language instruction, classroom management and most other aspects of a typical class. Many of Brumby and Wada's (1990) original suggestions, such as having teachers share lesson planning duties, homework correction and classroom management, either do not register at all or only as minor items. This may be partly because of the ephemeral nature of the AETs' employment: they are not directly responsible for students, they often see a class only once out of every four visits by a JTE, and they sometimes visit numerous schools as part of their routine. Regardless of the reason, for the most part AETs are freed from almost all responsibilities and have only to arrive in class and talk to fulfil their part of the team's role. JTEs are left with what could be considered the unpleasant aspects of teaching: the routine management issues, the paperwork and the discipline. This may also contribute to what has been called the star quality of the AET (McConnell, 2000; Sturman, 1992), as they are largely unencumbered by either the physical teaching paraphernalia of a JTE or the potentially negative relationships that JTEs will have developed with some of their students. This lack of responsibility may appear even in the interactions between the two team teachers during class time. Fujimoto-Adamson's (2005) case study found that during the class the AET received support from the JTE, but did not provide much support in return. AETs arrive, teach communication-based lessons that often involve songs, games or other breaks from the usual teacher-centred lessons, then leave until the next visit.

The following sections of this paper's research show that, despite the oft-stated focus on NES teachers as models of 'real communication', these teachers are impeded in several ways from presenting their students with models of native English.

Data Collection

Data for this research was primarily collected through qualitative research interviews, one type of what Kvale (1996) called professional interviews, a class of interviews that also includes police interviews and job interviews. In such interviews the interviewer must "converse with respondents in such a way that alternate considerations are brought into play" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 17), giving participants enough conversational space to form and present their own opinions as freely as they can. Kvale (1996) argues that the interview should attempt to discover the life world of the participant while remaining focused on certain themes of relevance to the research being done. This type of semi-structured interview

(Wengraf, 2001) is therefore not completely standardised, for there must be room to allow for individual differences in participants' life worlds, yet it must also be directed with some specificity at particular topics. I kept a list of questions with me to make sure all the topics of interest were covered, but I also followed the participants down whatever avenues of discussion they were willing to lead me. My interview schedule ensured that the interviews would have breadth, but the free discussion following initial question were an attempt to ensure that the interviews would also have depth.

As the interviews were generally at least one hour long, they can be called in-depth interviews, which Johnson (2001, p.103) says "commonly involve one-on-one, face-to-face interaction between an interviewer and informant, and seek to build the kind of intimacy that is common for mutual self-disclosure." The time scale of an in-depth interview gives the interviewer the opportunity to move beyond the initial superficial level of conversation to achieve a deeper level of understanding (Legard et al., 2003). First responses to initial questions can be followed by probes that attempt to provide insight into the reasons behind participants' utterances. Responses can be examined by both the researcher and the participant to see if they are opinions, beliefs, or feelings and the depth of commitment by the participant to those answers can be evaluated. The depth of an interview is marked by the appearance of elaborated responses, including participants' recollections of situations and their feelings and opinions about those situations (Merton et al., 1990).

Johnson (2001) argues that in-depth interviewing allows an interviewer to approximate the level of knowledge that participants have about a topic. In this view the participant is a teacher and the interviewer is a student who wants to gain membership, albeit probably only for a limited time, into the group the participant is part of. If successful the interviewer can go beyond the level of a commonsense understanding of the participant's life world to "uncover what is usually hidden from ordinary view" (Johnson, 2001, p. 106). Participants in short interviews may feel it necessary to get "a passing grade" (Merton et al., 1990, p. 100) in an interview by answering questions with a preferred response (Tsui, 1994), that is, the response they think the interviewer wants. During a lengthier in-depth interview the interviewer can give participants time to orient themselves to the interview, rather than to the interviewer, which allows for answers based on the participants' life world rather than interviewer's questions. As Baker & Johnson (1998) argue, lengthier interviews help turn participants into joint meaning makers with the interviewer, empowering participants and

giving them opportunities for self-reflection and “therapeutic release” (Sinding & Aronson, 2003, p. 95) as they express themselves to a willing and possibly expert listener.

