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Brian T. Quinn

INTRODUCTION

There is increasingly more discussion these days regarding the improvement of foreign language teaching methodology in particular, and the need for making wholesale drastic changes in foreign language curriculum development in general. This present dilemma has contributed to an abundance of alternative methodologies being constantly evaluated for their potential to improve the efficiency of language education. This debate is no more critical than in the realm of English education in Japan.

Japan has, of course, been making great strides to improve the state of English education, most importantly by producing ever more speakers and educators who are themselves quite fluent in the language. However, even with the steady increase in better qualified teachers, both on the secondary and university levels there has been no dynamic progress in the overall improvement of English teaching or any other foreign language despite the immense efforts of numerous teachers, experts and language scholars.

The most important reason for Japanese students' seemingly neverending lack of proficiency stems from one pedagogical factor which has been steadily ignored throughout the continuing foreign language debate. This is precisely the fact that even though more educators are perhaps fluent in English, English classes from the junior high school level up through university level are conducted almost exclusively in Japanese, with the focus on metalanguage rather than communication. The importance of fully utilizing L2 (the language being taught) in the actual teaching process as the main form of communication is still ignored by the vast majority of language teachers on all levels. It is simply not sufficient that the teacher is fluent in the foreign language if the teacher fails to use it in the critical

moments of language transmission. It is painfully ironic that most Japanese language teachers fail to comprehend the supreme importance of using English as often as possible when both organizing teaching activities and even chatting with the students socially.

The specific aim of this study is to show teachers the value of using L2 in the classroom and to explore the alternatives and opportunities for teachers to greatly improve their teaching efficiency by merely conscientiously establishing L2 as the main language of communication between the teacher and students. It will be shown that if teachers expect the students to be able to use L2 at the end of the course, then the students must constantly be given the chance to use and practice it during the course. Numerous ways in which language teachers can take positive steps to increase the amount of L2 usage will be discussed while demonstrating how, in this way, the students can come to better understand that the main aim of learning a language is to truly learn how to communicate in that language. English will be used throughout the course of this discussion as the typical L2 due to its universality of instruction in Japan. However the use of L2 and the examples given will be fully applicable to all foreign languages taught in the classroom context. This study will, in addition, be mainly intended for teachers whose native language is different from L2 and who teach students with a common language other than English (i.e., Japanese).

THE UNIQUENESS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Too many teachers try merely to teach about English which tends to give students the impression that English is just another subject such as math, history and so on. Thus, the students walk into class, open their books and passively listen to the discussion or explanation about some reading or translation passage. Soon they begin to mentally tune out and stop paying more than superficial attention to what the teacher is trying to say. Questions are usually asked in L1 (the native

language of the group) about L2 and when the class is over the student closes his or her book and puts "English" away in his bookbag regarding it as something quite dead, distant and almost untouchable. A more desirable aim of any English class should be, however, to constantly help students learn how to communicate successfully in the language no matter how simply it needs to be done.

First of all the teacher must acquaint himself with the specialized and idiomatic forms which are always necessary when conducting a class in L2. Although these utterances can grow to be quite numerous, they can all be easily mastered in a short time since they are being constantly repeated in class everyday. The ways of using and incorporating such language into a lesson will be discussed in detail later on. Next, the teacher should try to always use English as a means of instruction, class organization and for communication with his students on a personal basis. To succeed in this effort the teacher must try to exploit the many varied and genuine situations that continually arise in the classroom which can lead to meaningful and authentic language practice.

It is also of great importance that students realize that it does not matter so much if they make mistakes when they are speaking or even if they fail to understand everything the teacher says. The students must, however, recognize that if they want to be able to actually use their acquired English they must practice it during the course. It will, of course, be difficult at the early stages for the students to speak in L2 so a lot of praise and encouragement will be needed and correction of mistakes should be kept to a minimum or the students run the risk of losing confidence and giving up trying to speak at all. Ideally, correction should occur mostly during the presentation and practice stages of the lesson when the students should be mastering the main points and content of the lesson.

Teachers are often too quick to correct their students. This leaves students frequently too afraid to say much of anything for

fear of making an error. Remember that the main aim of learning a language is to learn how to communicate in that language, and so if you, as the teacher, can understand what a student says despite his mistakes, then he has communicated successfully. The students will then be encouraged by their success and soon increase their attempts at speaking and over time the frequency of mistakes will gradually decrease.

