



Tokyo Gakugei University Repository

東京学芸大学リポジトリ

<http://ir.u-gakugei.ac.jp/>

Title	Content-based Classes for English-Japanese Bilingual High School Students in Japan
Author(s)	Hoshino, Ayumi
Citation	研究紀要/東京学芸大学附属高等学校大泉校舎, 28: 41-49
Issue Date	2003-12-15
URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/2309/10203">http://hdl.handle.net/2309/10203</a>
Publisher	
Rights	

## Content-based Classes for English-Japanese Bilingual High School Students in Japan

Ayumi Hoshino

Approximately five-thousand secondary-education-level students return to Japan after spending a certain period of time abroad. Many of them have stayed in English-speaking countries or studied in international schools that use English as a means of instruction. These students come back being bilingual in English and Japanese. However, their bilingual ability soon deteriorates upon their return due to English language attrition. Language attrition takes place at a rapid speed. A few hours of regular English classes at school that emphasize grammar and translation are insufficient to maintain the level of English proficiency they had acquired. While pullout-classes, that remove the students in need of help from regular classes to provide individual help, are offered at times for Japanese language classes, pull-out English classes for bilingual returnees to enhance their language proficiency is mostly unheard of. Bilingual language ability is not language ability per se. Bilingual ability has significant social and psychological effects that have favorable influences on society as a whole. If all the returnee students were to lose the bilingual ability, that would certainly be an individual loss as well as a social loss of a precious asset. My attempts as a bilingual teacher to offer content-based classes in English have made some gains. Although these classes need to be offered on a much larger scale and in a much more systematic way, a glimpse of the lessons offered at an all-returnee high school will be revealed in the following paragraphs.

According to a Japanese Foreign Ministry survey in 2003, out of the 20-thousand elementary and junior high school Japanese students abroad in North America, an overwhelmingly large number of them attend local schools. This means that from the first day of school, they will be immersed in a situation where English is used. The language of instruction is the students' second language (or foreign language) and so one concern for the students and parents will be to maintain academic achievement with students back in Japan. Although these Japanese students studying abroad are a minority in society and experience overwhelming use of English in and outside of school, unlike the minority students of immigrant families, these students are usually strongly supported by their families so that they can maintain much of their first language and culture. In addition, Japanese language supplementary schools open on weekends in major cities in North America to provide academic instruction stipulated in the national curriculum thereby exposing Japanese students to the Japanese language and culture. Supported by these factors, Japanese students will be able to enjoy the majority status in nature while being a part of the minority population. As Yamamoto (1991)<sup>1</sup> and Nakajima (1998)<sup>2</sup> point out, this type of education produces a favorable environment that helps students acquire what Cummins<sup>3</sup> labels as Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Learning Proficiency (CALP) and possibly become bilingual and bicultural. Once the Japanese students with this exposure return to Japan, they are virtually deprived of any chances of exhibiting their manifest and latent abilities. Many high schools in

Japan today do offer special admission exams that give consideration to students' educational background abroad and this may ensure admission to schools to a certain extent. However, admission to high school in itself is not enough. Adaptational education oriented efforts such as pull-out classes to help them recover Japanese language ability is also not sufficient. What they need is a program that facilitates them to become additive bilinguals, not transitional bilinguals, with broader perspective, cognitive flexibility and high self-esteem not only with regards to themselves, but also with respect to their own and other ethnolinguistic groups.

It is unrealistic in terms of cost and effort to call for a new program for these returnees at regular public and private schools where the number of returnee students make up only a small fraction of the whole student body. However, Tokyo Gakugei University Senior High School Oizumi Campus was established in 1974 to accommodate returnee students only. And at this school, English classes for near-native English speakers were needed. Along with conventional English classes that handle literature, grammar and translation for advanced learners of English, content-based classes in English were introduced. The purpose of this program was to promote bilingualism through monolingualism - one of the three principles of successful bilingual education suggested by Swain (1983)<sup>4</sup>. Details of this effort were previously reported by Hoshino (1988, 1992)<sup>5</sup>. Accumulation of knowledge and skills in this area culminated in the establishment of a new and unique subject area, entitled Academic Contents in Foreign Language, in 2001 as a part of a new curriculum formulated for a special school project assigned by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology (*Kenkyu-kaihatsu-gakko*). The school now offers a two-credit hour elective course, Social Issues in English, in the 10th and the 11th grades. Following is a brief description of a lesson plan for the 10th grade class followed by a plan for the 11th grade.

