

The Problems of Teaching English in Japan

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In June 1968, at the age of 46, I left Japan for the first time to study at University of Southern California, giving up the status which I had established in the Ibaraki Prefectural Board of Education in my almost 23 years' service there.

I learned English in Tokyo, and became a teacher of English in high school. My promotion was a little bit faster than usual there. At the age of 35, I was made a teacher consultant in English in Ibaraki Prefecture. When I quit the Board, I had been the assistant principal of a public high school for four years.

Even though I was an accepted high school teacher of English and promoted to be a teacher consultant in English, there was in my mind a serious doubt as to whether my English, which I had learned in Japan as a second language, was useful enough to live regularly, do some regular business or study in a regular course in an English-speaking country. If my English was not useful at all, I wanted to put myself to a test pertaining to whether a 46-year-old average English teacher in Japan can bring his controversial English to a recognition level in the United States.

As a result of the English examination which I took at the beginning of the semester, the university decision was that though my English was usable in a regular class, it still needed to be improved a bit in a communication English class which was provided for foreign students. Thus, I began to study in a regular class and a communication English class at the same time. In my regular class I was the only foreign student. At the end of the semester I was fortunate enough to acquire a legally-required minimum number of units, getting "A" or "B" in the regular class, and finding myself among the few who finished the communication English course successfully.

During this period of my study and my activities in the United States later, I made two term papers as to teaching English in Japan, reading American specialists' literature and remembering what I had experienced and observed during my service in the Ibaraki Prefectural Board of Education.

Since I returned to Japan, I have taught English in university for four years. Therefore, I added my experience in teaching there. However, this writing is chiefly based upon my researches in the United States.

Scarangelo, who visited and taught English in Japan for a year, says that a Japanese student or a teacher who has studied English for six to twelve years cannot speak it, even though he can read and write it without difficulty.¹ Some teachers of English in Japan may object to his statement. They may say that he refers to particular persons he saw and particular schools he visited. However, generally speaking, what he reports must be true.

Dr. Kimizuka analyzes this problem, as follows:

1. The least qualified teachers who are still teaching by the "reading-translation-grammar" method . . . [they] have no command of spoken English.
2. A majority of average English teachers whose command of "spoken English" is better than that of the first group: However, . . . their ability to use spoken English is so limited that they cannot continue . . . to teach by the oral approach.
3. A very few competent teachers whose command of "spoken English" is fairly good. . . . They can communicate with native speakers on an understandable level. . . . These teachers can handle classes in English.²

I was an English teacher consultant of The Ibaraki Board of Education from 1957 to 1963. During this period, I had many opportunities to see various demonstration classes in English throughout this area. As a matter of fact, I visited 220 schools and I watched approximately 300 English teachers' demonstration classes. Most of the teachers showed their teaching plan

1 Anthony Scarangelo, "English Teaching in Japan," *The English Journal*, XLV (May, 1956), 264.

2 Sumako Kimizuka, *Teaching English to Japanese* (Los Angeles, 1968), p. 25.

before they gave English classes. In most cases their teaching plans were well-prepared. But unfortunately their English classes used to be the reverse. They used many charts, maps, and other teaching tools, including records or tapes. However, it was often that the English the teachers read in a voice for their classes was not understandable.

This is not a mere story of the past. Last year [in 1972] I was invited as one of the judges for an English speaking and hearing test in Ibaraki Prefecture which was held by the Society For Testing English Proficiency.³ At that test, I was surprised to see that all the students from a certain area of that prefecture could not pronounce f, v, and several other sounds at all. As a result, their English was not understandable, even though what they said in English was very basic. This was not the fault of these boys and girls. Frankly speaking, we must admit that this is the fault of their teachers. This means that their English teaching still needs improvement.

Thus, it is obvious that most teachers' ability to use English is not adequate enough to handle their classes. The teachers themselves know this fact, even though this problem is not discussed seriously enough.

There are several factors which underlie this situation. One of them is English teaching at the university level. Students who major in English at university are required to study English speech, composition, reading written English, literature, linguistics and the like. Therefore, as far as the system of English teacher training is concerned, there is no problem. But a debatable problem lies in the instructors and their traditional ideas.

Even though English instructors who are competent in using

³ The Society For Testing English Proficiency, *Nihon Eigo Kentei Kyokai*.