Data collection of this type may be especially pertinent in Japan. Fujimoto-Adamson’s (2004, p. 1) meta-analysis of the methodologies used in team teaching research in Japan put forward “a proposal for qualitative, interview-based research at the local level.” She concluded that previous studies’ focus on producing generalisable findings had led to a lack of localised information. Her call echoes that of Lin, Wang, Akamatsu and Riazi (2005, p. 218), who have highlighted the need for applied linguistics research to “provide a space for the voices of local teachers... situated in diverse socio-cultural contexts of the world.”

As a secondary method of data collection for this research I engaged in classroom observation at a Japanese commercial senior high school in Tokyo. During the observation period I also took field notes during informal chats at the same location with teachers and the school principal, and collected some written answers to interview questions, both from participants whom I interviewed and from two who chose not to be interviewed. While a detailed analysis of the results of the classroom observation is beyond the scope of this paper, the observations did corroborate the analysis presented in the ‘practices’ section below.

Participants

The 19 interview participants, all Japanese teachers of English in Japanese high schools, were selected using purposive sampling (Barbour, 2009). Of these 12 were currently working as teachers in Japan and the remaining seven were on sabbatical to study in various graduate schools at universities in London, England.

The participants, five men and 14 women, ranged in age from their mid-twenties to mid-forties, with one teacher was in his mid-sixties. Eleven of the nineteen participants had Masters degrees in teaching-related fields from universities in either the United States or Great Britain. Their teaching experience ranged from a new teacher in her first year of full-time work to three teachers in their third decades of teaching. All had worked for at least one year with assistant teachers of English. The teachers’ pseudonymous initials used in this paper have no connection to their actual names.

Data Analysis

To analyse my data I was concerned with what is broadly called discourse analysis. Generally, discourse analysis is the analysis of language in use (Brown & Yule, 1983), especially language "beyond the sentence boundary" (van Dijk, 1997, p. 7), as van Dijk and others (Schiffrin, 1994) propose, and also within the sentence. (I am aware that it is often difficult to refer to 'sentences' in spoken language, leading some to prefer other terms like 'utterance', but I will continue here with 'sentence' for convenience's sake.) As Cook (1989) points out, it is well-known that grammar controls what appears within a well-formed sentence, but there are also shared understandings among members of a speech community which help negotiate how a sentence relates to sentences that appear before and after it.

Discourse analysis is also focused on the scrutiny of how knowledge is produced, a concern largely associated with the work of Foucault and his assertion that "effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false" (Foucault, 1980, p. 118). Van Dijk (1997, p. 5) refers to this when he says that an "informal, everyday conversation about immigrants may at the same be part of the complex practice of communicating ethnic stereotypes." Kubota (1999, p. 11) makes van Dijk's general example more specific in her critique of "the essentialized representations of culture found in discussions of teaching" when she argues that researchers and writers often uncritically claim that Japanese people underemphasize self-expression and creativity. Both of these writers are looking at discourse in the Foucauldian sense, which is less concerned with the tones, sounds, words, and so forth, that make up set of words beyond the sentence level, and is more concerned with the meaning that speakers and listeners produce when they make themselves part of discourse.

This is the analysis of discourse writ large, so it includes the elements of discourse previously mentioned, but also looks at how the elements are construed into a bigger societal view of the topic under discussion. This view of discourse analysis echoes Kvale's (1996) argument that knowledge is created through the shared authorship of the interview. Speech is not a process of verbalising some hidden reserve of pure knowledge, but instead is a discursive process that actually produces knowledge. Further to this, Kvale asserts that varied and even contradictory data is a strength of the research interview, allowing researchers to

“capture the multitude of respondents’ views of a theme and to picture a manifold and controversial human world” (Kvale, 1996, p. 7).

My analysis was guided by ‘grounded theory’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), so as I analysed the data I attempted to look for any emergent patterns, while simultaneously being open to the fact that “all data... can constantly modify the theory through comparison” (Glaser, 1999, p. 841). Proponents of grounded theory argue that multiple participants’ varied responses provide the researcher with opportunities to make connections between responses to unify them into meaningful themes.

