

NUFS Workshop 2012

*Newsletter No. 1***Workshop in May (Day 1)****Date:** May 13, 2012, 13:00-16:00**Venue:** Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, Room 322**Instructor:** Yukimi Fukumoto (Oguchi Junior High School)**Title:** "Teaching grammar communicatively with focus on form"

Abstract: In Japan, English teachers face the challenge of developing students' English communication skills and the grammatical accuracy needed for term tests and entrance exams at the same time. How can we achieve the two goals within the limited class time available at school? Is there any way to increase students' motivation? The key is to integrate grammar teaching and communication by using communicative activities. The presenter will demonstrate communicative activities that she has developed as she taught first through third grade junior high school students. The hands-on experience will guide participants to see how communicative activities help students internalize new grammar and stretch their English communication skills.

**Instructor:** Miwako Kushiro (Kagamihara High School)**Title:** "Demonstration Lesson Based on Focus on Form"

Abstract: Faced with the new curriculum guidelines which are to be implemented next year, high school English teachers have to change their ideas and beliefs about teaching grammar greatly. As Jane Willis (1996) points out, teachers must create an environment where learners can be exposed to a lot of English and have chances to use it in order to develop their English communicative ability. Some may believe that teaching grammar does not go with communicative way of teaching. Others may think that teaching grammar will not be important part of English lessons once the new guidelines are implemented. However, these are not true. Grammar instruction will have a more important and different role in acquiring communicative ability. In this presentation, I would like to demonstrate the teaching procedures focusing on how to teach grammar communicatively.

**The number of participants: 42**

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

- “Jeopardy” – Fun and we can learn the forms.
- “Jeopardy” – It’s very interesting, and students can concentrate on the quiz, because they can get points if they answer correctly. Students can enjoy and learn a lot from this activity.
- “Let’s talk about our city” – The teaching schedule is gradually progressed and students can easily follow. The idea teaching with an ALT is also useful, I think.
- “Give direction activity” – Students can explain direction by using a real map. I think their motivation will be high.
- “Talking about movie” – I want to use this, because students must be interested in hot movies like that.
- “Do you know these movies?” – She provided the lesson with no grammar explanation and we were able to enjoy the content of the activity. The topic was also attracting me.
- I’m teaching at high school right now, so I’m really interested in materials which Ms. Kushiro gave us today. It’s hard to have high school students speak out in English in each class, but I’ll try to use her handouts to give chances to use communicative English for students in my school.

2. What you learned from today’s workshop.

- I learned that input activities are important, too. I tend to use output activities more, but now I need to think of input activities first.
- I was really impressed by the two professional teachers’ trial to apply several different teaching methods. Personally I learned English through only a grammar translation approach, so I was not sure whether TBLT, which I want to use for my future class, would work well or not. Thanks to this workshop, I got confidence on my beliefs on my teaching philosophy.
- We should make teaching plans based on planned or incidental focus on form intentionally. Especially it’s useful to use planned focus on form for JHS students. A lot of meaningful inputs enable students to try rich output activities.
- There were a lot of activities which support our daily classroom. This is my first time to join this seminar and I found that a lot of English teachers are trying to improve their English skills and their lesson.
- I face many similar problems as Kushiro sensei’s. I liked how the activity focused on something students were immediately familiar and interested in (movies or drama). The speaking activities were lively and kept us (the students) up and moving. I learned that it’s possible (and possibly much better for the students) to not rely entirely on the textbook during lessons.



3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): What was the web address for the power point quiz game?

A (Yukimi): The Jeopardy template I used for my quiz is available from the following website:

http://www.all.umn.edu/chinese_language/courses/LgTT5611/JeopardyPresentation/JeopardyInstructionsShort.htm

You can also find many others if you type “jeopardy template” in your search engine.

Q (2): Is there enough time to finish the activities? How do you ‘teach’ textbook?

A (Yukimi): It’s not always easy to find time to teach new grammar through communicative activities. I sometimes need to give up using communicative activities for less important grammar target if class time is very limited, but I can generally create time for activities by teaching each part of the textbook as follows; first I spend one or one and half class period to introduce and have students practice new grammar and useful expressions introduced in the pertinent page of textbook through my communicative activities. Then I cover the textbook content with one or half class period. Since I have already introduced important grammar and expressions through my activities, I can go through the textbook content without spending much time on explanation.

A (Miwako): I think so. Communication activities are the main part of the lesson, and drill questions are the supplementary material students are supposed to work on at home. Basically, I don’t use the textbook of Oral Communication. I only use the grammar textbook and the workbook as supplementary material given as homework.



Q (3): What do ALTs do in your class? Do they plan activities, too? I have a difficulty to have them understand my intension of teaching and create activities together.

