

## ACTION RESEARCH FINAL REPORT - 2013

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**Title:** Communicative Language Teaching in Elementary Schools

**Teaching Context:**

Level: 5th Grade Elementary School (5-4)

Class size: 36 students

Time: 45 minutes once a week

Textbook: Hi, friends! 1 (Tokyo Shoseki)

**Problems:**

- ① *Class size.* The teacher-student ratio in Elementary Schools can be a disadvantage. Having 35 to 40 students in one class can be very challenging. The large number of students in a class can make it difficult for teachers to monitor the progress of each student. Moreover, the language teachers miss on the opportunity to give more personalized feedback during activities.
- ② *Time.* The time spent for English class is very limited, 45 minutes per day, once a week, and 35 times a year. In most cases, English classes had to be cut short and sometimes cancelled altogether. As I have learned, the scaffolding approach is very important in learning. The sudden changes in schedule may force the teachers to expedite the process, leaving crucial steps out of the picture and rush the students to a premature output activity which is a perfect combination for failure.
- ③ *Lesson Planning.* Planning lessons has always been a challenge. I have structured my lessons by placing random activities absent reasoning. Fun has been my definition of what a great activity should be. The absence of a clear goal paired with a final information exchange task resulted to a class hour filled with activities that are irrelevant and mechanical in nature. These activities does not help the students develop their knowledge of the language.
- ④ *Textbook.* The textbook falls short in providing opportunities for students to develop various learning skills. The development of worksheets was inevitable. The challenge of creating interesting, effective and communicative activity centered worksheets is huge, yet nothing that hard work and sequential editing can't overcome.
- ⑤ *Assessment.* There are no exams or speaking tests in the Elementary School level. It is difficult to measure the performance of the students and their actual level of acquisition.
- ⑥ *Continuous Learning.* The students need to continue the learning process in the absence of the Assistant Language Teacher (ALT). Finding ways to keep the momentum going is a big challenge. In the same way, teachers must also continue to learn new things. We sometimes go through a drought of ideas when there is in fact an abundance of fresh ideas or a fresh take on tried and tested activities.

**Goals:**

- ① To develop the students' listening and speaking abilities.
- ② To keep the momentum and motivation of students to learn English.
- ③ To provide opportunities to acquire and produce Conversational Strategies.
- ④ To engage students in communicative activities and facilitate the exchange of genuine information.
- ⑤ Support the Homeroom Teachers (HRT) and build up their confidence in teaching English.

**What I did:**

- ① Demonstrate, don't explain.
- ② I have used communicative activities that require students to ask questions and provide genuine and personal responses.
- ③ I involved the HRT during the activities and shared the responsibilities of guiding, providing feedback and giving praise to students. I also encouraged advanced students to help those who struggle and work collectively.
- ④ Having a clear goal and sharing it to the HRT and the students at the forefront gave everyone a clear objective. A final information exchange task helped me to determine what the students need to learn to be able to accomplish the lesson objectives. The use of the scaffolding technique greatly helped in determining the flow of the lesson. I developed original worksheets to aid the learning process.
- ⑤ I have introduced and recycled Conversational Strategies across the lessons to give variation of context.
- ⑥ I conducted self-evaluation surveys to get the views and opinions of the students regarding their English learning experience.
- ⑦ I administered a Speaking Test at the very end of the semester using selected target sentences from different units to serve as a year-end review activity.

