

# Action Research Final Report 2012-2013

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1. Title: Improving students' communicative competence through focus-on-form instruction

2. Context:

(1) Level: 1st year students of junior high school

(2) Class size: 35 students

(3) Time: 45 or 50-minute-class, 4 classes per week

(4) Textbook: New Horizon English Course 1

(5) Problems:

- My students are very beginners, though some of them have learned English outside school. Their exposure to English is extremely limited.
- They are taught in a teacher-centered style in most classes at school and are not used to pair or group work.

3. Goal: • Students can introduce themselves and their friends and family.

• Students can ask each other and answer the questions.

• Students can use some conversation strategies and develop a desire to continue conversations with classmates.

4. What I did

(1) Structured input and output activities

Before I got students to read the textbook, I introduced target grammar with demonstrations and then gave them structured input and output activities.

(2) Speaking Test

Students wrote their self-introduction in the first term and the introduction of their friends or family in the second term and made a poster. They had a speaking test in pairs in front of an ALT. First, one student introduced him/herself and the other student asked him/her two questions. The first student answered the questions and the second student responded, "I see," "Really?" etc. Next, the two students switched their roles. They were evaluated based on the rubric. The partners and the order to take the speaking test were determined by lot. Students did not know the information until just before they took the test.

## 5. Results

### Listening & reading skills

Both skills became better in July than in April, but the survey results slipped back in February.

### Speaking skills

Speaking improved better and better. Many students commented on their progress in speaking.

### Writing skills

Writing also improved greatly. The number of students who reported the improvement in their writing was more than that about the other skills.

### From students' comments in the surveys and interviews

Students felt that they became able to write more English sentences and improved their speaking in communicative activities.

