The Oral Communication SIG has been trying to view oral communication from various aspects, ranging from the use of humor in academic presentations to the differences in narrative structures between English and Japanese. Meetings have generally been held once every two months with members describing research that they had been doing and also reporting on relevant research articles and books. The research report which follows was one of those presented at a meeting.

The group sponsored an open lecture by Dr. Dave Willis of the University of Birmingham, England, on Nov. 7, 2000 with special funding from JACET. His lecture on “Language description and language teaching” described the speech grammar proposed by David Brazil and suggested its use as a learner grammar to help explain how language actually works in real-time processes, such as in speech. It is a corpus grammar that works with “telling” and “asking increments” in a spoken text and can be useful for explaining why learners may be unsuccessful with grammar learning and also for helping them understand how to promote the learning process.

Some members of this SIG initiated a group research project leading to a presentation on “Humor in Academia: Discoursal and pragmatic considerations” at AILA ’99 in August, 1999 in Tokyo and another presentation on the “Non-use of humor in science and engineering presentations by Japanese graduate students: Language, cultural or discourse community barriers?” at the 12th International ISHS (International Society for Humor Studies) Humor Conference at Kansai University in July, 2000.

During this period, the groundwork was set for the next group research project on Pear Story narratives to compare the narrative structures of English and Japanese languages.