As a result of this grounded theory analysis, the data in was coded by separating it into parts or elements for close examination (Kvale, 1996), leading to the four themes explained and analysed below: translation, simplified English and foreigner talk, scripted talk, and AETs’ use of Japanese

Practices: Barriers to AET-student interaction

During the interviews Japanese teachers of English often suggested that AET’s should act as models of the target language when they are in the classroom. This finding is not surprising, echoing as it does the previous research on teachers’ roles outlined earlier in this paper.

The new finding in this research concerns how the respondents’ descriptions of classroom practices make it evident that AETs are often not seen by JTEs to be fulfilling this role. The data supports the idea that JTEs see AETs primarily as models of native English, but that JTEs’ descriptions of AETs’ linguistic behaviour in the classroom does not support the idea that this is happening. Four classroom practices, namely the use of translation, simplified English, scripted talk, and the Japanese language, may all interfere with the AETs’ provision of native English in use.

Translation

Respondents pointed out that translation of an AET’s English by the JTE is a quick and convenient way to overcome communication difficulties, a comment that echoes McConnell’s (1996) description of the team teaching process. (All the respondents used

‘translate’ and related word forms to refer to what might be more appropriately called oral interpretation, so I have used ‘translate’ in the same sense here. No respondent used any form of the word ‘interpret’ in their interviews.)

Fujimoto-Adamson’s (2010) research showed a JTE using English to attempt a negotiation between the AET and the students after the AET used some difficult vocabulary. Some respondents to my research reported doing the same, but they all reported using translation to help in the same situation. One teacher provided the example of an AET who used ‘exaggeration’ repeatedly. RR summed up the typical use of translation, saying it was dependent on the JTE’s judgement as to whether or not students understood the AET at any point in time. (All teachers are identified by pseudonymous initials. Transcription notations are included at the end of this article.)

Excerpt 1

01 RR and then so all the information and explanations and
02 directions and the ALTs give <.> the students and then I
03 <.> see the students’ faces and I think if the student
04 doesn’t don’t understand and I explain in Japanese but I
05 try not to use Japanese in the class <.> oral class

The final clause of Excerpt 1 shows some ambivalence on RR’s behalf. She wants to translate to promote understanding, but she tries not to because it is an oral class, which as we have seen is often the main occasion for Japanese teachers to shift their methodological emphasis from *yakudoku* grammar translation to communicative language teaching (CLT). RR had previously said that she taught her classes using “basically Japanese”, but with some attempts to use English for classroom language, viz: “but I try to use some English like please open your textbooks to page ten or something @”. Her laugh at the end of this utterance, indicated by ‘@’, may be a sign of embarrassment because she was admitting to the respondent, a native English speaker, that she used Japanese almost exclusively in an English class. When asked if the presence of an AET had any effect on her language of instruction, she said, “I think I use more /English”, an insecure response marked by a rise on the first syllable of “English” that may show doubt.

The JTEs are generally in agreement as to why they feel they should not translate. QQ, DD and NN all provide similar reasons, saying that students who know a Japanese translation will follow any English utterance are likely to ignore the English and wait for the Japanese.

Excerpt 2

A 01 QQ if I do that if I do that in a classroom they will my
A 02 students will not listen to ALTs and just try to listen
A 03 to me

B 01 DD I don't like to translate um what ALTs say because um if
B 02 I do that my students will look fo:r <.> uh like wait for
B 03 my translations

C 01 NN um if I translate students don't listen to the assistant
C 02 teacher because um they ex ex expect my Japanese then
C 03 that's <.> that can't be listening exercise

The use of translation may have an unintended consequence, as it forces the JTE into a subservient position, something LL explained when she was asked about the need for JTEs and AETs to work together.

Excerpt 3

01 LL yes @ I have to do that <.> I have to cooperate un u:n
02 but <.> in (AET's name)'s class he's strong and his
03 class is also strong like military so I am just a
04 translator and if I am a good translator he's satisfied

According to her description the JTE and AET fit the roles typically associated with translation at a diplomatic or professional level, a powerful (line 02 “strong” and line 03 “military”) figure whose words are important, and subservient second (lines 03 and 04 “just a translator”) who is responsible for making sure the message gets across to the locals. LL’s choice of subject for the verb phrase “have to cooperate” supports this. Instead of using the pronoun ‘we’, which might be expected if there was a certain level of power sharing, she says “I have to cooperate”, which seems from to show her positioning herself in a subservient role. This could depend on her understanding of these words, but the fact that she refers to the AET as “strong” and “military” seems to support the idea that LL felt compelled to work ‘for’ that AET, rather than ‘with’ him. LL seemed keen to emphasis her minimal role, at least

in the case of the AET mentioned in Excerpt 3, as in another place in the interview she said “during the 40 minutes (of class time) my role is to be just a translator”. Again the use of “just” before translator minimises the importance of her role and gives us a clue as to her feelings about the situation.