In the 10th grade Social Issues in English, three topics are covered; 1 ) capital punishment, 2 ) reproductive technology and bioethics, and 3 ) children in despair. The objective of this course is to research selected topics for a relatively long time, usually two to three months, to enable deeper understanding of the topic. Let's take a lesson plan on capital punishment for example. In phase one, students are given newspaper articles on recent executions in Japan<sup>6</sup>. Reading these articles, students first learn that Japan is a retentionist country. These articles also reveal some basic facts about executions in Japan; where they take place, how they are carried out, to what crimes capital punishment is applied, how information on execution is released to the public, after what period of time following the crime and sentencing is capital punishment carried out, what kind of judicial process leads to the final verdict, and etc. With this information in mind, students are then instructed to conduct a mini-research on capital punishment in various countries in phase two. Students are to research using the internet on countries or US states where they resided abroad and/or countries of interest to them. Then, the results of their research are presented to the class. Students find out some countries are abolitionists and some are retentionists. They start to look for and discuss the reasons behind the rationale for the differences. Asian countries tend to retain capital punishment to control drug-trafficking. Many industrialized countries abolished capital punishment for humanitarian reasons. Some other countries retain the punishment partly on the basis of religion. The students come to realize that each country has its own reasons of being retentionist or abolitionist. While working on the mini-research, the students come across the fact that many abolitionist countries have become so with a history of executing innocent suspects. Some students also uncover studies that suggest prejudices in what are supposed to be impartial judicial systems. Whenever these aspects are brought up by students, the class is given related articles for discussion<sup>7</sup>. This mini-research enables students to touch on

social-studies-oriented topics such as crime, religion, differences between the industrialized and developing countries and so forth. In phase three, students try to read the constitution of various countries. They examine whether capital punishment conforms to constitution. And in the fourth phase, students participate in a role play involving various people; the criminal, the victim, the criminal's family, the victim's family, the judge, the defense lawyers, the Justice Minister, the prison guard, the executioners, and the public<sup>8</sup>. Here they learn to consider a matter from various perspectives. The final activity of the course for this topic is a debate on capital punishment. Following the lectures, research, presentations, discussion, role-play and debate sessions, students find it all the more difficult after learning and thinking about the topic from various perspectives to come up with an opinion. At the end of the last phase, students are made to write a report on whether they think capital punishment is acceptable or not. Although their opinion is not well organized at this point, they are to take a side and try to persuade the reader with logical arguments and legitimate evidence.

In the 11th grade Social Issues in English class, materials are taken from news and documentary programs. The objective of this course is to familiarize students with various social issues in media in English in order to construct their value system through intensive discussion. Each material is discussed in detail but the allocation of time depends on the length of the news report or the documentary. An example of a news clip this year is a report titled "Transplant Patients Receive Wrong Heart" taken from ABC News<sup>9</sup>. In phase one, students view the news clip. Then in phase two, students are given an audio tape with the content recorded. Each student then transcribes the content for substantial comprehension. After the transcription is completed, they obtain a question sheet with a series of comprehension, research and opinion questions. The first topic related to this news clip is organ transplant. The class discussion centers around these questions. Students start by learning about some of the functions of various organs in human body. They are given lectures on the shortage of transplantable organs from cadaverous and living donors and how this led to a change in the definition of death in countries such as Japan<sup>10</sup>. Students will then work on a role-play worksheet trying to decide which patient out of a possible ten is most suitable to receive a hypothetically available organ<sup>11</sup>. Here they actually experience the difficulty of choosing a patient because of its ranking nature. They also view another news clip on organ selling in developing countries. Articles on xenotransplantation are also handled in class<sup>12</sup>. Through discussions, students realize the complexity of ethical issues regarding organ transplants<sup>13</sup>. Another topic related to the news clip is medical errors. Students are required to do a mini-research on examples of medical errors reported in and out of Japan. They present two of the collected examples to class. The class discusses the high number of medical errors, which in turn result in approximately 600 lawsuits filed in Japan and that makes medical errors the eighth cause of death (even by the more conservative statistics) in the US due to simple human mistakes when advanced medical technology is being invented each year<sup>14</sup>. The class then categorizes the types of medical errors and possible causes of these errors and tries to come up with preventive measures. Additionally, the class becomes aware that we, patients, are actually medical consumers. Through various activities in the class, students realize that while, on one hand, medical advancement can bring happiness to a once fatally ill patient, it can, on the other hand, cause outcomes in society that no one ever thought of handling and no one has been trained to handle.