### Survey results in April, July and February

Figure 1

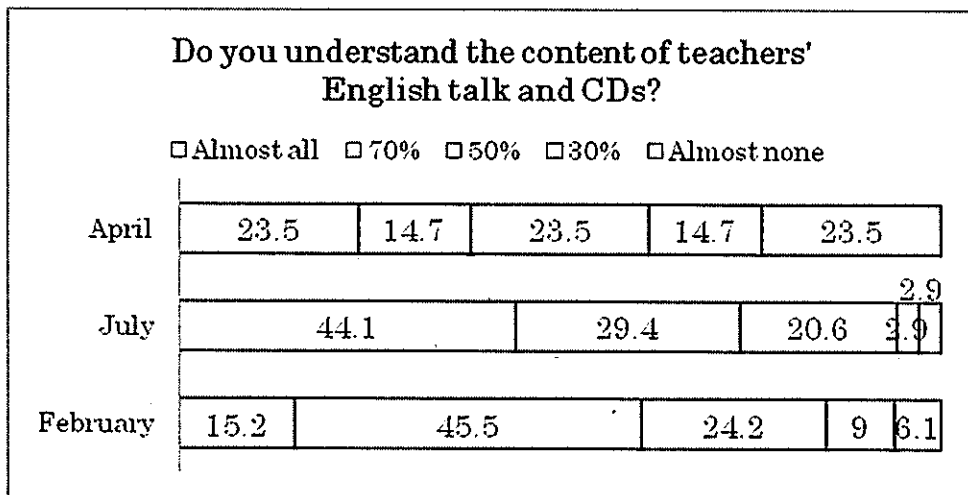


Figure 2

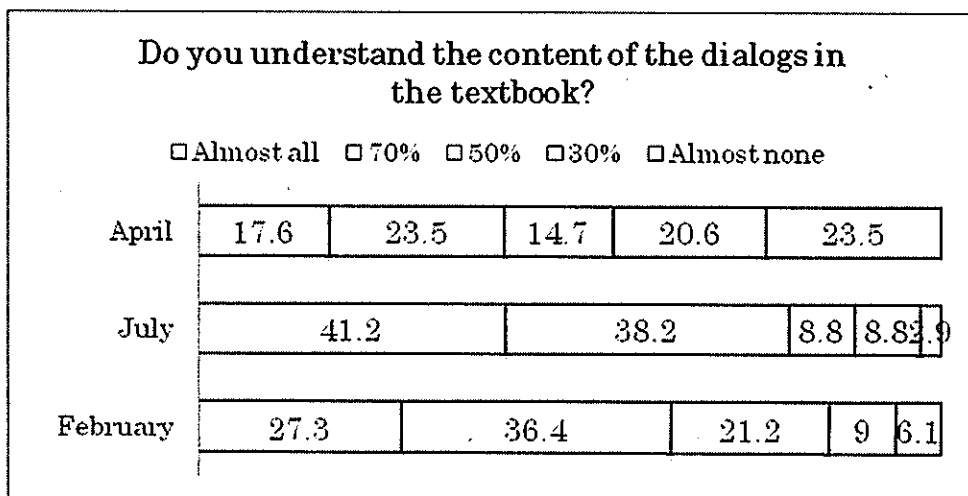


Figure 3

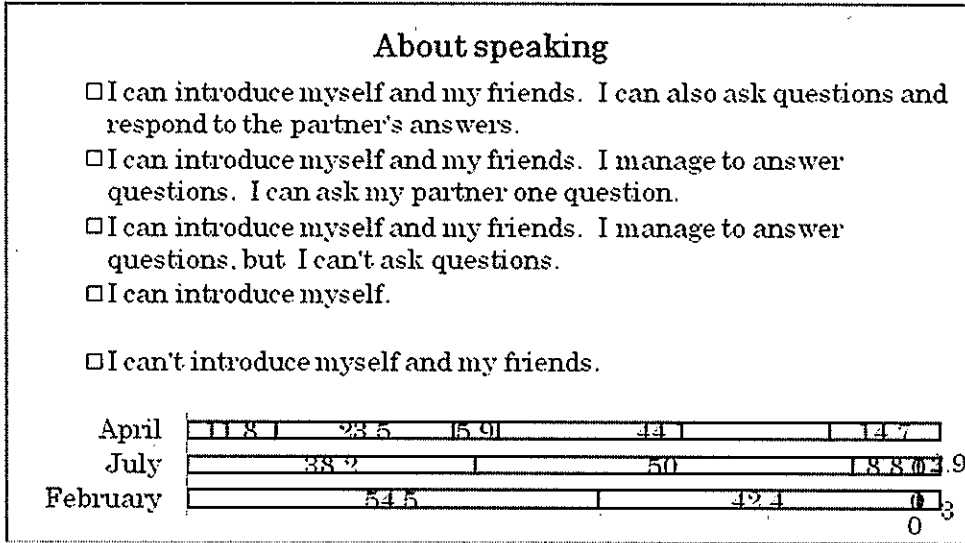
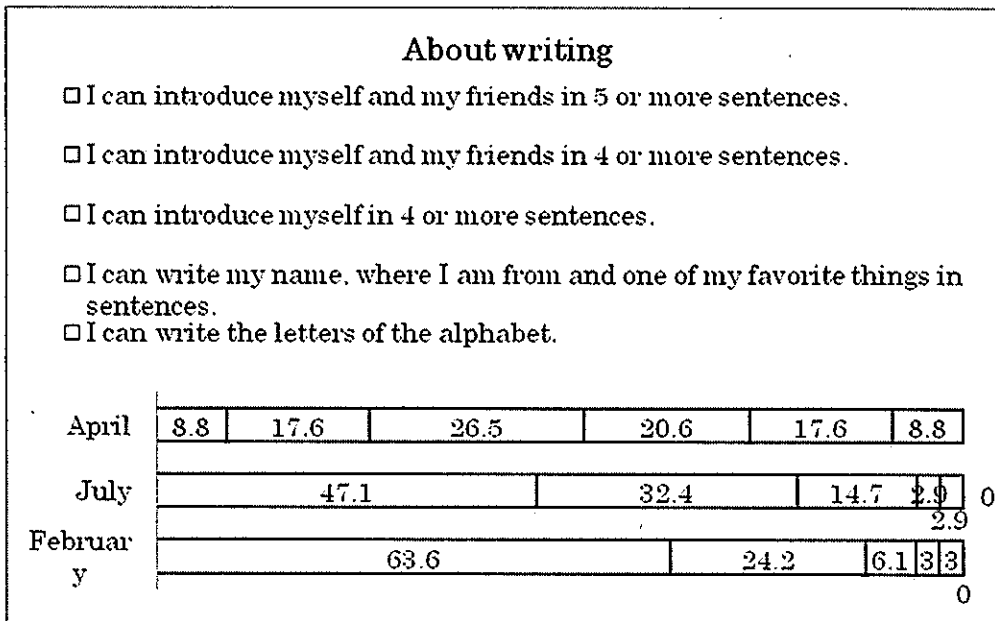


