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.

M016

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

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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-exchange 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.