The lesson plan described above is not a content-based class in the strict sense. No one subject area is focused but rather a various number of subject areas are covered. In this sense, it is an interdisciplinary-content-based course. Based on experience, this structure was more attractive for students and the teacher, because

students do not learn basic knowledge without a specific purpose. We start out with a social issue and in order to further our understanding of the issue, we go back to basic knowledge previously taught in various subject areas or search for new knowledge whenever necessary. All the knowledge, both linguistic and subject-area knowledge, is utilized and integrated in order to understand the specific issue. Thus, the course of study is deductive in its nature.

More strictly content-based classes were conducted experimentally at the school in 2002 as a part of a school research project<sup>15</sup>. My personal experience of teaching an hour of mathematics class in collaboration with a math teacher for a 11th grade proved, to some extent, that content-based classes in English will attract more student attention because: 1 ) the teacher will try to compensate for language deficits by being more articulate, straightforward and by using visual aids to help students' understanding, and 2 ) students try to listen more seriously to catch the English words. Here again students and the teacher try to use all the resources available.

These attempts to offer content-based classes to returnees brought noteworthy changes. First, students were much more interested and involved in the issues. The discussions were always active and no student was indifferent. Students acquired new English vocabulary much more easily because the same terms or concepts repeatedly appeared in discussions. Although no statistical analysis has been made to assess these achievements, students not only obtained new knowledge but also acquired the ability to think rather than to memorize. They seemed much more active and confident than in a class that constantly demands them to switch from one language to the other. In these kind of classes, as Swain (1986) indicates, "students and teachers have to work harder and the teaching draw on all the creative resources of the teacher. But it works - the children learn the second language and progress satisfactorily in subject matter learning as well."

These efforts were made possible because of a relatively homogeneous student body. Had these efforts been made in regular school classrooms without modifications, confusion would have resulted. Generalization of this approach cannot be easily made to other schools. However, a new trend has emerged in the educational scenes in Japan today. A growing number of schools implement or are trying to implement Japanese - English immersion programs. Strictly speaking, the use of the term "immersion education" has become prevalent without being defined. However, many schools have followed the footprints of Katoh Gakuen, a pioneer school which started partial English immersion program in its elementary school in 1992 and has since established immersion programs in its junior and high schools. Private schools such as Kosei Girls' Junior High School in Tokyo, Midorigaoka Junior High School in Yokosuka, Kosei Gakuen Elementary School in Tokushima, and Ritsumeikan Uji High School in Kyoto and public schools such as Katayama Elementary School in Saitama and Chiba Prefectural Narita International High School are examples of schools that have already introduced immersion classes. Tokyo Jogakkan Junior High School plans to launch an immersion program in 2004. Gunma Prefecture will open a new school in Takasaki, Chuo Secondary School, with an immersion program and Ota City, also in Gunma, will start a new school, Ota International Academy, affiliated with Katoh Gakuen in 2004. With a social demand for diversity and individuality of schools and schools' intention to gather students employing attractive and new curriculum to lure the ever-decreasing number of school-aged children population, the number of private schools that make native English-speaking teachers to teach content area subjects have grown steadily over the years and this certainly have started to direct public schools in the same direction in the recent years.