LL’s interview also gave the impression that at least one of the AETs she worked with was using his superior knowledge of English to belittle her students and treat them as linguistic inferiors. This put her in the position of having to translate while simultaneously shielding her students from the reality of the AET’s remarks.

Excerpt 4

01 LL I didn’t understand his character at first and
02 I didn’t understand his style at first <.> so I was very
03 <.> ah <.> I didn’t know what to do at in the first stage
04 <.> but I was learning that <..> he was very ironic
05 person and this is his style @ <.> when I translate his
06 English into Japanese I have to add something so that
07 students <..> a:h don’t feel uncomfortable

The Japanese word often given as a translation for ‘irony’, *hiniku*, is also translated by many dictionaries as ‘sarcasm’. There is a scholarly debate in Japan over whether *hiniku* is more like irony or sarcasm. (See Okamoto (2007) for a summary of the relevant Japanese sources.) Those who have spent time speaking English with Japanese people will be aware of hearing one word in contexts where the other might be expected. As Okamoto (2007, p. 1166) points out, “Japanese *hiniku* requires the target of criticism to be more explicitly expressed, compared with ‘irony’,” which does suggest a similarity to sarcasm.

If we accept that “ironic person” in Excerpt 4 has a meaning akin to sarcastic person, it appears that the AET was taking advantage of the students’ lack of English ability to mock them in some way. LL seems to have gradually realised this (“I didn’t understand... at first”) and reacted by attempting to protect her students (“add something”) from the AET’s sarcasm so that they didn’t “feel uncomfortable”. It is impossible to know how the AET thought LL would handle his remarks, but it appears that this may be further support of him having an arrogant attitude towards her as he was treating her students with a lack of respect in front of

her face and forcing her to translate and simultaneously mitigate the effect of his words to the students.

MM also seems to see the JTE in a peripheral translator role. In Excerpt 5 she explains that AETs, despite being assistants in name, become the focus of team taught classes to the extent that the students become passive participants and JTEs become secondary participants who are only used for their Japanese language skills.

Excerpt 5

01 MM AETs are centred in the class <.> in terms of system they
02 are assistant <..> but in reality <..> I think in most
03 cases AET are speaking AET are talking <.> or asking <.>
04 students are just listening and Japanese teachers <2> are
05 sometimes translate what AET says or something
06 instructions give instructions in Japanese yeah so I
07 think in reality u:m <.> in most classes AETs are centred

This seems to show a split between the intention of team teaching, which emphasised equal participation, and the practice, which has AETs in the primary position and JTEs serving as Japanese language assistants.

There is a final but important point to be made regarding translation; the potential problems it presents to JTEs who are not able to translate English adequately. (Note that this refers only to translating English, not to speaking English.) ZZ said he has trouble translating things that Japanese teachers of other subjects asked him to do.

Excerpt 6

01 ZZ when they face some English problem they always come to
02 us (JTEs) and uh they they question us but the contents
03 is like a you know very special field then I don't
04 understand not the English but the content

JTEs, regardless of their language skills, cannot be assumed to be trained translators and so may have no experience with circumlocution, summary or any of the other skills that Newmark (1983) argues are necessary for translation. They may naturally, as Wierzbicka (2003) argues is sometimes the case, provide semantic, word-for-word translations, rather than opting for pragmatic translations that would be more meaningful. In addition, they may

be comfortable using English in relation to their own lives and their own work, but they cannot always be expected to be knowledgeable about English used in other fields. In Excerpt 7 MM explains that student expectations that she would translate an AET's self-introduction led her away from her role as a teacher and into a role for which she was unprepared.