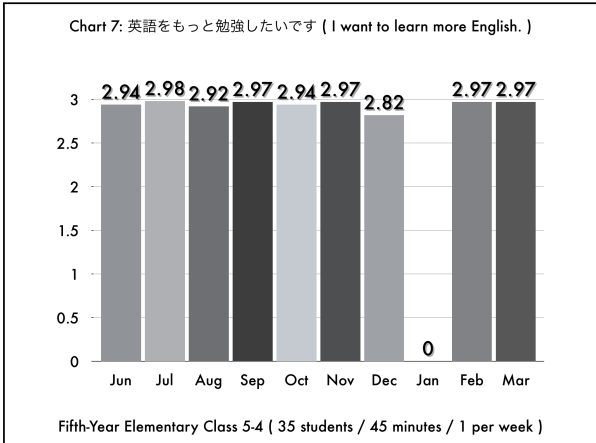
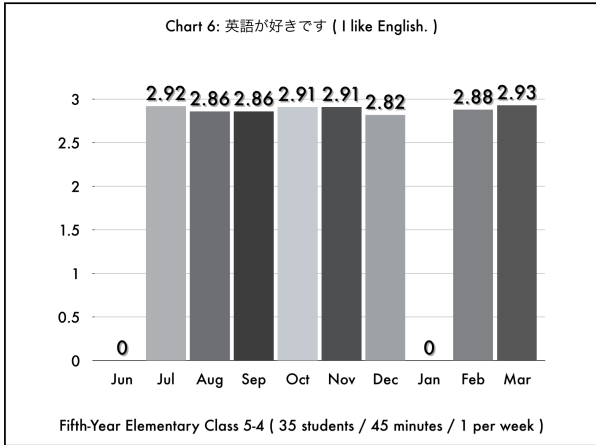
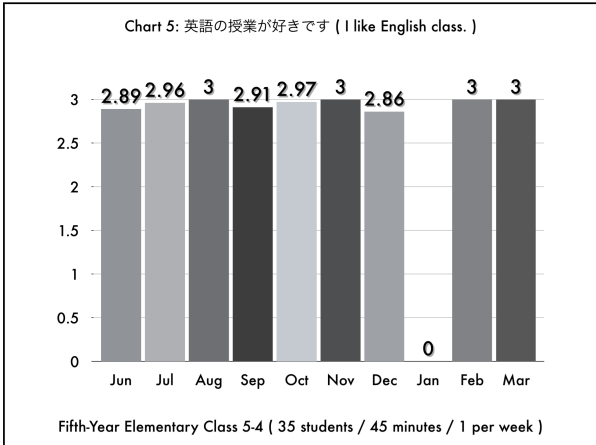
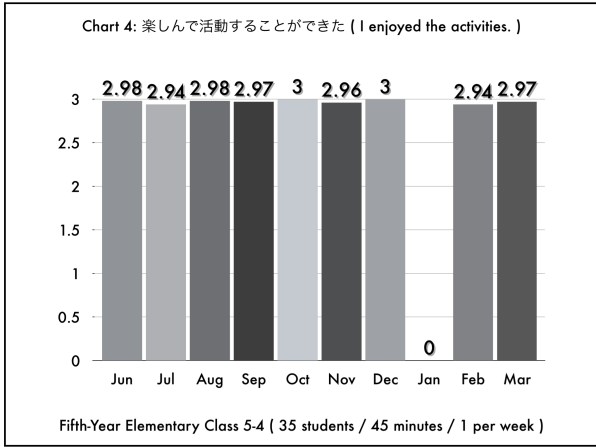
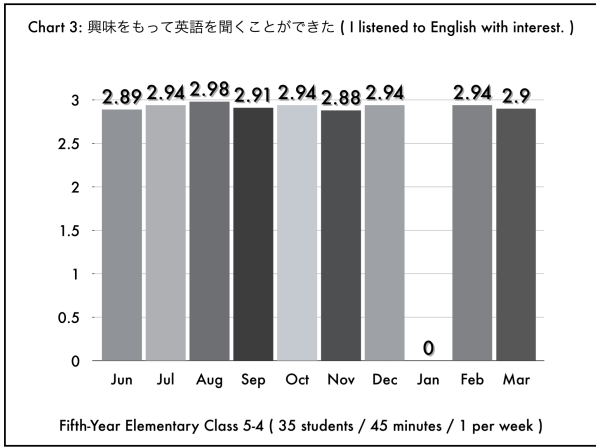
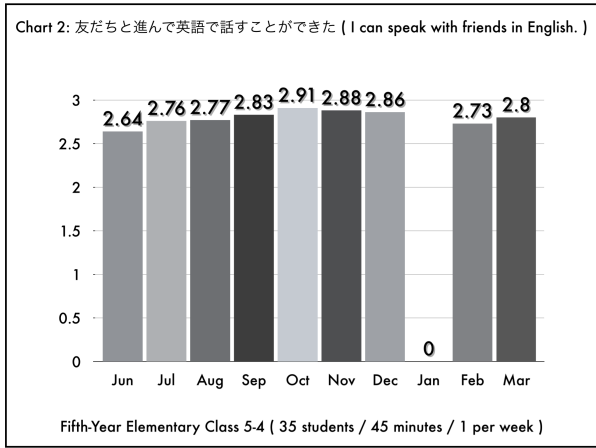
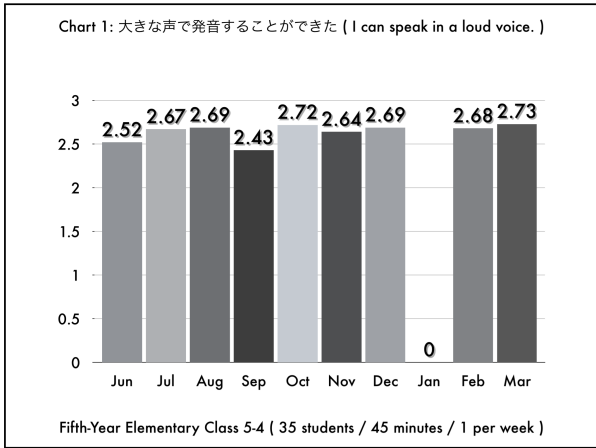
**What I learned:**