Our school population is made up of returnee students only. These students have few opportunities to mingle

with regular students in other schools. The same phenomenon takes place at international schools. International schools have programs for students to exchange ideas with other international school students but not with regular Japanese school students. In addition, students in immersion programs all over Japan also study in seclusion. If all these students, returnees with advanced English proficiency, international school students, and English immersion program students, could be desegregated and study together in one school with true diversity using English language basis, more academic stimulus, more in-depth learning and more cultural exchange would take place.

The lesson plans described above may not be utilized now in regular high schools in Japan; however, with immersion programs becoming more and more popular in Japanese classrooms, one day schools with students who can academically handle English may well execute these lesson plans. In order to realize this in the future, systematic introduction of early immersion programs are much awaited for.

- 1 中島和子 (1998)、「バイリンガル教育の方法」、アルク
- 2 山本雅代 (1991)、「バイリンガル—その実像と問題点」、大修館書店
- 3 J. Cummins (1980), "The Cross-lingual dimension of language proficiency: implications for bilingual education and the optimal age issue," *TESOL Quarterly*, 14, 175-87.
- 4 M. Swain (1986), "Bilingualism without tears." In J. Cummins and M. Swain (ed.) (1986) *Bilingualism in Education*,
- 5 星野 (北畠) あゆみ (1988)、「帰国子女を対象とした英語ⅡAの指導のねらいと試み」、東京学芸大学附属高校大泉校舎研究紀要第12集。  
星野あゆみ (1992)、「二か国語放送を活用した英語ⅡAの授業の実践報告」、東京学芸大学附属高等学校大泉校舎研究紀要第17集。
- 6 "Two hanged for four murders," *Japan Times*, December 19, 2002.  
"Pair of multiple killers are executed," *Japan Times*, December 28, 2001.  
"Serial killer, two other murderers hanged," *Japan Times*, December 1, 2000.
- 7 "Death row will always claim innocents: US report," *Japan Times*, April 17, 2002.  
"Innocent man freed after spending 33 years in jail," *The Japan Times*, February 5, 2001.  
"Man sent to death row goes free after 20 years," *The Japan Times*, March 6, 2000.
- 8 "Mother of murder victim speaks out," *The Japan Times*, November 28, 1992.  
"Death row on hold but not gone," *The Japan Times*, January 27, 1993.  
"Illinois governor commutes all death penalty sentences," *The Japan Times*, January 13, 2003.  
"Study suggests death penalty bias," *The Japan Times*, February 10, 2003.
- 9 "Transplant Receives Wrong Heart," *ABC News* August 16, 1991 in P. McPartland - Fairman (1991), *Focus on Health*, ABC News ESL Video Library
- 10 "Brain-dead transplants legally permitted today," *The Japan Times*, October 19, 1997.  
"Historic transplants over," *The Japan Times*, March 2, 1999.
- 11 adapted from "Who Gets the Heart," G. Rooks (1988), *The Non-stop Discussion Workbook*.
- 12 "Animal organ transplants in humans predicted as likely to begin next year," *The Japan Times*, September 14, 1995.  
"Pig Parts for People?" *Time*, February 11, 2002.
- 13 "Organ Concert," *Time*, Autumn 1996.

- 14 “Doctors’ Deadly Mistakes,” Time, December 13, 1999.  
“Is Your Doctor Too Drowsy?” Time, March 25, 2002.  
“Health ministry to draft plan to help reduce malpractice,” The Japan Times, June 20, 2000.
- 15 for details refer to the project report written in Japanese  
「平成14年度教育改善等経費（学長裁量経費）報告書 日本語と英語によるマーシャル・イマージョン教育システムの構築を目指した実践的基礎研究」

## **Social Issues in English**

### **Objective**

The objective of this course is to familiarize yourselves with various social issues in the media in English to construct your value system through intensive discussion. Active participation in class discussion, extensive research, and oral presentations are essential elements in the class. You need to do well in all the tasks to pass the course with a good grade.