As language teachers in Japan, learning L2 through L2 and developing, for example, an English atmosphere in the classroom, is, for the students, the next best thing to actually going to the USA, Great Britain or any other English speaking country and learning English there. Therefore if the teacher is able to carefully control and manipulate L2 usage, the students can be made to feel quite at ease both in comprehending and in utilizing L2. Of course, for many teachers who have been teaching English for many years through their native language such a switchover in class methodology will be difficult and cumbersome at first, but in a very short time the teacher will find it not hard to adapt and start to enjoy his own increased confidence in using the language.

THE VALUE OF USING L2 EXTENSIVELY IN CLASS

There are four important reasons for using English as much as possible in the classroom. First of all, normal textbook English is usually artificial and unnatural, however normal situations which occur in the classroom such as a student arriving late, someone forgetting a book, opening a window, collecting homework and so on, provide opportunities for real and natural English to be used. Secondly, if the teacher uses English to say real things to the class it will gradually show students that English is a real language used for communication, not just a dead subject to be deciphered for passing exams. In the third place, if the teacher is using English for the entire classtime, it affords students an excellent opportunity for extensive listening practice as well as practice in responding to spoken English.

Lastly, when students observe their teacher, who is not a native speaker either, speaking and conversing both confidently and fluently in English, it positively makes the teacher an excellent role model for the students to emulate. It is also an excellent psychological motivator for instilling such a mind frame as: "If he(she) can do it, then so can I!".

Although the advantages of using L2 constantly in class are numerous, it is important for all teachers to understand that they should not feel absolutely forced to speak only L2. It is obviously true that some occasions may arise when it would be proper and even more effective to judiciously employ the students own language, L1. However, this tendency should not be used as a crutch for both the teacher and students. Whatever language functions can be accomplished in L2 should be performed, whenever possible, in L2.

SOME TYPICAL REASONS FOR NOT USING L2

It always seems that teachers are quick to find good reasons to conduct their classes in L1 rather than in L2. Some of the more prominent ones are briefly discussed below:

1. "My proficiency in L2 is not sufficient!".

This might be true for a beginning teacher, but it is the duty of the foreign language teacher to master the most basic forms of communicative exchange in their chosen language and field of study. What works well for the inexperienced teacher is to simply make large lists of the most frequent classroom management expressions and always display them on the desk for referral as needed. Since L2 used for class management consists almost solely of high frequency words such as "open your books", "Sorry I was absent last week", these can all be mastered in no time at all due to the constant practice in teaching and using them.

2. "Students might laugh at me if I make a mistake".

Students are a lot more sympathetic than one would believe. This author is a native English speaker and I have taught Russian, French, German and Polish all in large university classes and have made more than my share of verbal faux pas, however, it is interesting to note that about 90% of such mistakes are not even noticed by the students anyway and as long as the teacher can correct himself and move confidently on with the lesson while maintaining his composure, then there is little chance of anyone laughing at the teacher.

3. My pronunciation isn't good enough!"

As the teacher should already be well aware of, good pronunciation, in itself, is not the ultimate goal of language learning, good communication is! The teacher must insure only that his pronunciation is intelligible enough to be understood by a L2 native speaker. It is also sometimes true that many students feel less threatened if the teacher's pronunciation is not so drastically different from their own.

4. "My students would never understand me!"

Just as young children do, language learners adapt very quickly to a new environment. They may not comprehend everything at first, but as L2 is more and more consistently used, they will soon start to understand most of what is said. It is also true, however, that students tend to be cleverly lazy, and if they realize that they can get away without either using or comprehending L2, then they will never be motivated enough to pick it up.

5. My students would make too many mistakes".

It is true that when students begin to use L2 communicatively for the first time they will make wholesale errors, however, this is the first stage for all language learners and it is just such errors which must be made and then gradually corrected until the students learn how to correct such errors themselves.

6. "The students would never cooperate."

Establishing L2 as the main language indeed requires immense cooperation from the students but it is exactly in this area that the teacher's role as inspiring motivator comes into play. It is absolutely crucial that the teacher establish an atmosphere of positive cooperation among the students and with sufficient encouragement students do, in fact, tend to cooperate without much difficulty. Some teachers even use a fine system for students who speak in L1 yet such alternative coercive measures are really unnecessary if the teacher develops a good rapport with the class.