Excerpt 7

01 MM sometimes the the terms <.> terms were related to some
02 kind of specific place or specific expression associated
03 with culture or young cultural things <.> so obviously I
04 was not able to translate or <.> precise translation at
05 that time <.> I was I was very criticised by students
06 <.> oh you can't understand English <.> but ex I
07 want to say excuse me maybe <.> native speakers of
08 American don't know that kind of <..> cultural <.> terms
09 <.> so <..> yeah I but in that case I was I was very
10 embarrassed <.> yeah that that that's the negative
11 negative experience in my team teaching

Students' perceptions of MM's status and authority as an English teacher may already be in transition, seeing as she is being forced to work side by side with a native speaker of English. Now MM's English expertise is called further into question when she fails to translate something.

The AET's presence and the resulting need for translation has been shown here to variously push JTEs into using a language of instruction that they do not normally think is necessary, marginalise their presence in the classroom, and cause them professional embarrassment. The need for translation also shows that while AETs may be exposing the students to native varieties of English it is not necessarily at a level they understand and so may not be serving any pedagogical purpose.

Simplified English and foreigner talk

The need for translation arises from the AETs' use of overly difficult English. The following four participants also discussed some AETs' use of slow and simplified English, which is not representative of the native English that AETs are supposed to be providing. (cf. Shin &

Kellogg (2007) for a description of how this can lead to the JTE's English being more complex than the AET's.)

Excerpt 8

A 01 LL the English he is using is very very simple like do you
A 02 have a question or do you want to ask something a:h <.>
A 03 repeat after me like that

B 01 FF in the classroom you know they (AETs) of course
B 02 they are I mean um he tried to speak <.> you know
B 03 a::h <..> to let the students understand everything

C 01 KK she (an AET) used simple words so that they
C 02 (KK's students) can understand her

D 01 RR they (AETs) speak very slowly <..> to students and
D 02 to me so I can understand them

The comments in Excerpt 8 make it appear that AETs are initiating this type of simplified talk themselves, but there are cases where JTEs ask the AETs to speak in simple English as well.

Excerpt 9

A 01 DD but I tell them to use really simple English because my
A 02 students wouldn't understand um any big words so I I tell
A 03 the ALTs to use short sentences and <.> um say it really
A 04 slow or um draw a picture if they don't understand or um
A 05 <.> like rephrase it

B 01 NN uh assistant can uh I ask assistant to bring some
B 02 pictures or um try to use uh easy word that students
B 03 learned or um so

The emphasis that these two JTEs put on the necessary amount of simplification their students' needs is striking. Because she thinks her students do not understand "big words", DD tells AETs to use several kinds of assistance: (line 01) "really simple English", which is doubly emphatic, (line 03) "short sentences", (lines 03 and 04) slow speech, (line 04) visuals, and (line 05) multiple explanations. NN's comments corroborate the need for simple English

and visuals. These two JTEs' comments seem to indicate that AETs need to make extensive modifications to the way they speak if they are to communicate with Japanese students. Language teaching may often feature the use of simplified examples of the target language as a means of allowing students to understand some of what they hear. However, as AETs are positioned discursively as 'real' English speakers something is being lost if they are forced to make such changes. I have never heard a JTE make an open acknowledgement to students in class that AETs were speaking simplified English, nor did a JTE ever tell me that he or she did acknowledge such to his or her students. There is thus a difference between how AETs are said to be talking to their students and how they are sometimes speaking in reality.

One final point of interest is related to RR's comment in Excerpt 8, where she says AETs speak very slowly to her. The AET may be using 'foreigner talk', (cf. Gass (1997)) as slow, simplified English is sometimes known in the context of NES interactions with NNEs. This can indicate the presence of feelings of status superiority by the native speaker with regards to the non-native speaker (Long, 1983). Lynch (1988, p. 115) has also argued that NNE listeners may report that foreigner talk is condescending, perhaps because NESs who use it are felt to be making "intellectual adjustments, and not merely adjustments to language or discourse". Should any JTEs feel this way it is unlikely to promote good relations between them and their assistants.

