

Samar Kassim

## **Action Research Report**

### **Part I.**

**Title:** Conversation strategies and motivation for first-year junior high school students

**Context:** My target class has 29 first-year junior high school students. They had only been learning English for half a year so their knowledge of English was low when I started teaching them. There is 29 of them so it is more difficult to get them to stay in English since they always revert to Japanese with their classmates but they have been doing better at staying in English during activities now than when I started teaching them. The textbook they are using is New Horizon I.

**Goal:** My goal for this class was to help my students become more comfortable with communicating in English through the utilization of conversation strategies.

**What I did:** I have introduced shadowing, reactions, clarification and follow up questions from September until March with my students. I have also incorporated as many different kinds of activities with the students as I could so that every class would be different so one class would incorporate a different medium such as videos, songs, card games, bingo, craft, interviewing partner about a topic, writing a letter and writing a skit. I tried not to develop a predictable activity other than introducing small talk at the beginning of class every period which they did each week.

**Results:** Overall, the final survey results seemed positive for their motivation and their belief that conversation strategies have been useful for them. I have highlighted what I thought were the most interesting results below.

When I asked students about their suggestions for improvements, most said they thought class was fine as it was. A few students requested more Japanese explanations for things as a suggestion.

Twenty-three out of twenty-eight students believed activities in the class helped them improve their English. The main theme for many of the student's reasoning was the class was fun so they could naturally remember things better as well as feel closer to English. Some students also felt that the English they were using could be useful to them when they are older. A couple of students felt like activities were useful but they struggled. I felt that overall the students felt much more comfortable with English from this survey result compared to the previous surveys where a third or more of the class would be undecided about their comfort level with English.

The majority of the class (23 students) also answered that they were able to finish speaking activities with their partners and only use a little bit of Japanese. This is a vast improvement from the beginning of the year when most of the class would easily slip into Japanese during activities.

The majority of the class also found conversation strategies immensely useful commenting that they made conversation deep and that they could speak longer. They also felt like it had real world application especially for when they are adults. They also felt like they were naturally acquiring the language through conversation strategies. One student even commented that what they thought in Japanese, they can now say in English. Another student commented that due to conversation strategies, they now know how to change the mood of the conversation. I think this is also a major change compared to earlier surveys where they were not sure if they

were improving or not in speaking. They sounded much more confident and comfortable in their responses regarding their English speaking now.

**What I learned:** I struggled a lot in the beginning with how to conduct this research since I was not the only teacher that taught this class. Once I started to focus on researching student motivation then I felt like my research could have more impact since I could research that.

Action research taught me the benefits of trying new activities with students and to always think of different ways to benefit them. I believe it also was beneficial for students since they all have different needs so using different activities can help bring out their different talents. I started to realize that activities that these young students enjoyed were the ones that made them think they are just playing a game but that actually has a communicative purpose really relieved their anxiety of speaking English. The survey results also reflect they remembered grammar more easily through activities and games because it was fun and natural.

Action research also showed me that some students are still struggling in class and the next step would be to see how to help them.

I learned that my students have progressed a lot more than I would have imagined when I first met them. I was not sure they would be able to do conversation strategies when I first started teaching them but they actually were able to use them over and over again.

My views on language teaching have changed in that I believe I will start to focus on learning more about research and conducting more research where I had otherwise not planned on doing such before.

## 7. Future issues

I have finished teaching this class so I unfortunately do not have the opportunity to have future issues in this research.

## Part II. Lesson Plan

School: Nagoya Municipal Inokoishi Junior High School

Date: 03/02/2016

Class: 3 classes X 30 students

Lesson aims: Students will review previous dialogues by writing one together with a partner.

TIME	STAGE	AIM	PROCEDURE	INT
00:00	Greeting	Create English atmosphere	T& Ss greet each other. Ask how their week has been.	T-Ss
00:01	Small Talk (How are your clubs?)	Get Ss into English mode.	Ss talk in pairs to answer the topic question.	S-S
00:05	Happiness Journal			Ss-Ss
00:25	Let's write a dialogue	Ss will work together to write a more in depth conversation using conversation strategies.	Each Ss gets a dialogue handout to work with a partner on.	SS-Ss
00:40	Survey	Wrap up class.		T-Ss

## Part III. Handouts

### Dialogue Skit

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

A1: \_\_\_\_\_

B1: \_\_\_\_\_

A2: \_\_\_\_\_

B2: \_\_\_\_\_

A3: \_\_\_\_\_

B3: \_\_\_\_\_

A4: \_\_\_\_\_

B4: \_\_\_\_\_

A5: \_\_\_\_\_

B5: \_\_\_\_\_

A6: \_\_\_\_\_

B6: \_\_\_\_\_

A7: \_\_\_\_\_

B7: \_\_\_\_\_

A8: \_\_\_\_\_

B8: \_\_\_\_\_

A9: \_\_\_\_\_

B9: \_\_\_\_\_

A10: \_\_\_\_\_

B10: \_\_\_\_\_

A11: \_\_\_\_\_

B11: \_\_\_\_\_

A12: \_\_\_\_\_

B12: \_\_\_\_\_

A13: \_\_\_\_\_

B13: \_\_\_\_\_

A14: \_\_\_\_\_

B14: \_\_\_\_\_

A15: \_\_\_\_\_

B15: \_\_\_\_\_

A16: \_\_\_\_\_

B16: \_\_\_\_\_

## Conversation Strategies

### ❖ Openers

How are you?      How are you doing?      How's it going?