- ① The students' overall reception to English is very positive. The results of the survey shows that students are excited to learn and participate in English class.
- ② The students are willing and ready to do more in class. They enjoy the challenge of dealing with more complicated activities. Students are very interested in gathering genuine information about their friends and teachers during activities.
- ③ Having the students process the information gathered during activities gives weight to their efforts and provide a valid reason to do the task at hand. Engaging them in a simple discussion with their group mates, give a presentation and or express their opinions and observations regarding the data gives them a chance to reflect and realize what they have accomplished.
- ④ Involving everyone right at the very beginning makes a big difference. It is not anymore the sole responsibility of the ALT to lead the class, it becomes the responsibility of everyone.
- ⑤ Developing worksheets is difficult yet very rewarding. I have witnessed students' creativity in doing more than what I have required them to do with these worksheets. They also provide students a tangible proof of their achievements.
- ⑥ The results of the speaking test surprised both myself and the HRT. The students did very well in confidently asking and answering questions all in English.

**Future Issues:**

- ① I would like to explore cooperative learning further.
- ② I would like to include more writing activities in class.
- ③ I would like to introduce more Conversational Strategies.
- ④ I would like to encourage the continuation of my teaching initiative in spite of a possible change in ALT.
- ⑤ I would like to further learn how to effectively administer and assess speaking tests in the future.

# Survey Results:



## **LESSON PLAN**

### **Lesson 9: What would you like?**

#### **1. Goals & Objectives:**

- ① To learn the names of various food or dishes around the world.
- ② Students must be able to politely ask their friends what they want to eat and express their food choices in a communicative activity.
- ③ The class must be able to reach a consensus about the contents of a time capsule that will represent the taste of their generation.
- ④ Students must be able to perform in a speaking test and exchange personal information.

#### **2. Procedure:**

##### Day one:

- ① Greetings
- ② Vocabulary
- ③ Target Sentence: "What would you like?", "I'd like pizza, please."
- ④ Skit
- ⑤ Activity: The Order Challenge
- ⑥ Activity: Food Board Game
- ⑦ Reflection
- ⑧ Farewells

##### Day two:

- ① Greetings
- ② Review: How are you?
- ③ Target Sentence: "What would you like?", "I'd like pizza, please."
- ④ Let's Chant
- ⑤ Vocabulary: Family
- ⑥ Let's Listen
- ⑦ Activity: Restaurant Relay
- ⑧ Reflection
- ⑨ Farewells

##### Day three:

- ① Greetings
- ② Review
- ③ Target Sentence: "What would you like?", "I'd like pizza, please."
- ④ Let's Chant
- ⑤ Activity: Card Game
- ⑥ Activity: Time Capsule
- ⑦ Reflection
- ⑧ Farewells

##### Day four:

- ① Greetings
- ② Feelings: "How are you?", "I'm happy.", "How about you?"
- ③ Family: How many brothers do you have?, "I have 2 brothers."
- ④ Activity: Interview Game
- ⑤ Colors, Subjects, Animals, Sports, Food: "What subject do you like?", "I like English."
- ⑥ Activity: The Quiz Show
- ⑦ Reflection
- ⑧ Farewells

### Day five:

- ① Greetings
- ② Review: Vocabulary
- ③ Review: Target Sentences
- ④ Activity: Let's Talk
- ⑤ Reflection/Evaluation
- ⑥ Farewells

### **3. Today's Lesson**

#### **Day three:**

##### **Step 1: Greetings**

The class sings the "Hello Song" and "The Alphabet Chant". Right after the chant, the students play Rock, Scissors, Papers. The winner asks the question of the day and the loser answers. The teachers greet the students and asks about the weather, day, and date.

##### **Step 2: Review**

The ALT will review the vocabulary focusing on food names and family that are more difficult. The ALT will also stress the slight differences in pronunciation in Japanese and English.

##### **Step 3: Target Sentence**

The target sentences will be reviewed and practiced using substitution.

A: What would you like?

B: I'd like pizza, please.

##### **Step 4: Let's Chant**

The chant will be used to practice the target sentence. Using the instrumental version of the chant, the teachers will use different food items to allow even more exposure.

##### **Step 5: Activity: Card Game**

The objective of this activity is to practice the target sentence. The goal of this game is to be the first player to discard all cards by matching food cards. The students are asked to work in pairs.

A: What would you like?

B: I'd like pizza, please.

A: Ok. Here you are.

B: Thank you.

##### **Step 6: Activity: Time Capsule**

The teachers will introduce the students to the Time Capsule. The ALT will do a Keynote presentation about the Osaka Time Capsule - Expo '70 to give the students a better idea of the concept of what it is. The students will be divided into 6 groups. Each group will be given a worksheet that they must fill in with a list of 10 food items that they think represents them as a group. Each member must choose 1 food item from the menu on their textbooks. The students must follow the dialogue below to accomplish this part of the activity. To fill in the remaining slots on the worksheet, each member can elect 1 food item that is not on the menu using the dialogue. They will vote for the 4 most popular items which will then make the list. The small groups will be combined to form 3 big groups who will then present their list in front of the class.