Figure 4



Survey results about rubrics

Figure 5

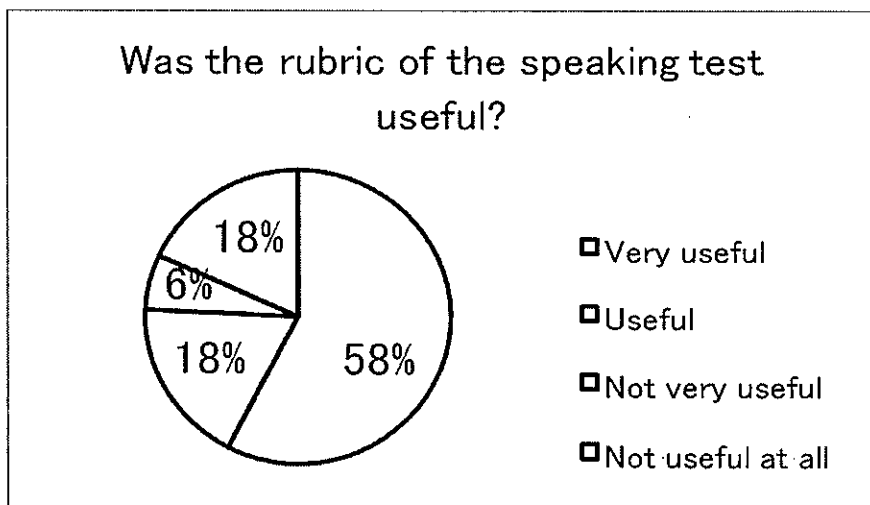


Figure 6

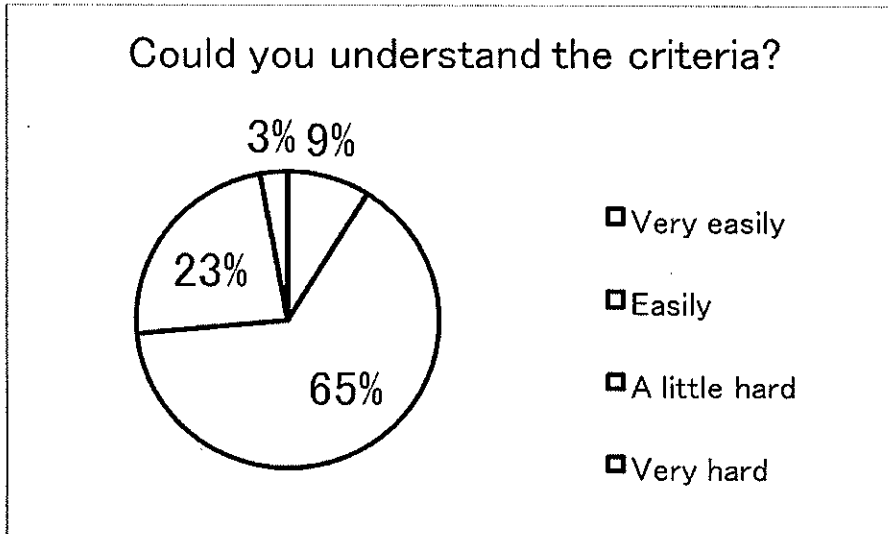


Table 1: Students' comments in response to the open-ended question: "How did your English skills change?" in the survey in February, 2013

