



# THE MASK & GAVEL

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# **Conversations Across Borders**

November 21–24, 2014 in Tsukuba, Ibaraki

**Paul Nehls (Editor)**

This is the first issue of the third volume of *Mask & Gavel*. Editing my first issue of *Mask & Gavel* has been a truly enjoyable experience. I owe our previous editor, James Venema, an enormous world of thanks for his hard work in creating a striking and thoroughly professional journal, and then walking me through the process in order to maintain that level of excellence. Another special thank you is in order for the team of reviewers and proofreaders whose work has made this volume possible. Finally, I wish to thank also the readers of *Mask & Gavel* - we hope you find this issue to be both informative and interesting.

**Dawn Kobayashi (SIG Coordinator)**

I am very excited to write this introduction to the latest edition of the Speech, Drama, and Debate SIG journal, *Mask & Gavel*. Many congratulations to Paul Nehls and his team for putting together another comprehensive publication which covers new research and classroom experiences in speech, drama, debate, and oral interpretation. More importantly, a big thank you to the contributors to this issue for their exemplary work. SDD is a developing area of research in language teaching and we have been very fortunate with the high level of submissions to the journal. It's encouraging to see such vibrant work being completed in this field. I hope you find plenty of interesting reads in this edition and also inspiration to submit your own research for publication. Your work could be featured in the next edition of *M&G*!

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# Feature Article

## The Pedagogical Relevance of Readers Theatre in the Japanese EFL Classroom

**Patrick Ng Chin Leong**

**University of Niigata Prefecture**

**chin@unii.ac.jp**

### Abstract

*Readers Theatre (henceforth RT) is a presentational performance based on principles and techniques of oral interpretation and conventional theatre (Adams, 2003). This study seeks to examine whether: (i) RT lowers the affective filters of Japanese EFL learners in the classroom, (ii) Japanese EFL learners have positive experiences with RT in class (iii) RT has any impact on Japanese EFL learners' writing. Students' reactions to specific phases of RT activities are described and analysed: script negotiating, script rehearsal, and script performance. For this study, data was collected from the following sources: the teacher's reflexive journals after the RT lesson, students' comments on their writing journals, a survey on students' reactions towards the RT activity, and the impact of RT on students' writing. The results of the study showed that RT lowers affective filters of Japanese EFL learners in the classroom as students display a positive attitude towards RT as an enjoyable and creative activity.*

One of the main concerns in L2 acquisition is how to provide students with “real-life” language experience. Felton, Little, Parsons and Schaffner (1988) believe that compared to the informational talk in a typical lesson, there is a higher incidence of interactional and expressive talk when drama activity is included in the classroom. Needlands (1992) states that if the teacher and students are able to use drama to create roles and situations, there will be a greater variety of different contexts for talk. Maley and Duff (1978) also support the use of drama for language development. They suggest that involving students in the negotiation

and construction of drama allows students to link the language they are learning with the world around them. In this study, Readers Theatre, (a simple drama activity), is used to examine its pedagogical implications in the Japanese EFL classroom.

### **Readers Theatre: Review of the Literature**

Readers Theatre (henceforth RT) is a presentational performance based on principles and techniques of oral interpretation and conventional theatre (Adams, 2003). Unlike conventional theatre or drama, RT is an uncomplicated classroom activity in an EFL context because it does not require full costume, stage sets, or memorization of scripts. Students rehearse and perform a play for peers or others through hand-held scripts (Ng, 2013). There is a wealth of literature that documents the effects of RT on emergent readers. According to Adams (2003), through RT, reading is conceived as an enjoyable activity. The mind, body, emotions, and sensory responses are engaged simultaneously when readers read and perform a script. Young and Rasinski (2009) suggest that since the performance of RT involves repetitive reading and assisted reading that focuses on delivering meaning, it is a potential tool for promoting fluency. Keehn (2003) observes that RT enables young readers to improve in speed, accuracy, retelling confidence, fluency, phrasing, expressiveness, and overall reading ability. Jordan and Harrell (2000) recognise RT as an effective drama activity for providing emergent readers with authentic speech practice especially in teaching reading fluency (rate, accuracy, phrasing, pitch, stress, and expressiveness) as well as comprehension. They suggest that “involving students with enjoyable and exciting active reading procedures provide the key to fluency and higher levels of comprehension gain, through a natural process of repeated readings and interactive transactions with language” (Jordan and Harrell, 2000, p. 74).