S1: What would you like?

S2: I'd like a hamburger, please.

## Step 7: Reflection

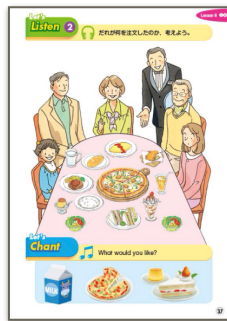
The HRT gives the students some time to think about what they learned, their thoughts and comments about the lesson. The HRT then calls a few students to share their reflections of the recently concluded class.

## Step 8: Farewells

The ALT says, 'That's all for today.' The class calls the leader by saying, 'Today's leader.' The leader stands up and lead the class by saying, 'Thank you teachers.'. The teachers say, 'You're welcome. Goodbye. See you. and Have a nice day!'


## 4. What happened:

- The topic was highly motivating which made the students want to participate in the activities.
- The worksheet that I have developed for the listening activity on Day 2 helped the students to organize the information that they have gathered. It made the listening activity systematic and made the students more focused. In the end, the students were able to listen, process and produce on paper what they have learned from the listening exercise.



Name: <input type="text"/>					
	1	2	3	4	5
Name なまえ	SAKURA				
さくら との関係	自分				
注文					
注文					
注文					

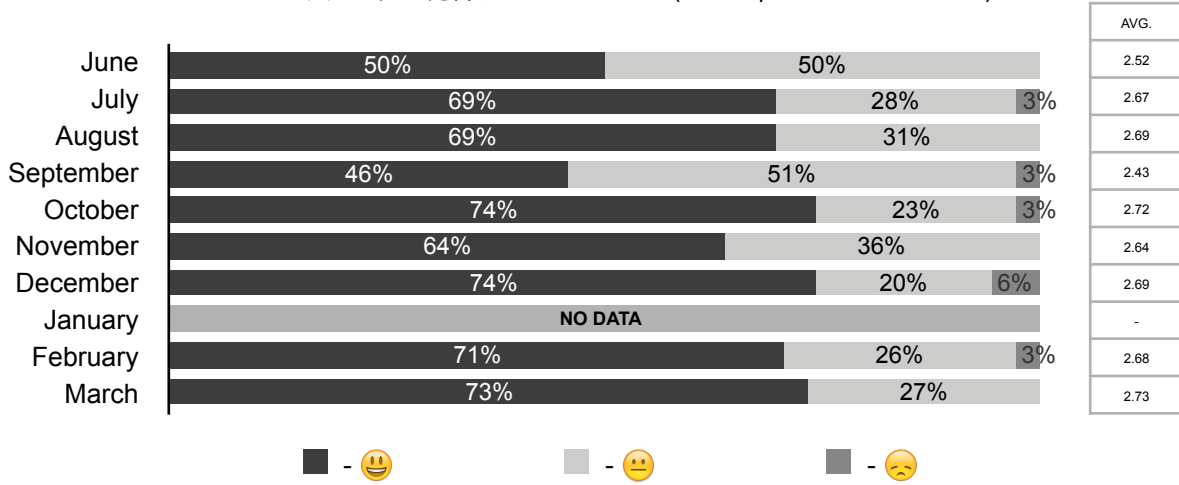
- Students were immediately drawn into the concept of the Time Machine with the help of the short visual presentation. Students were motivated to work as a team and decide on which food items must go inside the capsule.

 <b>TIME CAPSULE</b> 2114	
	sushi
	pizza
	hamburger
	parfait
	spaghetti
	green tea
	Matsusaka gyu
	caviar
	takoyaki
	rice

- The food items that some groups decided on were not solely based on what they like. They also considered sharing to the future generations a few things that might not be present when the time capsule is due to be opened. Some examples were *Hida gyu* (*Hida beef*), *Matsusaka gyu* (*Matsusaka beef*) and *caviar*. When asked about the reason behind their choices, one student said that there is a possibility that the quality of beef may not be as good because of pollution. In addition, there might not be any delicious fish in the ocean in a 100 years.