<u>Writing</u>
I became able to write more English sentences. (6)
I became able to write longer sentences. (1)
I became able to write my name and my favorite things. (1)
I became able to write more words. (1)
I became able to write English words and sentences more fluently. (2)
<u>Speaking</u>
I became able to speak more English. (4)
I became able to introduce myself fluently and respond to others' answers. (1)
<u>Speaking &amp; Writing</u>
I became able to express myself about daily life in English. (3)
I became better at putting Japanese into English. (1)
I became able to use more English expressions and conversation strategies. (1)
I became able to ask more questions in English. (2)
<u>Reading &amp; Listening</u>
I became able to read English sentences. (1)
I became able to understand English in detail. (2)
I became able to understand long sentences. (1)
I became able to understand what foreigners said. (1)
<u>Grammar</u>
I became able to use verbs in sentences. (1)
I became able to distinguish simple and progressive aspects. (1)
I could understand English question and negation forms. (1)
<u>Others</u>
I feel my pronunciation has improved. (1)
My English vocabulary has increased. (1)
I became better at English. (2)

Table 2: Students' comments in response to the question: "How did your English skills change?" in the interview in February, 2013 (All the names of students are pseudonyms.)

- I became able to write slightly longer English sentences. I became able to greet in English and talk in short sentences. I became able to ask questions more fluently (Ichiro, a high-level male student).
- I became able to speak a little more and better. I became able to talk a little in English with my friends. I became able to greet in English and talk about daily life fluently (Goro, a middle-level male student).
- I became able to write longer English sentences and more words. I became able to ask more questions. My speaking skills have improved greatly. I couldn't use rejoinders at all in April, but after that I could use them easily. I became able to say, "I see" or "Really?" I became able to speak about various things. I got more As in the second speaking test. I became able to speak English, thinking of the meaning (Taro, a middle-level male student).
- I feel my pronunciation has improved. But in the second speaking test, I paid too much attention to what I couldn't do in the first one, so I couldn't concentrate on other points (Akiko, a middle-level female student).
- I think my speaking skills have improved because I became able to speak more fluently than before. I was glad that I could ask and answer in various ways in the second speaking test (Haruko, a high-level female student).
- I became able to understand grammar better. My pronunciation has become better than in the first term. I became able to answer correctly and respond to others' answers (Natsuko, a high-level female student).

Table 3: Students' comments in response to the open-ended question: "Why were the rubrics useful?" in the survey in February, 2013

- Explanation of evaluation
- I knew how I could get a good score. (4)
  - I knew the assessment criteria. (1)
  - I knew what to do in the test. (1)
  - I knew how many questions I should ask. (1)
  - I knew loudness would be evaluated. (1)
  - I knew how many different verbs I should use. (1)
  - I knew what and how to speak. (1)
- Preparation
- I knew how to prepare for the test. (2)
  - I prepared questions to ask in the test. (1)
  - I could write sentences according to the criteria. (3)
- Feedback
- The rubrics showed me what to be improved. (4)
  - I knew what I could do in the test. (1)
  - The rubrics showed me my strengths and weaknesses. (1)
- Motivation
- I practiced hard to pronounce English better. (2)
  - I could set my goals. (2)
  - The rubrics motivated me. (1)
  - I tried to write many sentences. (1)
  - If there had been no rubrics, I would have done worse. (1)

Table 4: Students' comments in response to the question: "Why were the rubrics useful?" in the interview in February, 2013 (The names of students are pseudonyms.)