English are increasing in number in universities, it is still a fact that many instructors prefer understanding written English to English speech and composition. Sometimes they would like to give a lecture on Middle English or Old English in Japanese. In fact, in Japan how much they know as to English or something concerning English is more evaluated than how well they can use it. For some reason or other, this is a traditional undercurrent that has controlled English education in Japan.⁴

Besides, many university students who will major in English have not studied regular basic modern English in a regular way, even though the number of proficient students are increasing.⁵ Those who have not been trained correctly on the middle school or high school level do not like to receive regular oral training on a university level.

Associated with the traditional fact that great emphasis has been placed on the translation of English on the English faculty side, the general attitude many English students entertain against oral training consciously or unconsciously seems to have been a deterrent to English teaching being improved at the university level.

Another factor that has hindered English education in Japan is the belief that there exists something that are more important than to teach or learn English as a spoken language. They are detailed grammatical analysis of sentences, the appreciation of American or English literature, the study of phonetics and so forth.

As a matter of fact, however hard English instructors in universities try to improve their own ability to use English, it

4 Bryant II, "English Language Teaching....," p. 41., quoted in Sumako Kimizuka, *Teaching English to Japanese* p. 27.

5 I observed this fact while I was a teacher-consultant.

sometimes does little to develop their own status in their society. In order to get a better position, it is more effective for them to study grammar on a high level, American or English literature, phonetics and some other similar subjects. How many writings they have made as to one or more of these subjects is much more evaluated than trying to acquire better proficiency in English. I guess this trend has been influencing the development of English education to some extent.

I do not say that these types of learning is less important. I believe that the researches as to these are essential, as those in various other fields. I also believe that these subjects are closely related with English teaching or learning. However, I would like to limit my subject here to a basic ability to hear and speak English, which has been primarily required in the majority of schools at the junior and the senior high school levels all over Japan. I think we must not forget most students from Hokkaido down to Okinawa have been spending lots of time and energy in learning English. As long as they have to learn English as an almost required subject, I am sure that it is our duty to try to lighten their heavy burden by finding a better and more effective way of teaching English.

As to this problem, some people may say that the situation has been improved, since audio-visual aids have been getting popular, and more and more widely used. They may add that English students in universities are training themselves through speech by using language laboratories. This opinion is all right. However, if we look carefully into what is actually going on, we have to say that it is still debatable.

English at the university level is mostly reading, translation, and discussion (in Japanese) of literary works. Discussion in English and the study of phonetics, philology, linguistics, and the like, are included for the English major.

“Among Japanese university professors, however,” says Bryant, “it is generally thought that in gaining proficiency in a foreign language the student must have sacrificed more important areas of knowledge. . . . ”⁶

Thus, traditionally great emphasis has been placed upon gaining “more important areas of knowledge” at the university level.

I have been teaching in university for four years since I came back to Japan. The university in which I teach is a comparatively new one. It is located in a suburban area. Thus, the campus is large, as compared with many others. The facilities it has are mostly fine. However, I have often noticed that the idea that gaining knowledge as to English is more important than training in spoken English still exists in various phases of English teaching there.

For instance, many classrooms that are used for English classes are too big. In such a room, there is a microphone for the instructor’s use. From the spoken language teaching point of view, it is obvious that better training in language in such a large class is next to impossible. (In USC, where I studied in the United States, the language staff have made every effort to make its language classes smaller than 15 students.) I guess this is the living relics of antiquated methods in teaching English in Japan.

There is a language laboratory in the university I referred to. It is better than nothing. However, many classes cannot use it easily and freely. Thus the number of the students who can use it is limited.

Fortunately, the chief professor in English there is a conscientious and energetic man. He has tried to catch every opportunity to make the English classes of more effective size.

Judging from my four years’ experience in this university, I

6 Kimizuka, p. 26.

have found that even now the problem of teaching English more effectively has not been considered much in making the school buildings there.

Furthermore, most universities do not have native speakers of English as regular instructors, except for the ones that they happen to have on an exchange program. The students of some universities in big cities, or mission schools run by Americans can study English directly from native speakers of English, but the majority of the students in English can hardly have an opportunity to study it under a native speaker in their regular curriculum.

Frankly speaking, it is not too much to say that in the present Japanese educational state, the students in English do not train themselves in the speaking field, unless they try to do so personally.