### ❖ Closers

A: Nice talking with you!

B: You too!

### ❖ Chance for others to talk

How about you?

### ❖ Clarification

Sorry, what was that?

I'm sorry, can you repeat that?

### ❖ Time to think

Hmm, let me see.....

Hmm, let me think.....

### ❖ Follow-up questions

What \_\_\_\_\_?

Where\_\_\_\_\_?

When\_\_\_\_\_?

How old\_\_\_\_\_?

### ❖ Reactions

That's great!

That's too bad!

Wow!

I'm sorry to hear that!

That's nice!

Oh no!

## Part IV. Appendix ( Student Survey)

1. Did you understand today's grammar point at the beginning of class? (授業の最初に習った文法のポイントは理解できましたか?)

September

1. Yes (はい) (22/29 students )
2. Somewhat yes (どちらかと言えば、はい) (7/29 students)
3. Somewhat no (どちらかと言えば、いいえ)
4. No (いいえ)

March

1. Yes (はい) (21/29 students)
2. Somewhat yes (どちらかと言えば、はい) (8/29 students)
3. Somewhat no (どちらかと言えば、いいえ)
4. No (いいえ)

2. Did you understand today's grammar point better after the activities of class? (アクティビティをした後、文法のポイントをもっと理解できるようになりましたか?)

September

1. Yes (24/29 students)
2. Somewhat yes (5/29 students)
3. Somewhat no
4. No

March

1. Yes (はい) (24/29 students)
2. Somewhat yes (どちらかと言えば、はい) ( 5/29 students)
3. Somewhat no (どちらかと言えば、いいえ)
4. No (いいえ)

3. Did you feel more confident with this grammar point after class? (授業で、この文法を使うことに対して自信をもてるようになりましたか?)

- 1)Yes (18/29 students)
- 2) Somewhat yes (9/29 students)
- 3)Somewhat no (2/29 students)
- 4) No

What suggestions do you have for improving today's activity to help you understand better? (みんなにとって分かりやすい授業をするために、アクティビティをどのように改善したらいいと思いますか?)

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4. Are activities used in this class to practice target sentences useful to improve your English?  
(新しい文法を練習するために、クラスの中でしたアクティビティは、役立つと思いますか?)
1. Very Useful (とても役立つ) (23/29 students)
  2. Useful (役立つ) (5/29 students)
  3. I can't decide (どちらとも言えない) (1/29 students)
  4. Not very useful (あまり役立たない)
  5. Not useful (役立たない)

それは、なぜですか?

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5. Can you understand English spoken by Samar? (サマールの話す英語が理解できますか?)
1. Very well (とてもよく分かる) (8/29 students)
  2. Mostly (ほとんど理解できる) (9/29 students)
  3. About half (半分くらい) (12/29 students)
  4. Not very well (あまり理解できない)
  5. Not at all (全然理解できない)

6. During English speaking activities, I can ..... (アクティビティの中で、私は.....)
1. I can talk actively in English without using Japanese at all (日本語を全く使わずに積極的に英語で話すことができる。) (3/29 students)
  2. I can participate actively with my partner but still use a little bit of Japanese (少し日本語を使うけど、パートナーと積極的に参加できる。) (23/29 students)
  3. I can finish the speaking activities (参加することはできる。) (3/29 students)
  4. I cannot do the speaking activities (何もできない。)

7. Did you enjoy the games in this class? (クラス内のゲームは楽しかったですか?)
- 1) Yes (29/29 students)
  - 2) Somewhat yes
  - 3) Somewhat no
  - 4) No

8. Did you find games in this class helpful for using the target grammar? (新しい文法を使うために、クラスでやったゲームは役立つと思いましたか?)
1. Very Useful (とても役立つ) (23/29 students)

2. Useful (役立つ) (6/29 students)
3. I can't decide (どちらとも言えない)
4. Not very useful (あまり役立たない)
5. Not useful (役立たない)

それは、なぜですか？

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9. Did you find conversation strategies introduced in this class helpful for improving your speaking ability?

1. Very Useful (とても役立つ) (21/29 students)
2. Useful (役立つ) (7/29 students)
3. I can't decide (どちらとも言えない) (1/29 students)
4. Not very useful (あまり役立たない)
5. Not useful (役立たない)

それは、なぜですか？

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