7. "I enjoy telling jokes and humorous stories in class".

This aspect of class would indeed suffer, especially with lower level language learners, but over time the teacher can find many ways in which to manipulate the available language known to the students in a multitude of comical and enjoyable ways.

8. "I teach literature/composition/reading/grammar, not convers

This is perhaps the most pervasive excuse for not utilizing L2 in class. However, this is the crux of the problem. It is clear that not all language classes have the same objectives but even in content oriented classes there are countless opportunities to use L2 in the course of a lesson without taking away any time or energy that needs to be devoted to accomplish the task at hand.

It could be used painlessly for such activities as checking attendance, asking questions, talking about the text, giving summaries, correcting errors and organizing the class. Of course for many difficult points the use of L1 will, at times, be essential yet, when returning to more simple or mechanical parts of the lesson the use of L2 would greatly increase the students overall exposure to the language in a beneficial manner.

USING L2 AT JAPANESE UNIVERSITIES

After at least 6 years of study, Japanese university students are quite well equipped to begin using English, however, they completely lack any practice in real communication. It is therefore even more essential for teachers to employ as many opportunities as possible for both listening to and speaking the language. "Consider the case of Japanese students in a first year college or university conversation course. These students will already have studied English for six years. In general, however, they possess few conversation skills since the emphasis in junior and senior high school English classes in Japan is on grammar and vocabulary. However, their knowledge, passive as it may be, can be utilized by their teachers, who should not resort to using a lot of Japanese in class. In fact, teachers should avoid using Japanese in order to activate students' English".(Cantor:3) Moreover, if the teacher constantly reverts to L1 throughout the class then in the end the teacher is doing a great disservice to the students whose only chance to hear and use English is probably in the classroom.

It is also fair to say that most language teachers are not fully conscious of the overwhelming use of L1 in their lessons. One extremely productive step is to occasionally set up a tape recorder in the corner of your classroom and record a typical lesson. Later while listening the tape the teacher can time the actual amounts of L1 and L2 spoken in the course of the period. Many teachers are quite surprised to discover that even though they are either reading or translating "in English", on

further evaluation of the tape, they may be spending from 60% to 90% of the class period using L1. As a result, by taping one's own lesson, the teacher can begin to more objectively analyze areas in which L2 could profitably be implemented.

In North America, it is also popular for colleagues to regularly observe each other's classes and then talk over some possible ways to improve their language methodology or language usage. Unfortunately, this rather constructive custom is not well accepted, especially in the area of foreign language instruction, where teachers feel that their language proficiency or competence is possibly being questioned.

USING APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

Every teacher should first of all identify the language and expressions which will be regularly used in his classes. There are a number of high frequency items which will be used both when speaking to the students and when the students speak among themselves. Teachers should teach the most basic of these to the students right at the beginning of the course. Some important phrases are:

Could you repeat that, please?

How do you spell that?

I'm sorry but I don't understand the question.

I'm sorry but I don't know/ I forgot.

I'm sorry, but I couldn't catch it.

How do you say _____ in English?

What's another way to say _____?

These are just a few of the essential phrases that students must quickly master in order to interact in a typical English class. The students will also need to acquire various phrases in order to be capable of talking among themselves, especially when the teacher employs extensive pair/group work exercises. Some of these are:

I'll be first	Let's change parts
You be first	Let's ask the teacher
Go ahead	Could you help us?
Whose turn is it?	That's a good idea!
I'll be A and you be B.	This is hard.

As stated previously, such expressions should be taught as is, right from the start of the course without going into any detailed grammatical explanations since they must be used immediately. In the beginning, teachers will need to frequently prompt students to use them, but with practice and gentle, regular reinforcement, the students will soon use them without having to think about them. It is also important that students are taught how to politely interrupt the teacher when they are failing to understand something. In such a case, "Excuse me Mr. ___, I don't understand" is a simply but useful expression. Regarding the teacher's use of language, it is essential that the teacher reduce the feelings of anxiety and enhance the feelings of security in the class by using the same expressions regularly and increasing to them very gradually over an extended period of time. If teachers are careful in their language usage, then their students will soon grow more confident and likely to use such phrases themselves. It is necessary to give special encouragement to all students who are making a real effort to communicate even if they tend to obliterate an occasional sentence or two. This can easily be done by generously nodding the head and inserting plenty of utterances such as: "Yes", "Fine", "Good", "Well done", and so on. When students are having difficulty understanding it is also important to not further confuse the students by rephrasing statements and inadvertently making the sentences even more complex. It is usually preferable to simply repeat the utterance while stressing the part that has caused the apparent lack of understanding.