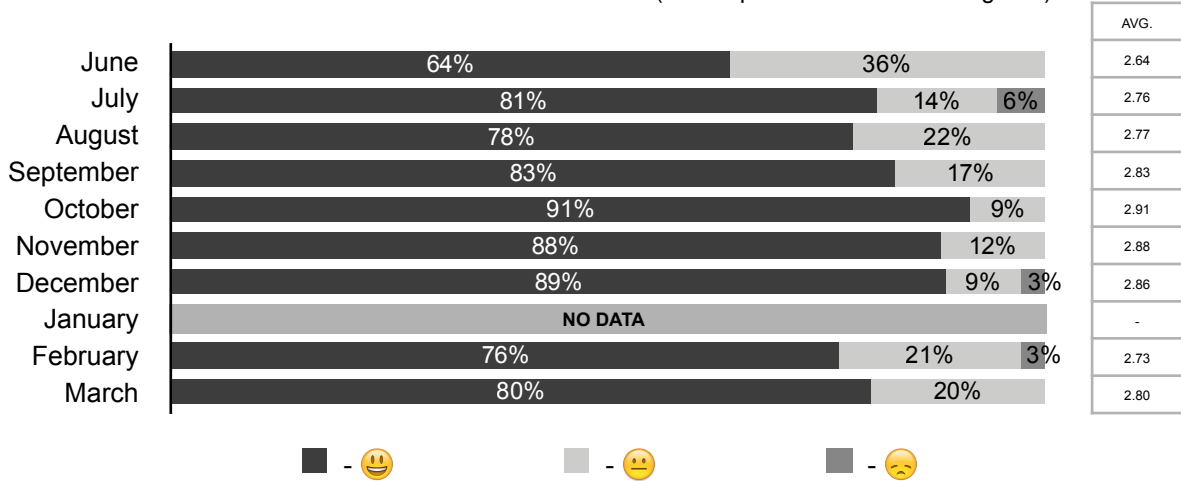
## SURVEY RESULTS

**Chart 1: 大きな声で発音することができた ( I can speak in a loud voice. )**



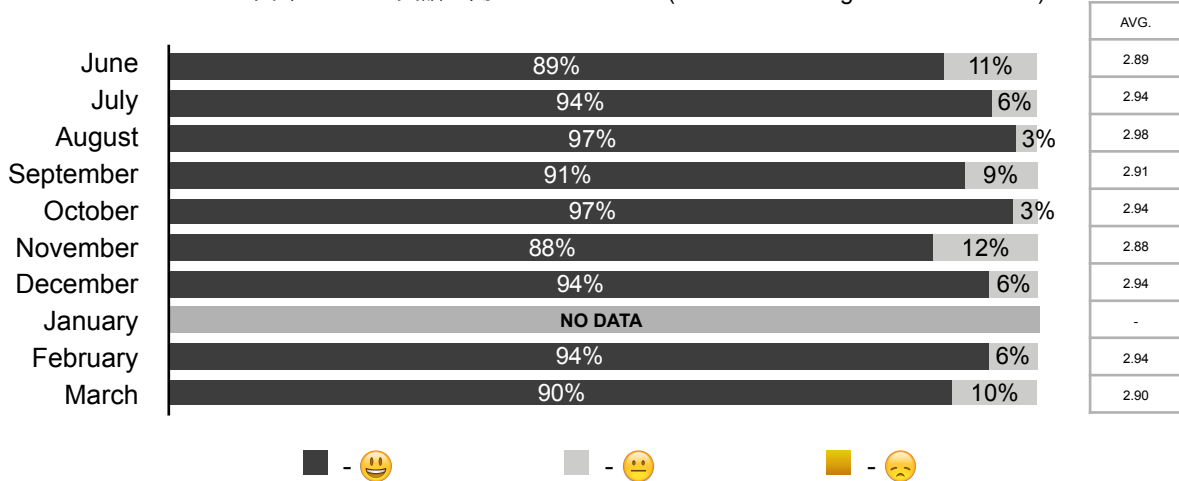
Fifth-Year Elementary Class 5-4 ( 35 students / 45 minutes / 1 per week )

**Chart 2: 友達と進んで英語で話すことができた ( I can speak with friends in English. )**



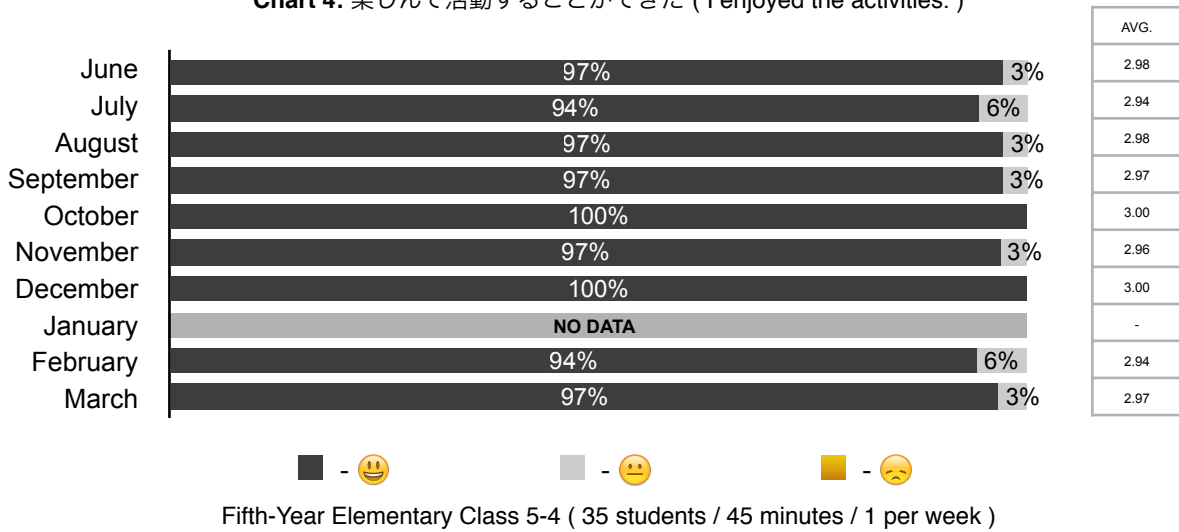
Fifth-Year Elementary Class 5-4 ( 35 students / 45 minutes / 1 per week )