Thus, university graduates who have studied English under these circumstances become teachers in English. Accordingly, "few of whom (the English teachers in Japan) have ever heard the language spoken by a native—except, perhaps, over the radio"⁷ or through other mass communication media. "Consequently the spoken English of a Japanese student who is learning English entirely from Japanese books is unintelligible to Americans, even though it might be grammatically perfect, which is seldom is."⁸ This means that young students in junior and senior high schools who have a receptive mind cannot have a good teacher. This is a regrettable fact.

What is still worse is that many teachers who have not received satisfactory training to be English teachers have to teach

7 Bryant II, "English Language Teaching....," p. 21., quoted in Sumako Kimizuka, *Teaching English to Japanese*, p. 21.

8 Roland A. Mulhouser, "English Speak," *The Modern Language Journal*, 35 (March, 1951), 214, quoted in Sumako Kimizuka, *Teaching English to Japanese*, p. 15.

English in school without taking a necessary and fruitful in-service training. Once a person is licensed to teach English, he is often thought to be an accomplished teacher. Even if he remains poor at teaching English, his pay increases according to the salary schedule. Thus, it is probable that no one criticizes him in public.

Furthermore, many of the staffs of the boards of education and the principals are sometimes not well conscious of what is teaching English, or of what is the primary problem in the English-teaching field.

When I was a teacher-consultant, I visited a school. Talking with the principal of that school, I found that a young lady who was qualified as a teacher in English had been teaching home-making and that the English teacher there had been a non-licensed man.

I thought it queer and asked the principal why he had not made the young lady teacher teach English classes. His answer was that though any teacher could teach English, it was only a lady teacher who could teach home-making. Thinking of improving being urgent business in the English teaching field, this is the waste of manpower in that field.

Thus, Dr. Kimizuka classifies teachers of English in Japanese schools into three groups.

1. The least qualified teachers who are still teaching by the "reading-translation-grammar" method: Some of them may have an excellent knowledge of grammatical rules, English classics, and perhaps a fairly wide vocabulary, mostly on the recognition level, but have no command of spoken English. Consequently, they teach English in the same manner as the Chinese classics are taught.
2. A majority of average English teachers whose com-

mand of "spoken English" is better than that of the first group: These teachers are conscientiously trying to teach by the "oral approach" because they believe that English should be taught through speed. However, in most cases, their ability to use spoken English is so limited that they cannot continue beyond the first several months or the first year at the lower secondary school to teach by the oral approach.

3. A very few competent teachers whose command of spoken English" is fairly good: They may not be free from Japanese accent, and may not be fluent in using idiomatic English, but they can communicate with native speakers on an understandable level. This group includes those who have studied in the United States for a year or two on GARIOA, Fulbright, or some other exchange program. These teachers can handle their classes in English through the lower secondary school and probably the first or the second year of the upper secondary school.⁹

Judging from these facts, we must admit that many teachers in schools need improvement in their own proficiency in English, even after they have become qualified teachers in English. Therefore, prefectural boards of education, which are directly responsible for all the activities in every educational field, have tried to do everything imaginable in order to improve teachers' ability to use English.

One of the best feasible ideas is to give in-service training. Naturally, many in-service training programs have been had here and there. Of all these, a ten-year in-service training project which was organized and carried out by every Board of Education and sponsored by the Ministry of Education in 1951

⁹ Kimizuka, p. 25.

was the greatest that they have had. Regarding this project, Dr. Kimizuka writes:

Teaching ‘supervisors’ or ‘consultants’ were appointed by local boards of education, and visiting specialists were sent by the Ministry of Education and also by some universities to give lectures, demonstrations, and advice. In addition to the teaching specialists a number of volunteer teachers, including members of C.I.E. (The U.S. Civil Information and Education) and family members of the Occupation Army officers participated in many of the programs thus organized.¹⁰

However, what the individual teacher did in these programs was only to attend an English conversation class for 2 or 3 hours and lectures in Japanese on phonetics, philology, linguistics, and the like for 2 or 3 hours a day for the short period of a week or so. Furthermore, the number of excellent instructors as to speech was very limited. (We can easily understand this fact if we see that one of the instructors then was a poor student at USC who barely got necessary units.¹¹) Thus, the result was that ‘We cannot yet say that the present situation is satisfactory,’¹² even though that project was the largest-scale one that they have ever had.

Therefore, we must admit that various kinds of in-service training for English teachers have not always been satisfactory and that most English teachers have not received any in-service training adequate enough to improve their English, except for the very few who have had a strong desire and a good opportunity to do so.