Scripted talk

The acronym AET has been jokingly referred to as meaning 'automatic English tape recorder', playing on the fact that AETs sometimes do nothing in class other than read a passage before students repeat it, something that was done with cassette players and is now done with CD players. RR explained that when she has an AET in her class they read dialogues together, saying "textbooks have a like model conversation <..> and we do the model and the AET and JTE and ah we let the students practice the dialogue." KK and MM said they did the same. Of course, most of the textbooks from which they are reading come with CDs that use actors to perform the same dialogues. It could be argued that the CDs are providing performances of scripted dialogue and are thus two steps removed from natural English, but an AET and a JTE are in essence doing the same when they read together.

This is not to say that CDs are accurate reflections of natural English, for they are often recorded presentations of scripted performances. One interview participant, GG, mentioned that he had some experience working with voice actors for textbook CDs. He explained that even the CDs, which were recorded by native English speakers, were not providing students with accurate depictions of any variety of native English.

Excerpt 10

01 GG I once um made um um you know materials teaching
02 materials and uh the text was uh recorded by a was um
03 read out um by American professional narrator living in
04 Japan and they said which speed would you prefer natural
05 English or Tokyo natural you know this is a jar kind of
06 jargon Tokyo natural which means they don't speak or
07 speak like that with native speakers you know very slowly
08 very artificial variation of English

In this excerpt GG shows that he is certainly aware that this kind of spoken English is not representative of anything students might encounter in reality (line 08 “very artificial”), but he also later said that any other kind of English would be “very very hard difficult to understand” for students. When I asked which variety he chose, GG said, “well well of course uh you know Tokyo natural because it's easier for both teachers and ah students to understand”. He went on to comment that in fact almost all of the English that Japanese students would hear was mediated like this, whether it was on TV or radio English conversation programmes or from their AETs in school.

AETs' use of Japanese

AETs are not normally required to be at all fluent in Japanese. Respondents mentioned that AETs sometimes used limited Japanese. FF said, “sometimes just for a joke or you know he or she (an AET) will say some Japanese word”. However, several interview participants mentioned working with AETs who speak Japanese to the extent that they use it regularly, whether for simple classroom language (‘please open your book’, and so on) or as a language of instruction.

AETs who speak Japanese may be useful as models of successful language learners, perhaps encouraging students to see that it is possible to learn a language as different from

English as their own is. BB said she thought AETs should be able to speak Japanese as it would give them some insight into the language learning process and allow them to model certain language learning techniques they themselves used, but she did not want them to speak Japanese in the class.

On the whole having an AET speak Japanese contravenes the idea that Japanese students need to hear real English as it is spoken by native speakers. KK seems to have realised during her interview that perhaps it was not right to admit that an AET speaks Japanese frequently in the classroom.

Excerpt 11

01 KK I think he speaks Japanese like <.> sixty percent and
02 English forty percent <.> I think I'm going to tell him
03 that @ I want you to speak English @

KK didn't elaborate on why she had not yet told him to avoid speaking Japanese, but it may have simply been for the convenience of having him direct the class. Her laughter in line 03 could signify her realisation that it is absurd to have to tell an AET, hired because he is a NES, to use English in her class. She had previously said that AETs were the main actors in her classes (KK: "basically the AETs take initiative I don't") and seemed satisfied with this, so in this case the AET was not really fulfilling his purpose as a model of real English.

LL, on the other hand, said she was actively working to convince an AET in her class to stop speaking Japanese, emphasising in line 02 of the following excerpt that she prefers he speak English.

Excerpt 12

01 LL I'm feeling kind of frustrated about his class <..> so I
02 want to tell him that he should speak English <.> a:nd
03 my students are 16 years old so easily they can
04 understand his English if he speaks only clearly

LL's frustrations were such that she had been to speak to her head teacher about this AET in an attempt to get him to adhere more closely to what she believed were the goals of team teaching. Her final comment is telling in that she doesn't ask for him to speak slowly, or

simply, or according to scripted dialogues. She just wants him to speak “clearly”, which is a reasonable request of any teacher.

Problems with Japanese team teaching

The majority of foreigners in Japan are NNEs, and Japanese people are more likely to use English to communicate with other NNEs than with native speakers (Tanaka, 1995). Thus a more realistic use of team teaching would involve a JTE and an accomplished NNE user of English. As Jenkins (2007) and Seidlhofer (2005) have argued, the varieties of English used by Japanese speakers of English and other NNEs are valid in their own right and need not always be positioned as deficient when compared to native English.