A (Yukimi): I sometimes ask ALTs to plan activities, but I also find that their activities do not always reflect my goals or teaching principles. I realized that this is inevitable because we don’t necessarily share beliefs and experiences about language teaching, which influence lesson planning and material development. So, I usually prepare lessons and handouts on my own if I have clear ideas and goals. Nevertheless, I always ask ALTs to take the major role in class as much as possible because they can make valuable contributions to class.

Q (4): Instead of giving students the rules about the passive after the Jeopardy game, could students try to figure out the rules themselves based on the sample sentences?

A (Yukimi): I appreciate this question very much because students should be given opportunities to figure out grammar rules by themselves. When I give input activities, I guide students so that they can notice grammar rules behind language samples. I also invite students to think and share ideas when we review grammar rules.

Q (5): Do you use a PC in all your classrooms? When you can’t use it, what would you do, for example, to do the Jeopardy game?

A (Yukimi): As I said previously, I created these activities when I was at a previous school. Because computers were not available in the regular classroom setting, I didn’t use a computer in my daily teaching. I usually printed out pictures and brought them to my class. As an exception, I brought and set up a computer and a projector in a regular classroom when I did the Jeopardy game; however, as many of you have already done, we can also do it without a computer.



Q (6): Do students talk actively? What would you do if there are some who don't?

A (Yukimi): I created these activities for students at my previous school. They participated actively and enjoyed talking in English because I used a lot of communicative activities as I taught them for three years. It may be difficult to use communicative activities with students who are not used to speak English with classmates. In that case, I would introduce communicative activities little by little and have them enjoy using English for communication. At the same time, I would tell them how important and helpful to speak English as a way to learn English.

A (Miwako): The students of my school participate in speaking very actively. If you start with the very early stage of the school year and make speaking activities routine, students get used to it soon and feel comfortable in speaking English.

Q (7): When you take time doing those activities, and other teachers don't, with a limited time, can you finish your textbook explanation?

A (Miwako): Fortunately, all the teachers conduct lessons with the same handout at my school now. So I don't have to worry about the problem mentioned above. But five years ago, I was the only one who conducted grammar lessons with communication activities. Then, I gave mostly input activities with a small amount of output activities so that I could catch up with the other teachers. The drill questions on the workbook were given as homework, and I explained only some important grammatical items or the items I found students had difficulty understanding while they were checking the answers of the homework at the beginning of the lesson.

Q (8): I like the ideas of switching from planned focus on form in the 1st year to incidental focus on form in the 2nd and 3rd years. Is there any data collected on students' use of the forms in the 2nd and 3rd years?

A (Miwako): I haven't collected the data that shows which grammar items students use in their writing and speaking in the 2nd and 3rd year lesson. While students can identify certain grammar items in reading and listening, they might not be able to use those in their language production. Actually, I myself would like to know how to check how much grammar is internalized in students' inner language system.

Q (9): I'd like to know how to apply this theory to reading class. Is there any other reading strategy or method?

A (Miwako): Structured input and output is the most useful in developing the learner's inner language system. I think reading needs to deal with specific reading strategies such as scanning, skimming, guessing unknown words and so on. Structured input and output may be useful in dealing with specific grammar items in reading materials. Incidental focus on form can be applied to post-reading activities including writing



Q (10): Relative pronoun 'whose' is new to senior high school students. Do you give extra exercises for this?

A (Miwako): Yes. One of the basic principles of structured input and output is "One thing at a time." I think of another handout dealing with "whose."

Q (11): About workbook, how do you decide which questions to cover?

A (Miwako): The teachers in charge of the 1st year got together and decided on “minimum basics” of the grammar items in the book.

Workshop in May (Day 2)

Date: May 14, 2012, 9:30-12:30

Venue: Aichi Kenko Plaza, Conference Room 3

Title: Orientation for Action Research

Advisors: Kazuyoshi Sato, Nancy Mutoh (NUFS),
Robert Croker (Nanzan University)

Presenter: Noriko Ishitobi (Ueda Junior High School)

Abstract: My action research in the school year of 2011

has been conducted to study how students learned English communicatively through focus on form instruction. The targeted students are 152 second-year junior high school students. Although I am making a presentation on action research this time, I consider myself as not an expert, rather still a learner in regards to conducting surveys or analyzing them. At this workshop, I would like to share my failure in the way of collecting data and difficulties in analyzing the data. I hope you can learn from the process of my trial and error.



The number of participants: 21



Workshop in June (Scheduled)

Date: June 9, 2012, 10:30-14:30 (Part 1), 14:30-17:00 (Part 2)

Venue: Nagoya NSC College, Room 52

Instructor: Tim Murphey (Kanda Foreign University)

Title: "Ways to Increase the Amount of English in the Classroom"

Please send an email to Chihaya ([chiha143\(at-mark\)nufs.ac.jp](mailto:chiha143(at-mark)nufs.ac.jp)) to attend this workshop.