10 Ibid., p. 24.

11 My own experience and observation in Japan (1957–1963).

12 Ministry of Education, *Educational Development in Japan During the School-Year 1953–1954* (Tokyo, 1954), p. 6., quoted in Sumako Kimizuka, *Teaching English to Japanese*, p. 24.

We can enumerate several reasons why we have not had many fruitful in-service trainings in the English-teaching field in Japan. In order to train ourselves in using English, we must expose ourselves in an English-speaking environment. That means that we are forced to be very careful to catch strange and inaudible sounds and move some muscles of the mouth which we do not use in our everyday life. Besides, we must shift from thinking in Japanese to that in English. Hit by a difficult word, phrase, or clause, we must guess what it means. We happen to make many mistakes in speaking English. Therefore, we often shrink from uttering a word, even though we are 99% ready to say something. Naturally, regular people are not willing to get into such a psychological tension. This is thought to be one of the major reasons why in-service training in using English has often been perfunctory unless its individual participants have a positive urge to train themselves. Usually, "Adults are not capable of learning a language in the natural, spontaneous way that children are. For the adult, learning a foreign language usually involves great effort and seldom results in perfect mastery of the new idiom."¹³

Thus, the basic problem of increasing English teachers' ability to use more useful English has not been seriously discussed and has been left unsettled consciously or unconsciously. An experienced teacher round me was so good at teaching English on the middle school level that he got a scholarship from the Board of Education to study in Tokyo for half a year. He said he would study the technique of teaching English at university. Personally, I think he should have made a better choice to study more useful English. The same has been true of many other in-service trainings.

13 Ronald W. Langacker, *Language and Its Structure* (New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Atlanta, 1967 and 1968), p. 14.

As a matter of fact, away from this basic problem, there has been a widespread trend of the idea that in order to teach English more effectively, it is very important to improve the technique of teaching, together with the study of phonetics, philology, English literature and so on.

This is a primary problem which we should discuss seriously. As Langacker says, "Exposure to language is . . . a minimum requirement for language acquisition,"¹⁴ and language acquisition is a minimum requirement for teachers to improve their teaching. However, this has not always been priority no. 1 in our in-service training.

For this reason, many of the in-service trainings which English teachers occasionally have can not be positive and stimulating ones. In these perfunctory trainings the teachers spend most of their time discussing how to encourage their slow learners, and how to handle more skillfully the mischievous students in their classes. The types of teaching material or tools to use are also their topics. Of course, these are important problems, but what is still more important for the teachers is to have a better proficiency in English. Unfortunately, however, very few people have placed primary emphasis upon language acquisition, thus far.

The excessive advertising of the value of the language laboratory or something like that is also a newly-rising factor which discourages teachers trying to increase their ability to use English. Sometimes, its necessity is advocated as if it were all-powerful in teaching. It is true that machines are useful and effective. However, machines are only machines. Machines can show us many things, but they can't give us experience.

Dr. Finocchiaro, who has a distinguished career in the field of teaching English as a second language, says as follows:

14 Ibid., p. 16.

The tape recorder can give more intensive and extensive practice, but it cannot answer questions, indicate relationships, emphasize, underline, and detect problems by looking at the learners' faces.¹⁵

In teaching a foreign language, the most important qualification of the teacher is to know the target language well, so that his students may imitate him.¹⁶ Lado describes it as follows:

For the non-native speaker this means using freely not only the significant sounds, syntactical constructions, and general details of pronunciation and idiomatic expression of native speech and writing.¹⁷

Thus, language laboratory as well as other professional qualifications required in the field of teaching a foreign language, such as culture, teaching technique and so on come next to the target language itself.¹⁸ Therefore we should not overestimate the power of machines. It is human beings that have a final power in language teaching.

I have referred to two reasons why many in-service trainings for English teachers have not always been effective. I mentioned psychological difficulties individual teachers have when they train themselves in English, and overestimated values of developing machines. These are the reasons which lie on the English teacher side. In order to see administrative and economic factors which deter in-service training programs, I would like to switch to the problems on the board of education side.

According to Japanese law, boards of education must pay their public school teachers not only regular salaries but the

15 Mary Finocchairo, *English as a Second Language from theory to practice* (Tokyo, 1971), p. 98.

16 Robert Lado, *Language Teaching* (New York, 1964), p. 8. See also Nelson Brooks, *Language and Language Learning* (New York, 1964), p. 63.