**Chart 3: 興味をもって英語を聞くことができた ( I listened to English with interest. )**

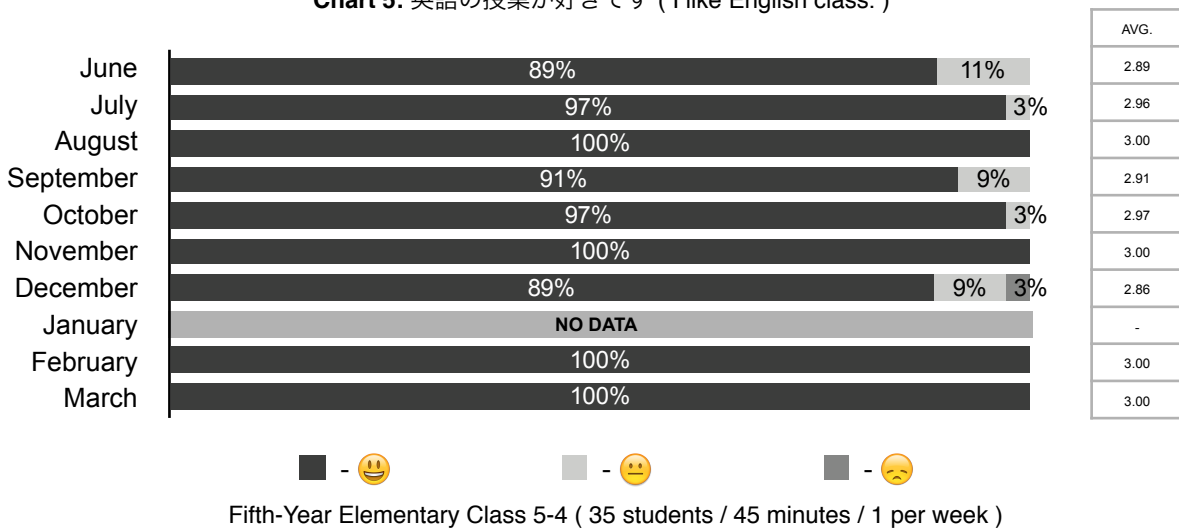


Fifth-Year Elementary Class 5-4 ( 35 students / 45 minutes / 1 per week )

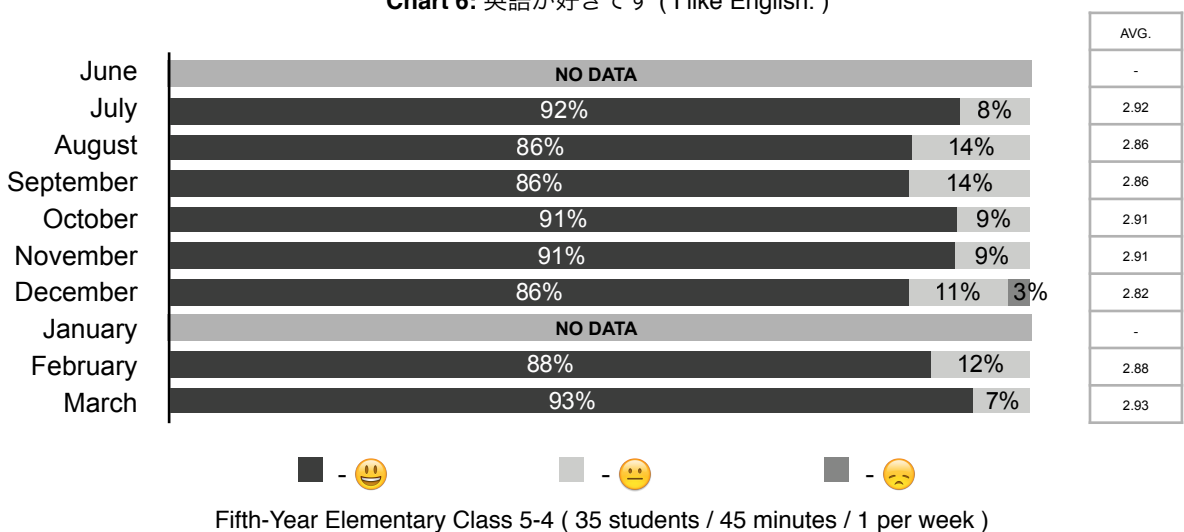
**Chart 4: 楽しんで活動することができた ( I enjoyed the activities. )**



