

NUFS Workshop 2006

Newsletter No. 1

Workshop on May 13th

Date: May 13th (Sat), 13:00-16:00

Venue: Nagoya University of Foreign Studies

Instructor: Kazuyoshi Sato (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

Title: How languages are learned: An introduction to Second Language Acquisition

The number of participants: 26

Abstract: Foreign language teachers tend to teach based on how they learned a foreign language as students. This workshop gives participants opportunities to reflect on their views about how languages are learned and what the implications are for how they should be taught. Participants will engage in activities demonstrated by Sato, including audiolingual method and how to teach grammar, and are expected to discuss the following views.

- (1) Languages are learned mainly through imitation.
- (2) People with high IQs are good language learners.
- (3) The most important factor in second language acquisition success is motivation.
- (4) The earlier a second language is introduced in school programs, the greater the likelihood of success in learning.

1. Interesting activities you might want to use in your class. Why?

- I really enjoyed 'Select five persons' activity. I could know other point of view. I think it's good way to have own ideas and share them with other students. I will remake it easier one and try in my class.
- I'd like to use the activity 'Select five persons' because it was really enjoyable, and as another teachers said, I forgot I was in an English class. This activity reminded me how interesting it is to express my opinions in English. This is what I want to do in my class. My students will definitely enjoy it.
- I'd like to try to use today's activities. I was thinking we could not teach grammar actively. However, I found that I could teach grammar by using kind of a game.
- I haven't used communicative activities in my class, but I realize CA is very important for students when they learn the language. So I want to try CA in my class.
- Grammar method; I found new teaching method about the grammar. Especially I agreed

the thought about U-shaped curve. Creating rules is important and effective for the students.

2. What you learned from today's workshop

- In audio-lingual method, the teacher is centered, I learn. I didn't think so until today. So I want to keep it in mind. I want to make the students take part in my class. So I want to use communicative approach.
- I have to get out of the lessons I took when I was a student. Before explaining about grammar point, let the students do some 'communicative' activities and guess the rule. And I have to remember making mistakes is natural.
- I found the difference between ALM (audio-lingual method) and CA (communicative approach). And also I recognized we don't care making errors. It was helpful for me.
- I want to try some skills you showed me; for example four people practice skit in turns. You use music when we are thinking. Those are nice ideas.
- There are a lot of activities and approaches for teaching grammar. Only one is not enough. We should do as many activities as possible to make the students practice.
- I learned that there are several ways that would motivate students' eagerness to learn English. I would like to apply some techniques in my daily lessons.
- Output is a very important factor in learning a foreign language and student-centered activities are really enjoyable and interesting. These activities will definitely help develop students' motivation.

3. Questions and answers

Q: I'd like to know some good textbooks for the low-level students at high school. Especially in selecting grammar books in Japanese is tough. Of course they need some explanations in Japanese.

A: Unfortunately, there is no best book. We need to modify exercises to suit our students with different levels and interests. Also, we need to use both explicit and implicit grammar teaching. You will know more about it in the next workshop. Here is the list of some grammar books. No. 1 & 6 include many short exercises, while other books include more communicative activities.

1. Basic Grammar in Use with Answers: Reference and Practice for Students of English, Beginner (Murphy & Smalzer, Cambridge)
2. Five-Minute Activities (Penny Ur & Andrew Wright, Cambridge)
3. Grammar Games (Rinvoluceri, Cambridge)
4. The Anti-Grammar Grammar Book (Hall & Shephard, Longman)
5. Grammar on the Go (Holder, Addison-Wesley)
6. Side by Side (Molinsky & Bliss, Prentice Hall)
7. すぐに使える英語の言語活動 (米山朝二他、大修館)

8. 英語樂習 (樋口忠彦他、中教出版)

Q: I don't want to use Japanese in class as possible as I can. But I need to explain the grammar a lot. I don't know the balance.

A: Using Japanese sometimes is fine, especially when you have something important to say. That is one of the advantages of non-native English teachers. However, as I demonstrated in the workshop, explicit grammar teaching followed by drills does not work well for most of the students (some intelligent students might learn in this way, but they often cannot use the grammatical points they have learned in actual communication). It means you need to incorporate other activities which focus on some grammatical point as I demonstrated. In other words, you can reduce the amount of explicit grammar teaching, while incorporating communicative activities with a focus on some grammatical point. Then, you can have a good balance!

Q: Grammar class instead of Oral communication is given to the students to many high schools today. Do you think it's necessary?

A: Grammar is necessary and grammatical competence is one of the four components of communicative competence (grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence). The issue is how to teach grammar. As I showed research evidence, grammar only class using a traditional explicit teaching does not work. I think we all know it from our experience.

Q: How do I improve teaching technique?

A: Teachers can learn to teach only through trial and error. You can take a small risk little by little. You can receive many ideas from workshops, other teachers, books, etc. However, unless you try them out, you can never develop your teaching repertoire.

Q: In 'Research findings' of your handout, what are four communicative tests that Savignon did?

A: These include: 1) discussion with a native speaker of French, 2) interviewing a native speaker of French, 3) the reporting of facts about oneself or one's recent activities, and 4) a description of ongoing activities.

Workshop on May 14th

Date: May 14 (Sun), 9:30-12:30

Venue: Aichi Kenko Plaza

Advisor: Kazuyoshi Sato (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

Title: Action Research

The number of participants: 18

Abstract: First, Prof. Sato explained the definition of action research. Then, Ms. Miwako Kushiro made a presentation about her action research she did last year. The title is 'Combining Writing and Speaking Skills in Writing Classes', and she concluded that proper and well organized scaffolding is important for students to achieve the goal easily and comfortably. She also emphasized the importance of personalization in classroom activities and recycling activities. Then, participants talked about their own 'Action Research Plan' in pairs. They had four different partners, which made them know each other's plan. After that, they discussed what problems they have now in a group in Japanese. They are supposed to revise their action plan and hand in 'Lesson Plan' to Prof. Sato (yoshi@nufs.ac.jp). He will give each of them some comment. They are supposed to carry out the plan and will make a report next time.

Next Workshop

Date: June 10 (Sat), 10:30-12:00, 13:00-14:30, 14:30-17:00

Venue: Nagoya NSC College (Tel: 052-241-2131, <http://www.nsc.ac.jp/access/>)

Instructor: Juanita Heigham (Sugiyama Jogakuen University)

Title: Communicative Grammar

Abstract: Once students have gained a basic understanding of a grammar structure, they can begin using it in spoken communication. By employing a variety of communicative activities that focus on a featured structure, teachers can help students immediately use the grammar that they have studied in their textbooks. The presenter will demonstrate a sample lesson based on this type of curriculum and then give step-by-step instructions on how to create similar lessons. Following these steps, participants will work in small groups and make their own communicative grammar lesson plans.

If you can take part in this workshop, please send an email to chiha143@nufs.ac.jp