- The rubrics were useful because I could think what I would talk about in the speaking test according to them (Ichiro, a high-level male student).
- As I knew what I couldn't do in the first speaking test, I could find what to improve in the next test and made efforts to overcome it (Haruko, a high-level female student).

Table 5: Students' comments in response to the open-ended question: "Was there anything difficult to understand in the rubrics?" in the survey in February, 2013

- I couldn't understand. (1)
- They were too detailed. (1)
- I want them to be easier. (2)

## 6. What I learned

In the questionnaire, I asked students to choose what they became able to do. It seemed that they could realize their progress better than when they were asked how much English they could understand or produce.

I set higher goals in the second speaking test than in the first one. It contributed to motivating students, pushing them forward, and letting them recognize the improvement of their skills.

As students reported in the survey and interview, the rubrics produced washback effects.

## 7. Future issues

- Better explanation of rubrics. Showing examples seems effective.
- Developing skills to conduct better interviews.

1. Level: 1st graders of junior high school

2. Class size: 35 students

3. Textbook: New Horizon (Tokyo Shoseki)

4. Goal:

Students can introduce their friends or family and talk about the introductions with their partner.

5. Objectives:

(1) Students can introduce their friends or family.

(2) Students can ask questions and answer the questions asked by their partner.

(3) Students can use rejoinders.

6. Procedures

Day one: Part 1

Day two: Part 1

Day three: Part 2

Day four: Part 2

Day five: Part 3

Day six: Part 3

Day seven: Revision and practice

Day eight: Assessment

7. Today's lesson plan (Day one)

(1) Oral introduction

(2) Communicative activity

a. Write about students themselves.

b. Practice the dialog.

c. Activity in pairs

d. Write English sentences.

8. Assessment (Day eight)

(1) Speaking test in pairs

(2) Self-evaluation

(3) Teacher's comments

Class 1-( ) No.( ) Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Unit 6-1 Kevin plays basketball.

A: Hello. I'm twelve years old. How old are you? (あなたは何歳ですか?)

B: I'm thirteen years old.

I play basketball. What do you play?

A: I play rugby.

I like English. What do you like?

B: I like Japanese.

I want a new game. What do you want?

A: I want a new bag.

Nice talking with you.

A: You, too.

What's your first name?  
あなたの (下の) 名前は何ですか?  
Pardon (me)?  
もう一度言ってください。  
How do you spell...?  
...はどうやってつづるんですか?

Name	年齢	スポーツ	好きな教科	欲しいもの
You				
1				
2				

★インタビューの結果を英文で書こう。

(例) Kevin is twelve years old. He plays basketball. He likes Japanese.

He wants a new game.

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Class 1-( ) No.( ) Name \_\_\_\_\_

## 2学期スピーキングテスト「家族や友達を紹介しよう」(参考 教科書 p.50) No.1

紹介する人の名前以外は日本語も英語も書かないこと。

**Step 1** あなたの家族または友達を紹介文を書き、その内容を表したミニポスターを作ろう

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Thank you.

**Step 2** ミニポスターを見せながら、スピーチをした後、質問し合おう

Kris 先生の前で、廊下でスピーキングテストを行います。

..... 月 日( )か 月 日( )の英語の授業

テスト当日までにくじを引いて、ペアは当日発表する。

※試験官 (Kris 先生) が質問することもある。

ミニポスターと評価シートだけを持って廊下に出る。評価シートを Kris 先生に渡す。  
(評価シートはテスト当日に配付される。)

A&B: Hello.

Kris: How are you?

A&B: I'm fine, thank you.

(評価シートを Kris 先生に渡す) Here you are.

フリース タート

Kris: Please start.