**Chart 5: 英語の授業が好きです ( I like English class. )**

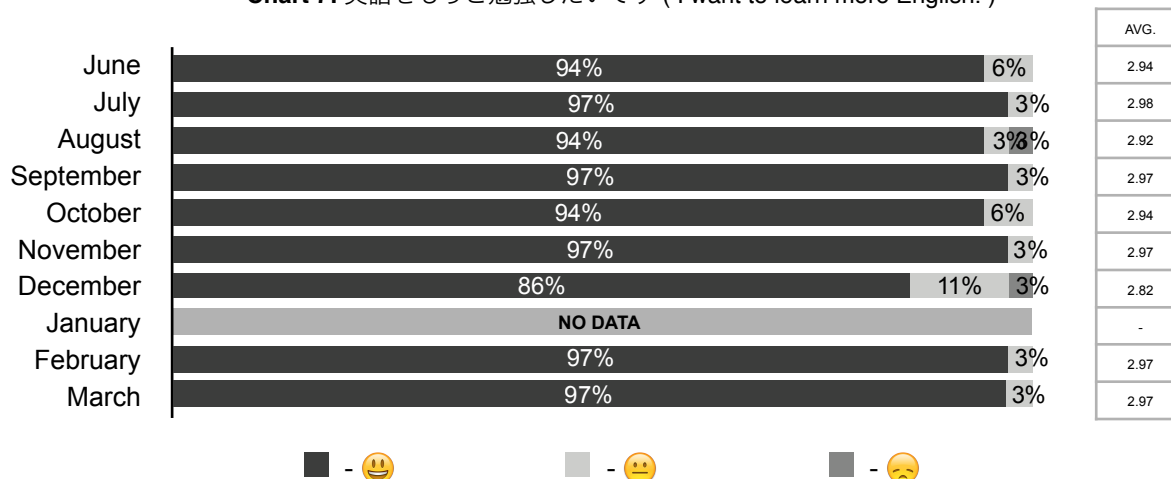


**Chart 6: 英語が好きです ( I like English. )**





**Chart 7: 英語をもっと勉強したいです ( I want to learn more English. )**



Fifth-Year Elementary Class 5-4 ( 35 students / 45 minutes / 1 per week )

### OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS RESPONSES

#### Q1 ががんばったこと ( What I worked hard at/on/for. )

Positive Comment/s		Number of responses
Communication	talking with friends, asking and answering questions	11
Vocabulary	learn, memorize and recall the words	8
Pronunciation	native-like, big voice	7
Fluency	no mistakes	2
Comprehension	understood the target sentences	1
Non-verbal	used gestures to express oneself	1

#### Q2 できるようになったこと ( What I'm able to accomplish. )

Positive Comment/s		Number of responses
Communication	did my best during the activity, asked questions spoken in English, expressed myself in English	19
Vocabulary	learned and recalled the words	7
Pronunciation	improved pronunciation	2
Fluency	was able to perform with no mistakes	1
Motivation	I can use this in JHS	1

#### Q3 ががんばりたいこと ( What I want to improve. )

Positive Comment/s		Number of responses
Motivation	learn more, do my best in 6th grade, excited retain what I have learned	17
Speaking	speak more, big voice	5
Pronunciation	improve my pronunciation	5
Writing	be able to express myself in writing as well	1
Request	I want to learn with Lem sensei again next year	1

- The results of the open-ended questionnaire show that students perceived a positive impression about their own communicative abilities.
- Compared to previous results, the responses are more focused on communication instead of simply learning the words and pronunciation.
- The students are getting more and more accustomed to using English communicatively by engaging in activities that require them to ask questions and answer by providing personal information.
- A student pointed out a very important concern regarding the inclusion of writing activities in class. She is very happy with her speaking ability and wishes to be able to express herself in writing as well.

### SELECTED RESPONSES

“I am happy to be able to listen and understand English.”  
 “I want to not only speak, I also want to be able to write in English.”  
 “It was very difficult in the beginning, but now I can speak in English.”  
 “I look forward to learning 6th Grade English.”  
 “I want to study English with Lem Sensei again next year.”