It will, unfortunately, at times be necessary to persuade individual students to refrain from using their native language.

In low level classes the teacher may repeat the L1 utterance in L2 and then ask the student to repeat it. This is, in fact, a frequent way in which many students will request help. The teacher, can also pretend not to understand L1 by saying: "I'm sorry, but I only understand English in English class!". Yet the best way to persuade students to use English is by the teacher's own confident use of the language himself.

SOCIAL LANGUAGE

In order to develop a more relaxed atmosphere in the classroom and deepen the mutual rapport between teacher and students, it is often a good idea to spend a few minutes chatting to the class about topics of general interest instead of going straight to the textbook. This can be done in English even at the most rudimentary levels. For example:

T: Did you all have a nice weekend?

S: Yes.

T: Did you? I did, too! On Sunday I went for a drive. Did anyone go for a drive?

S1: Yes.

T: Where to?

S1: To Nagasaki.

T: Who did you go with? (and so on)

(This can then be continued with some more students)

Such warm up chatting can be done very successfully by talking about such topics as:

popular movies

recent sports events

big world events

local scandals

things students did the past few days

plans for vacations

student events

holidays

popular TV shows

There are several advantages in chatting with students before the actual lesson proper. Some of these are:

- 1.It helps create an opportunity for real communicative language practice.
- 2.It creates an English atmosphere in the class.
- 3.It establishes a bond between the teacher and students.
- 4.It helps the students to relax and open their minds to get ready to learn.
- 5.It allows us to "break the ice" just as people do in real life when meeting people we all tend to use "small talk" before getting down to business.

There are no set guidelines for chatting with the students, however, it is essential that the teacher chooses topics which truly interest the students, show sincere interest in the students answers, not pay too much attention to mistakes and finally remember that the object of social chatting is to establish a friendly atmosphere in the class.

CLASSROOM LANGUAGE

In the following section ten areas of classroom organization will be presented in order to give abundant examples of how L2 can be profitably used throughout the lesson on all levels. These areas include:

- 1.At the start of the lesson
2. Checking attendance
3. Setting up the classroom
4. Getting organized
5. Introducing different stages of the lesson
6. Using A/V Materials
7. Setting up pairs/groups

8. Handling interruptions
9. Control and discipline
10. Ending the lesson

1. At the start of the lesson

The teacher should always greet the students with a bright and cheerful "Good morning/afternoon". The students can respond in turn. This can be followed by a polite "How are you (all) today" with the students responding "Fine, thank you." Next the teacher can ease into some social chatting as mentioned previously. While talking with the students in very large classes it is a good idea to expand some of the topical question to pair work so all the students can begin to warm up. For example, after asking a few students about their weekend then say:

"All right, everybody. Now ask your neighbors!"

At this stage the teacher can then check a couple of pair responses before proceeding with the lesson.

2. Checking attendance

The teacher will have to use several "marker" words to indicate to the students that they are moving to a new stage or phase of the lesson, after which attendance can be checked:

T: Right! / Now! / Fine! / OK! / Quiet now, please! /

T: I'm going to call your names.

T: (calling out names)

S: (should reply with) Here! / Present! (Note: NOT YES!)

In small classes the teacher could ask:

T: Is anybody absent today?

T: Where's Miss Takeshita?

Students would be expected to answer the questions as well as possible. The teacher may continue:

T: Miss Tanaka, you were absent last week, weren't you?

S: Yes, I was.

T: What was the matter?

S: I was sick/at a job interview/in the hospital.

T: Oh, that's too bad. Do you feel better now?

Come see me after the lesson, OK?

T: OK!/Right! Let's get on with the lesson.