17 Ibid., pp. 8-10.

18 Ibid., p. 8.

expenses needed to receive an in-service training when boards of education tell their teachers to be out of service for a long-term training. Besides, to employ the substitutes for these teachers is another financial problem caused by an in-service training program. Thus, in order to give many teachers an effective in-service training, the expenses are tremendously great. On account of a difficulty to cover these expenses, boards of education are apt to shrink from giving expensive in-service training programs.

Moreover, many officers who are on the staffs of boards of education studied English by the "reading-translation-grammar" method. Therefore, they have little or no idea what proficiency in English means. They often say that it is necessary to have the ability to use English, since it is occasionally discussed in the newspapers or magazines. But that is only a superficial gesture. Many of them have never realized how training students in English orally should be done. Because they are little conscious of this problem, they are rather indifferent about it.

To them, learning English is just to translate English into Japanese. They think to themselves that what is needed in teaching English is a good dictionary, a blackboard and chalk. Traditionally, they have believed that English teaching is a very inexpensive business. Therefore, they are likely to neglect positive in-service training programs in a very important process of forming the budget, even though few officers who have direct charge of English teachers' training stress the importance of their programs.¹⁹ We must admit that the undercurrent of "Japanese insistence on teaching English as it was taught in 1893, as Latin is taught today"²⁰ and that that is "at the root of the trouble."²¹

19 My experience (1957-1963).

In spite of these unfavorable conditions as to public in-service training, there are strenuous teachers who take every opportunity of increasing their proficiency in English personally. However, the number of those who continue to study voluntarily are very few. The majority of teachers are not willing to study of their own accord, simply because no profit is received in return.

Relating to salary schedules for teachers, Gibson and Hunt write:

In order to encourage excellence in work performance, there need to be means for recognizing performance complementing the typical salary schedule, which is based upon experience and training. (1) The position and duties remain the same and the pay is changed in accordance with performance; (2) the position is expanded to involve added duties, and the pay is increased in recognition of performance; and (3) the person is promoted to a more responsible position in recognition of performance.²²

However, the Japanese salary schedules for teachers are generally "a rather fixed pattern, known as the single salary schedule, based upon years of experience."²³ "Level of Training"²⁴ is given only little consideration.

Under such a uniform salary schedule, teachers cannot hold "the same position"²⁵ for a long time, expecting to receive a higher pay for more excellent performance than the average teachers. Sometimes they may have additional duties on account

20 Anthony Scarangelo, "English Teaching in Japan," *The English Journal*, XLV (May, 1956), 263, quoted in Sumako Kimizuka, *Teaching English to Japanese* p. 21.

21 Ibid.

22 R. Oliver Gibson and Herold C. Hunt, *The School Personnel Administrator*, pp. 317-318.

23 Gibson and Hunt, op. cit., p. 292.

24 Gibson and Hunt, loc. cit.

of their excellent performance, but they are not to be better paid for them.

Promotion is attractive to every teacher. Usually, promotion means becoming an assistant principal or a principal. However, in most cases, promotion depends upon one's ability to handle administrative affairs. Sometimes "politics and favoritism"²⁶ interfere in promotions. In those cases, teachers' pay and promotion have little to do with excellent work performance in the classes. This problem is common in teaching. English teachers are not an exception.

I am afraid some people may think that the salary problem has no relation to the improvement of teaching English in Japan, but proficiency in English is something new even to the majority of the approved teachers in English. In order to acquire that ability, they will have to use a lot of time, energy and money. If we are to encourage them to do such a hard task, they should be compensated in one way or another.

In addition to the salary problem, various duties teachers have to have is trouble trying to find an opportunity to increase their proficiency in English.

Teachers have miscellaneous duties beside teaching.²⁷ As a matter of fact, it is common for them to use much of their time doing something other than teaching. Furthermore, they often have to teach one or two subjects beside their majors. If English teachers did not have this trouble, they would have more time to improve their English. In order to improve this condition, schools should have more teachers and more clerical employees than now. However, teachers' miscellaneous duties are

25 Gibson and Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

26 Gibson and Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

27 Taking care of a home room, handling delinquent students, helping students with their club activities, doing clerical work and so forth are their major duties beside teaching.

an almost unbreakable tradition.

Furthermore, average teachers of English do not have many opportunities to see native speakers of English in their communities. Therefore, if they want to learn under one, they often have to go to some other place to see him. To do so, they need considerable time, energy, and money.

This condition, interlocked with the fact that teachers are terribly busy at school, discourages many teachers to try to train themselves in using English.