### SELF-EVALUATION SHEET

Name:		5年	組	月	日
1. 大きな声で発音することができた	😊	😐	😞		
2. 友だちと進んで英語で話すことができた	😊	😐	😞		
3. 興味をもって英語を聞くことができた	😊	😐	😞		
4. 楽しんで活動することができた	😊	😐	😞		
5. 英語の授業が好きです	😊	😐	😞		
6. 英語が好きです	😊	😐	😞		
7. 英語をもっと勉強したいです	😊	😐	😞		
Comment(s):					
① がんばったこと					
② できるようになったこと					
③ がんばりたいこと					

### SPEAKING TEST

- The speaking test is purposely entitled “Let’s Talk” to neutralize the unpleasant connotation of the word *test*. This is done to avoid the added pressure on students to perform well in a graded activity.
- The audio of the pair conversations were recorded with the permission of the HRT. The students were assured that their identity will remain anonymous in the entire evaluation process.
- The class was divided in half. The HRT, without any recording device, supervised half of the class while the other half was supervised and audio recorded by the ALT.
- The audio recordings were transcribed and assessed by the ALT to gather the data presented in this report. A very simple rubric was developed to help evaluate the performance of the students.
- The students were not presented with the results of the speaking test because of time constraints.

## TRANSCRIBED SELECTED CONVERSATIONS

### Pair 1

Boy: Hello.  
 Girl: Hello.  
 Boy: How are you?  
 Girl: I'm fine. How about you?  
 Boy: I'm hungry. How many brothers do you have?  
 Girl: I have one brother(s). How about you?  
 Boy: I have one brother.  
 Girl: How many sisters do you have?  
 Boy: I have no sisters. How about you?  
 Girl: I have one sister.  
 Boy: What sports do you like?  
 Girl: I like skate(ing). How about you?  
 Boy: I like soccer.  
 Girl: What food do you like?  
 Boy: I like sushi. How about you?  
 Girl: I like omelet(s).  
 Boy: Thank you.  
 Girl: See you.

### Pair 2

Girl: Hello.  
 Boy: Hello.  
 Girl: How are you?  
 Boy: I'm hungry. How about you?  
 Girl: I'm fine. How many sisters do you like ... do you have?  
 Boy: I have no sister(s). How about you?  
 Girl: I have no sisters.  
 Boy: Me too. How many brothers do you have?  
 Girl: I have 2 brothers. How about ... how about to (you)?  
 Boy: I have one brother.  
 Girl: What fruit do you like?  
 Boy: I like grape(s). How about you?  
 Girl: I like strawberry(ies).  
 Boy: What color do you like?  
 Girl: I like orange. How about to (you)?  
 Boy: I like blue.  
 Girl: See you.  
 Boy: Bye.

### SPEAKING TEST RUBRIC

<b>OPENING</b> Hello. How are you? How about you? I'm great.	0	1	
<b>QUESTION 1</b> How many brothers/sisters do you have?	0	1	
<b>ANSWER 1</b> I have ~ brothers/sisters.	0	1	2
<b>QUESTION 2</b> How many brothers/sisters do you have?	0	1	
<b>ANSWER 2</b> I have ~ brothers/sisters.	0	1	2
<b>QUESTION 3</b> What ~ do you like?	0	1	
<b>ANSWER 3</b> I like ~.	0	1	2
<b>QUESTION 4</b> What ~ do you like?	0	1	
<b>ANSWER 4</b> I like ~.	0	1	2
<b>CLOSING</b> Thank you. See you. Bye.	0	1	
<b>OVERALL DELIVERY</b>			
Pronunciation / Intonation	1	2	
Volume	1	2	
<b>CONVERSATIONAL STRATEGIES</b>			
How about you?	0	1	2
Me too.	0	1	2
Self-correction	0	1	2

## SPEAKING TEST RESULTS

Test Criteria	Number of responses			
OPENING	15/16			
QUESTION 1: How many brothers/sisters do you have?	8/8			
ANSWER 1: I have ~ brother(s) / sister(s). 0 = no answer    1 = answer with mistakes    2 = correct answer	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>AVG.</b>
	1	8	7	1.38
QUESTION 2: How many brothers/sisters do you have?	7/8			
ANSWER 2: I have ~ brother(s) / sister(s). 0 = no answer    1 = answer with mistakes    2 = correct answer	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>AVG.</b>
	4	5	7	1.19
QUESTION 3: What ~ do you like?	8/8			
ANSWER 3: I like ~. 0 = no answer    1 = answer with mistakes    2 = correct answer	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>AVG.</b>
	1	7	8	1.44
QUESTION 4: What ~ do you like?	7/8			
ANSWER 4: I like ~. 0 = no answer    1 = answer with mistakes    2 = correct answer	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>AVG.</b>
	3	4	9	1.38
CLOSING	16/16			
<b>OVERALL DELIVERY</b>				
PRONUNCIATION / INTONATION	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>AVG.</b>	
	16	0	1	
VOLUME	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>AVG.</b>	
	7	9	1.57	
<b>CONVERSATIONAL STRATEGIES</b>				
How about you?*	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>AVG.</b>
	2	3	11	1.57
Me too.**	6			
Self-correction**	9			

\* The use of the expression "How about you?" is measured in terms of frequency of use by one student.

\*\* The other conversational strategies were measured by the number of times it was used during the entire speaking test.