### **Procedure**

1. Listen and/or view a news clip.
2. Receive a cassette tape with recording.
3. Transcribe the content
  - Write on every other line.
  - Leave some space for words you cannot make out.
  - Change lines when speaker changes.
4. Receive the script.
5. Check your transcription.
  - Correct misspelled words.
  - Fill in words you couldn't make out.
  - Highlight new words and words you cannot define in English.
  - Check important idioms.
6. Look up new words and idioms in dictionary.
  - Write down the definition in the notebook.
7. Obtain a question sheet.
8. Answer to questions doing research whenever necessary.
  - You may be assigned to do presentation on particular question.
9. Participate in vocabulary review, content review, oral presentation and in-depth discussion in class.

\* Please use a notebook, rather than a loose leaf, in this class. Write and paste all your handouts and work in this notebook. This will be inspected from time to time.

### **Grading**

1. Attendance
2. Participation in vocabulary review, content review, oral presentation and discussion.
3. Attitude
4. Notebook Inspection
5. Midterm and/or Final Exams



## Transplant Patient Receives Wrong Heart

**Announcer:** From ABC, this is *World News Tonight* with Peter Jennings. Sitting in tonight Sam Donaldson.

**Sam Donaldson:** In an Oregon hospital, a tragic mistake in an operation that is becoming more and more common. A man who went in for a heart transplant two days ago was given a heart his body was never meant to accept. Tonight, there's a desperate search to find another one for him before he dies. Here's ABC's Ken Kashiwahara.

**Ken Kashiwahara:** At the University Hospital in Portland today, doctors said the transplant patient, whose name has not been released, remains in stable but critical condition with no complications. The mistake occurred on Wednesday when the patient who has type O blood was given a type A heart. The body normally rejects organs when blood types don't match. Doctors said it was a human error in the hospital's laboratory, discovered too late to stop the procedure.

**Dr. Donald Trunkey:** It makes us feel very badly that we've made an error, on the other hand, we have to look past that error, correct it, and get on with it.

**Ken Kashiwahara:** The error means that there will be one less heart available for other transplants. Hospital officials say, worldwide, there have been eight other cases of mismatched heart transplants. At least two patients have survived, including James Shockley in Arizona, doing well four years after his body rejected a heart with the wrong blood type. He survived for 12 days on an artificial heart until a second successful transplant. Today he said he harbors no bitterness and has some advice for the patient in Oregon.

**James Shockley:** You gotta have the will to live, first of all. If he wants to live, he's going to live and he just has to keep fighting for his life.

**Ken Kashiwahara:** Medical experts say that mistakes in the major transplant operations—heart, liver and kidney—are rare in the United States and that safeguards are adequate.

**Dr. Oscar Salvatierra:** The track record is there, that over several hundred thousand organ transplants have been performed and there are less than 10 such instances.

**Ken Kashiwahara:** In Oregon, meanwhile, doctors say their patient is unhappy but not depressed over the mistake and say they are cautiously optimistic he will survive until they get another heart with the right blood type. Ken Kashiwahara, *ABC News*.

**Announcer:** This has been a presentation of *ABC News*. More Americans get their news from *ABC News* than from any other source.

**Appendix 3 Questions Sheet for “Transplant Patient Receives Wrong Heart”**

**Transplant Patient Receives Wrong Heart**

**Comprehension Questions**

- 1 . What happened?
- 2 . Where did it happen?
- 3 . How often does this happen?
- 4 . What measures are taken to avoid such mistakes?

**Research Questions**

- 1 . Do some research on organ transplants.  
Which organs are transplantable?  
Who receives organs? Who gives organs?  
What are current problems?  
What are the advantages and disadvantages of the transplant technology?
- 2 . How often do medical mistakes in hospitals take place? Look for statistics.  
Why do these medical mistakes take place?
- 3 . Collect articles reporting medical mistakes.  
(Japanese articles should be translated.)

**Opinion Question**

- 1 . What do you think about medical mistakes in hospitals when medical technology has advanced so drastically?
- 2 . Can we avoid such mistakes? Why/Why not?
- 3 . What new measures can be taken in order to decrease the number of such mistakes?