A: (Kris 先生とパートナーにミニポスターを見せながら、スピーチをする)

B: (Aさんに1つ質問する) Does he/she ...? / Is he/she ...? / What does he/she ...? など

A: (Bさんの質問に答える) Yes, he/she does. / No, he's/she's not. He's/She's ..... など  
(3語以上で)

B: (Aさんの答えに反応する) Me, too. / Good. / I see. / Really? など

(Aさんにもう1つ質問する) Does he/she ...? / Is he/she ...? / What does he/she ...? など

A: (Bさんの質問に答える) Yes, he/she does. / No, he's/she's not. He's/She's ..... など  
(3語以上で)

B: (Aさんの答えに反応する) Me, too. / Good. / I see. / Really? など

Kris: <sup>ターン</sup> Now, your turn.

B: (Kris 先生とパートナーにミニポスターを見せながら、スピーチをする)

A: (Bさんに1つ質問する) Does he/she ...? / Is he/she ...? / What does he/she ...? など

B: (Aさんの質問に答える) Yes, he/she does. / No, he's/she's not. He's/She's ..... など  
(3語以上で)

A: (Bさんの答えに反応する) Me, too. / Good. / I see. / Really? など

(Bさんにもう1つ質問する) Does he/she ...? / Is he/she ...? / What does he/she ...? など

B: (Aさんの質問に答える) Yes, he/she does. / No, he's/she's not. He's/She's ..... など  
(3語以上で)

A: (Bさんの答えに反応する) Me, too. / Good. / I see. / Really? など

Kris: Thank you very much. You're finished.

A&B: Thank you.

評価シートは後日返却するので、ポスターだけ持って教室に戻る。教室でポスターを提出する。

フライングスタート

Rubric for the speaking test in the second term

1	Contents of the self-introduction	A	The student was able to introduce his/her family member or friend in detail using 5 or more types of verbs as well as adding modifiers or reasons why.
		B+	The student was able to introduce his/her family member or friend using 4 or more types of verbs.
		B	The student was able to introduce his/her family member or friend using 3 or more types of verbs.
		C	The student could only use 2 types of verbs or less.
2	Pronunciation	A	The student was able to use proper English pronunciation all throughout.
		B	The student had just enough proper English pronunciation.
		C	The student had very strong katakana English pronunciation.
3	Accuracy of questions	A	The student was able to ask the questions both times using correct grammar.
		B	The student was able to ask questions once using correct grammar.
		C	The student was not able to ask questions using correct grammar.
4	Accuracy of responses	A	The student was able to respond immediately without restating the answer.
		B	The student was able to respond correctly.
		C	The student was not able to respond correctly.
5	Reaction to response of partner	A	The student was able to use 2 types of rejoinders.
		B	The student was able to use 1 type of rejoinder.
		C	The student could not respond.
6	Loudness of voice	A	The student could be clearly understood when they were speaking.
		B	The student's voice was loud enough to where enough information could be gathered to understand their point.
		C	The student's voice was so low where nothing could be understood.

# 1年2学期 スピーキングテスト「家族または友達紹介」 評価基準

1	スピーチの内容	A	5種類以上の動詞を使い、さらに理由を述べるなど詳しく家族または友達の紹介ができた
		B+	4種類以上の動詞を使って家族または友達の紹介ができた
		B	3種類以上の動詞を使って家族または友達の紹介ができた
		C	2種類以下の動詞しか使っていなかった
2	発音	A	英語らしい発音が常にできていた
		B	内容が十分伝わる発音ができた
		C	カタカナ英語が目立っていた
3	質問の正確さ	A	2回とも正しい文法を用いて質問することができた
		B	1回は正しい文法を用いて質問することができた
		C	正しい文法を用いて質問することができなかった
4	応答の正確さ	A	言い直すことなく、即座に応答できた
		B	正しく応答できた
		C	正しく応答できなかった
5	相手の応答への反応	A	2種類の反応ができた
		B	1種類の反応ができた
		C	反応できなかった
6	声の大きさ	A	はっきりと聞こえる声で話せた
		B	何を話しているか聞き取れる大きさと話せた
		C	声が小さくよく聞き取れなかった