3. Setting up the lesson

The teacher can use many different statements to help set up the classroom such as the following:

It's rather hot in this room, isn't it? (stuffy/cold/dark)

It's terribly messy in here, isn't it?

Please straighten up the tables, would you?

Would someone turn the lights on? (air conditioner/heater)

Could someone open that window, please? (draw that curtain)

Would someone go and get some chalk, please? (an eraser/the janitor)

Oh! Good! Well done! Thank you for tidying up the room!

What a comfortable classroom!

4. Getting Organized

Before getting down to the lesson, there will sometimes need to be some preliminary organizing to be done such as:

Would someone clean the blackboard?

Could everyone straighten up your desks/tables?

Let's get into groups of 4 per table.

That's it!

Now today you'll need your green books.

Please clear your desks of anything else.

You'll need the handouts we were using last week.

Did you forget your book? Well, share with your neighbor then.

Not that book. The other one!

I'm going to pass out some new worksheets today, please take one and pass them back.

Keep these in a safe place because we'll be using them later.

I'll want them back at the end of the lesson.

Please pass them up to the front.

Such organizational instructions can be complicated so it is advisable for the teacher to make regular use of the same utterances over and over again after a few weeks or months the students will understand. When first implementing such instructions solely in L2 it will often be necessary to use gestures to help make your intended meaning clear to the students. When they still do not understand, repeat the request slowly and show them what you want done.

5. Introducing the different stages of the lesson

OK, who can remember where we stopped last week?

Let's go over it one more time, shall we?

(outlining the lesson plan)

First we're going to listen to a story.

Later I want you to practice a dialogue

Near the end of the lesson we'll sing a song.

Today we're going to learn how to give people advice. (buy food)

Today we're going to practice giving directions.

During a lesson conducted in L2 instead of giving detailed

grammatical explanations as one would do when using L1, it is better to give many more examples in order to reinforce the topic at hand. In this way the language needed for giving examples is as follows:

Like/As in/For example/Such as/ Look, like this/You can say...

(introducing a break or new stage in the lesson)

Well, let's take a break and listen to this.

Now let's practice the same thing in pairs.

Alright then, now I want everyone to read the following story.

6.Using A/V materials

There is now almost universal use of A/V materials at some stage in most foreign language courses and explaining to your students how to use various machines in English is of great practical value to them.

Would somebody plug in the tape recorder for me?

Could you plug it in over there in the outlet by the window?

Can everybody hear?

Should I turn the sound up a little more? (turn it down)

Why don't you people in the back come up a little closer to the front?

Could you rewind the tape for me?

Could someone help me carry the tape recorder back to my office?

Oh no, what's wrong with it? It must be broken.

Check the plug, please.

Good that's better. Can everybody hear now?

Did you catch that? I'll go back and play it once more.

Be quiet everyone and listen carefully.

(For LL) Don't forget to rewind your tapes before you leave.

7. Setting up pairs/groups

There will be a great need for organizational guidance from the teacher in helping the students to quickly and efficiently get into pairs and groups to carry out extensive language practice.

Some useful language is as follows:

I want everyone to work in pairs, please. In twos with your neighbor. (in groups of 3,4,or 5)

Now switch partners!

Oh, you're by yourself, aren't you? For now join this pair and take turns.

All those on the left take Jim's part and those on the right take Mary's part

When you've finished change parts and do it again.

OK/Stop now. That was pretty good! Silence! Let's see how well you do. Now let's hear this pair.

In pair work there is also a lot of language which the students will need to use among themselves in order to carry out the communicative drills:

I'll go first./Go ahead/Sorry, could you repeat that again?

I'll be A and you be B.

It's your turn to go first.

OK, now let's change parts.

I don't understand. Let's ask the teacher.

During this part of the lesson when the students are speaking English in pairs among themselves it is important for the teacher to circulate around the room in order to observe what is actually going on. The teacher should be careful not to interrupt the students but to take note of some of the most typical kinds of errors which are taking place. It is also a time where he may

provide them with examples of needed language for them to continue their verbal exchanges. This is also when the teacher needs to encourage the students to carry out the drills in English and can insure that L2 is indeed being used by all students.

8. Handling Interruptions

No teacher can escape bothersome interruptions which unavoidably will take place throughout the course of a lesson, however the teacher can often use such interruptions to his advantage for making more real communicative exchanges with the students:

S: I'm sorry I'm late.