Nevertheless, the AET is being made responsible for two of the primary goals of the language classroom. First, the AET is the model for accurate pronunciation and communication. It is the AET’s use of English that is made primary, despite the fact that students have two English users before them. The other teacher, the JTE, is an English user who came from a similar linguistic starting point as the students and would therefore seem to be a more natural choice of linguistic target. Second, the AET is being implicitly set up as the actual purpose for English communication, for it is the AET’s language that is expected to motivate the students. These twin pedestals that the AET has been set on, right from the start of the team teaching experiment as is evident from Brumby and Wada’s book, have had consequences for team teaching research and practice through its entire run so far. The dominant theme for much of the discourse has become one where the roles and even values of the AET are the focus for discussion, leaving the JTE marginalised.

Crooks (2001, p. 32), for example, says that team teaching was implemented to help shift the curriculum from one based on grammar to one based on communication, “with the AETs’ native-speaker abilities being utilized to achieve this aim”. The problem is defined as a need to shift from a historically popular Japanese approach to language instruction to a more modern Western one. The answer also comes from the West in the form of the AET. Crooks continues, saying “JTEs have found themselves having to change their teaching practices, putting the language they teach into everyday use in negotiation with the AETs, and approaching English in different ways for the benefit of their students” (2001, p. 32). The implication here again is that the Japanese side needs to be changed. It is JTEs who must

change their methods, the methods that they likely experienced as language learners. It is the JTEs who must make accommodations for the AETs' lack of linguistic skill. It is also the JTEs who must seek new ways to benefit their students.

An additional concern for JTEs is that making time for team-taught lessons with AETs reduces the amount of time they have to focus on preparing students for examinations. Fukuzawa (1994) says the Japanese school system is guided by a text-centred curriculum driven by the need to pass exams. This creates a constant 'washback' effect, pushing teachers to focus on exam preparation over other considerations. The washback effect, when neglected, can be an impediment to the implementation of communicative teaching methods (Prodromou, 1995), so teachers may feel that the need for students to succeed on examinations is more important than learning to communicate. JTEs interviewed by Sato and Kleinsasser (2004, p. 806) reported that they were "at a loss to explain the goals and objectives" of communicative language teaching, while teaching for exams felt comfortable because it provided them with a clear, well-defined purpose for their teaching.

Nunan (1992) argues that successful team teaching needs support from administration, time for implementation and enough teacher training for teachers to develop appropriate skills. Carless's (2006) evaluation of these criteria in relation to team teaching in several countries found that in Japan they were not present most of the time. In fact, Carless notes that the one case study of team teaching from Japan he chose as an example of good practice is an anomaly: the AET had a Master's degree in applied linguistics, spoke Japanese, enjoyed being part of Japanese culture, and worked for a school that allowed him to participate fully in school matters, including attending teachers' meetings and making speeches to the local parents' association. Until more attention is paid to improving team teaching, classroom practices such as the four outlined above show that the reality of team teaching is often at odds with its stated goals.

Conclusion

The JET programme and team teaching both helped drive and were themselves driven by a rapid expansion in the popularity of English education in Japan during the mid to late 1990s (Fujimoto-Adamson, 2006). During this period of time slogans like 'globalization', 'cultural difference' and 'international understanding' (Fujimoto-Adamson, 2006, p. 277) became

popular in government-run schools. Seargeant (2005) argues that this went hand-in-hand with a desire for authenticity in foreign language practice, to the extent that foreign language theme parks in which Japanese tourists could interact in English in constructed social and institutional situations were developed and popularised.

The employment of AETs in team teaching may be a reflection of this search for authenticity. AETs are by nature both linguistically authentic native speakers and they are culturally different than JTEs, which may provide students with a different type of motivation to learn English. However, the presence of the four barriers which I have described in this article suggests that AETs cannot always be positioned as providers of authentic native English in classroom interactions.

Transcription Notations

() = text included by researcher for clarification

_____ = emphasis

@ = laughter

<.> = pause of roughly one second

<..> = pause of roughly two seconds

: = lengthened sound

/ = rising intonation

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