I have pointed out several annoying factors which have been apt to deter many urges of many teachers to be more proficient in using English. Away from these problems now, I would like to refer to some other problems which are very influential in the English teaching field in Japan.

I am sure that many people did not miss a shocking article on the papers, reporting the suicide of a young teacher of English in Shizuoka Prefecture.²⁸ He tried to teach useful English, but his students and their parents wanted him to teach the English that was useful in the entrance examination. His right idea did not interlock with the requirement of the majority of his students and their parents.

As far as proficiency in English is concerned, the entrance examination in English is a huge, uncontrollable monster in the English teaching field. Most of the students at the junior and senior high school level are required to devote much of their time and energy to the study of English in order to pass the entrance examination. However, what they study does not help them gain the ability to use English. They are to be tested mainly as to whether they can understand rather difficult sentences and analyze them grammatically. Donald A. Harrington says, "I want to teach them modern English, but they want to learn

28 *Mainichi Shimbun* (Morning Edition), June 2, 1973, p. 19.

examination English.”²⁹ His statement is short, but clearly tells the problem we face.

The fact that economy in Japan has been growing rapidly is not indifferent to the English teaching field, either. Even though Japan has become a big economy, running after America and the Soviet Union, its profit gained has not been distributed in proportion to the educational field. Besides, many of the university graduates who are comparatively proficient in English do not want teaching. They want to go into other fields. However, there is no way to draw them back, since business conditions are prosperous and attractive.

As linguistic specialists repeat, “language is speech.”³⁰ “Oral communication is even more important than writing, which is still only a secondary representation of language.”³¹ Naturally, the most important professional demand in teaching English is to develop teachers’ ability to use English in their classes. Even when they use machines, “the initial presentation of the teaching material should be done by the teacher.”³² “It is more desirable for him [the teacher] to listen to the tape as close to coming into class as possible and to present it “live” first.”³³ Thus, it is obvious that teachers’ proficiency in English has precedence to teaching technique, language laboratory, and other professional needs.

If we apply these accepted principles which underlie teaching modern language to looking into every aspect of teaching English in Japan, it is seriously controversial.

“Language is largely a matter of imitation,”³⁴ since “language is speech.”³⁵ As I have said, however, the main way of teaching

29 Donald A. Harrington (Personal interview, July 10, 1973).

30 Kimizuka, p. 123. See also Langacker, p. 58.

31 Langacker, p. 59.

32 Finocchiaro, p. 98.

33 Ibid.

and learning English is by using translation methods at the university level. Thus, the grammatical analysis of rather difficult sentences and translation of English are stressed. The appreciation of literature, and the study of phonetics, philology and the like are considered more important.

Naturally, most teachers at the junior and the senior high school level, who have studied at university that way, cannot handle their classes in English, since their ability to speak and hear English is very limited.

Therefore, few teachers can afford to remain at a standstill.³⁶ However, there have been few effective in-service trainings. Besides, teaching technique, and the skill of handling disinterested students or slow learners are the major topics of discussion teachers raise in their in-service training seminars.

Language laboratory is not a no. 1 priority in teaching language. However, more and more teachers and laymen are coming to believe that it is everything.

Culture, teaching technique, and language laboratory are secondary professional qualifications. However, culture is often thought to be very important at the university level. Teaching technique, and language laboratory are usually considered to be most important. Thus, the problem of improving proficiency in English, the most important qualification, has been left almost unsolved.

Most of the students who want to go to senior high school or college have to take a written examination in English, together with other subjects. Unless they have the ability to understand written English and analyze it grammatically, it is hard for them to pass this kind of examination. Practically speak-

34 Kimizuka, p. 123.

35 Ibid., See also Langacker, p. 58.

36 Finocchiaro, p. 128.

ing, students have little time to develop their skill in spoken English.

Public officers of local and central governments, who are responsible for educational activities, have been too conservative to have positive programs to encourage many English teachers to tackle a hard task of improving their ability to use English.

Judging from these factors, the basic problems in teaching English in Japan are not a simple matter. The educational and administrative backgrounds of these problems have been traditionally formed decade after decade and deeply rooted into the various social structures of Japan emotionally, commercially and financially. These backgrounds seem to be almost unbreakable and many of them go beyond the teacher level. Therefore, any useful or academic advice beamed at teachers in English has not made a powerful impulse upon the English teaching field in Japan.

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