T: What was the problem?

S: I missed the bus/overslept/was drinking coffee at Mr. Donut.

T: Well don't let it happen again.

S: Yes sir/ma'am.

T: OK, now let's get back to the lesson.

T: Where's your book?

S: I'm sorry I forgot it/I haven't bought it yet.

T: Make sure you bring it next time.

Well, share with your neighbor for now.

T: Come to see me after the lesson. I'll talk to you then.

Such exchanges can be brief but effective for demonstrating to students that L2 is the language of communication for all aspects of class management. Almost immediately they will be careful to respond to the teacher in L2 after they have interrupted the lesson to show their feelings of apology.

9. Control and discipline

Even on the university level there will be times when some class

discipline will have to be used by the teacher to keep the class from getting too noisy and out of control:

Calm down everybody!/Stop doing that!/ Let's settle down now!
 Be quiet!/ Now listen quietly!/Let's get on with your' work.No
 more playing around!/Stop talking back there, please!
 Stop disturbing the others!
 Hiroshi could you please wake up your neighbor?
 Don't look at your books when you talk with each other.
 Could you please pay a bit more attention?
 If you don't try a little harder you won't learn anything.
 If you don't intend to cooperate I suggest that you leave,
 immediately!
 Everybody! On your feet! I think it's time we had a little talk.

Of course the need to discipline a class is probably most frequent in junior high school classes, however there are some times when even university students get carried away and act childish. The teacher should never fail to establish that he is the one in control of what's going on at all times.

10. Ending the lesson

It is always difficult to time the lesson perfectly so that it finishes just when the bell is ringing. However the teacher should always keep one eye on the clock. The teacher should always wrap up the lesson with a couple of minutes to spare. In this way he can then remind the students about the next lesson and see if there are any questions from the students. It is also a good idea for the teacher to leisurely get his things together before leaving the classroom because this gives the students the chance to approach the teacher with personal or individual questions they may have not had a chance to ask during the lesson. The teacher should never carry the lesson over the designated time limit. This is extremely unfair to students who

must get to their next class or appointment and annoys all students a great deal. Students will universally appreciate it if the teacher ends the lessons promptly and leaves a couple of minutes for questions and answers.

OK. Let's do just a couple more and finish up.

Just finish the sentence you're writing now and then we'll have to stop.

That's it. I think you've all done rather well. We'll stop here and continue next time.

At home, I'd like everyone to read the next story/chapter and be ready for a quiz next class.

Before the next lesson I want you all to write out exercises 3 and 6 and hand them in.

Make sure you put all the desks back in their places.

Don't forget to turn out the lights and shut the windows.

Next lesson we'll do chapter 16 so please take a look at it before class.

I hope you'll all have a nice weekend/vacation!

Have a nice day!/See you next time!

Once again, it is most essential that at the end of the lesson the teacher leaves himself sufficient time to both wrap up what the students have learned that day and to clearly explain the assignments expected for the next class. It is also a good idea to leave small amount of time for questions and answers. Finally the teacher should never continue the lesson after the bell has rung except for a very exceptional reason.

CONCLUSION

This article has been devoted to encouraging more non-native foreign language teachers to increase, whenever possible, their use of L2 in the classroom and to eventually establish L2 as the main mode of communication between the teacher and students.

Although there are justifiable reasons for utilizing L1 on occasion, in general the teacher's conscientious consistent use of L2 in organizing and conducting the class will provide great benefit to all the students, both in improving their active English skills (speaking and questioning) as well as their passive skills (listening comprehension). Teachers should systematize their lessons and develop lists of basic L2 expressions necessary to conduct daily classes both for the students to master and for the teacher's own review. Using L2 to teach L2 is one area that is still being terribly ignored in the recent debate on improving foreign language education in Japan. It is, however, potentially the most effective and essential change needed to be broadly implemented on all levels of foreign language education from junior high school up to university. The old excuses of avoiding L2 usage during instruction are now being proven false by recent classroom research and it is high time that all foreign language educators re-evaluate their own treatment of L2 and try to explore the various ways in which to make the classroom a true place for students to develop the skills and confidence needed to successfully use the language they are studying for genuine communication.

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