Characteristics of the Mental Lexicons of High Proficiency 
Japanese EFL Speakers: From the Perspective of Morphological Aspects

N. Sakata (Kinki U.)

Longtin and Meunier (2005) show that L1 speakers decompose derivatives into constituents when processing them through a masked priming experiment, a kind of psycholinguistic method. In their experiment, forward masks (500ms), primes (47ms), and targets (e.g., HAPPY) are consecutively presented. Three kinds of primes were used: real derivatives (e.g., happiness), pseudo-derivatives (e.g., happidom), and unrelated words (e.g., blue). The results show that compared to the condition where unrelated words were primes, derivative and pseudo-derivative primes equally quicken the reaction times of targets (Participants had to judge whether targets were real words or not). If every word were represented as whole words, pseudo-derivatives could not activate any mental representations because there are no representations corresponding to pseudo-derivatives. However, if words are represented as separate components, decomposed pseudo-derivatives can activate suffixes and stems included in the pseudo-derivatives. Therefore, the results of Longtin and Meunier (2005) show that in the mental lexicons of L1 speakers, suffixes and stems are separately represented. How are derivatives represented in the mental lexicons of Japanese EFL learners? Sakata (2010) shows in the same kind of experiment of Longtin and Meunier (2005) that intermediate-level Japanese speakers of English do not decompose derivatives into constituents. The results were different from L1 speakers' ones. However, whether the difference is caused by proficiency difference or qualitative difference between L1 and L2 had not been clarified. The present study investigated this. The results indicated that 23 participants whose TOEIC scores were 890 or more showed almost the same results as the intermediate-level Japanese EFL learners, meaning that Japanese EFL speakers have different mental lexicons from L1 speakers of English. The results may indicate that there is a qualitative difference between Japanese EFL learners and L1 speakers of English in terms of morphological components.

Teacher's Code-switching in the EFL Classroom: 
A Tool or a Drawback?

A. Iimuro (Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific U.)

This study examined one teacher's use of first language (L1) in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Based on Krashen's Natural Approach (1983) and Communicative Language Teaching (Richard & Rodgers, 1986), many university language courses take on the second language (L2) input only policy. However, the debate over the use of the L1 in language classrooms is still ongoing (Cook, 2001; Turnbull, 2001). Moreover, core issues regarding L1 use include teachers' lack of awareness of when and how they use the L1 (Polio & Duff, 1994) and ways their L1 use can be changed to achieve more in classrooms (Lin, 2008). Therefore, this study aimed to (a) identify the teacher's L1 use in the EFL classroom and (b) investigate the ways L1 use can be changed to encourage more target language use by the students.
The focus is on a bilingual Japanese teacher-researcher both fluent in Japanese and English. Interactions in a beginner EFL class at a university in Japan were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using conversation analysis over four months. Findings identified six main ways in which L1 was used. These include (a) eliciting students’ target language use and (b) clarifying procedural problems. While five of the L1 usages were consistent with previous studies (Polio & Duff, 1994; Ustunel & Seedhouse, 2005), one of the L1 usages was found unique to the teacher. Furthermore, although students appreciated the teacher’s L1 use, findings showed some L1 use hindering students’ target language use and possibly reducing learning opportunities in the classroom. Action plans for improvements and its outcomes will be discussed.

This study contributes to the developing understanding of L1 use in the EFL classroom, as well as how a teacher’s L1 use can influence students’ target language production. Implications for teacher education and development will also be discussed.

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Project E-xchange: Japanese and American Students Experience Online Cross-cultural Communication

T. Shimmura (Ishikawa Prefectural U.)

During the 2007-2011 academic years, 130 second-year Japanese students exchanged messages in small groups with similar groups of 75 American students in Indiana who were studying Japanese culture. Forums were created within the Moodle course management system for this online interaction. The goal for Japanese students was to experience real communication in English and improve their English abilities and communicative strategies.

Students at Ishikawa Prefectural University and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology have a common problem. Japanese students have few opportunities to use their English skills with native speakers, while American students studying Japanese culture have few chances to interact with Japanese native speakers. Consequently, Project E-xchange was instituted in 2007 and was extended for three more years to facilitate cross-cultural communication among the students. During established 10-week exchange sessions, Japanese students spent half of their class time in a computer room writing messages to their overseas partners, with their teacher acting as an advisor, answering questions, and offering help and encouragement, while American students wrote messages outside their classes. Topics and observations from the forums were used for classroom discussions during this period in both Japan and the US. At the end of each session, students wrote short papers summarizing and describing their experiences, and a coordinated survey was conducted for all students in both groups.

Japanese students developed greater confidence in their English communication abilities and also became more interested in other cultures. The American students enhanced their knowledge of Japanese culture and improved their cross-cultural communication abilities and skill at using English with non-native speakers.

This presentation focuses on survey data from 2010-2011. It examines how students exchanged messages, what they talked about in the forums, what teachers did to improve the possible outcomes, and what the term-end survey indicates for future applications.