Liu (2000) conducted a study to examine the effect of RT to address its theoretical and pedagogical issues in an intermediate L2 writing class in a US university. There were 14 students enrolled in the writing course designed to improve the writing skills of students through the use of literature. His study showed that RT encourages students to “participate directly in interpretation and reflection on the readings, reading responses and their own writings” (2000, p. 359). In addition, Liu’s study also showed that in a classroom where students come from similar linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds, RT enhances cultural awareness between the home culture and the target culture through meaning negotiation and cultural comparisons and reflections.

This current study seeks to extend Liu’s study to examine the theoretical and pedagogical impact of RT in the Japanese EFL classroom. The research questions for this study are:

- (i) Can RT lower affective filters of Japanese EFL learners in the classroom?
- (ii) Do students have positive experiences with RT in class?
- (iii) Does RT have any impact on Japanese EFL learners’ writing?

### **The Study: Contextual Background**

RT was implemented in a class of first-year intermediate Japanese EFL learners enrolled in a Core English class at the University of Niigata Prefecture in the northern part of Japan. There were 25 students in the class and the course ran for 15 weeks. It was

observed that most of the students were afraid to engage in group discussions in English due to their lack of confidence in their spoken English. RT was implemented in class to increase students' confidence in speaking English and to cultivate their reading habits as a means to improve their overall proficiency. A graded reader, *Alice in Wonderland* was used for the RT activity. Students first read the story and the teacher created a problem scenario (see the Appendix) based on a scene in the book. Students then discussed and wrote a script based on the scenario. They then rehearsed and performed the script before the class. A performance rubric was used to evaluate the students' performance.

## **Data Collection**

Data collection for this study was derived from the following sources: (i) the teacher's own reflexive journals after the RT lesson (ii) students' comments on their writing journals (iii) survey on students' reactions towards the RT activity and (iv) student writing of a script for the RT performance. In this study, students' reactions to specific phases of RT activities will be described and analysed: Script negotiation, Script rehearsal, and Script performance.

### ***Phase One: Script negotiation***

Students were instructed to discuss a problem scenario created from Chapter 8 of *Alice in Wonderland* (see the [Appendix](#)): To create the script, students were instructed to create several roles in their script: Alice, gardeners, narrators etc. They also had to write an introduction to set the mood for the story. During the negotiation of the problem scenario, it was observed that students were actively involved in discussing the problem scenario deciding on how they should develop the script. Initially, some groups experienced difficulties in the script discussions as they could not think of any ideas to persuade the queen not to paint the flowers white. The teacher provided some suggestions and showed a sample script written by previous students. After a while, some groups became more confident and suggested some interesting ideas. During the script writing phase, no students approached the teacher for help in the use of English expressions. Students debated on how they should develop their script and were thoroughly engaged in their discussions. It was observed that even passive students were interested in sharing their ideas.

The atmosphere of the class was different from the routine class lesson. Some members broke into laughter while other groups were deeply engrossed in the script discussion. Students were more relaxed and their facial expressions showed they enjoyed the script discussion and script writing activity. Except for one group who experienced some difficulties at some points in their script negotiations, all other groups were deeply engaged in the script negotiation. The interest factor in learning English was enhanced because of the intellectual and emotional involvement in the RT activity which involved reading, speaking, writing, and listening. Compared to normal class lessons, the RT activity evoked a great amount of interactions amongst group members. At the end of the RT activity, one student wrote about her script discussion experience (all student comments left as written without correction):

(student comment) *I enjoyed discussing the script. In our group, every student gave their own ideas to make the story interesting. We came up with many ideas and exchanged opinions. In the end, we couldn't adopt all ideas but all my group members enjoyed*

*discussing the content of the script.*

### ***Phase Two: Rehearsing the script***

When each group had completed their script, they showed it to the teacher who then provided some language support to help them improve their lines. When the teacher had read and approved the script, the group began to rehearse their scripts. During the script rehearsal, the teacher also emphasized the importance of pronunciation and good articulation in order for students to put on a good performance. Students were also encouraged to use sounds (footsteps, moaning sounds, etc.) to impress the audience. Initially, some students were hesitant to read their lines but when they saw other students performing and laughing, they began to conceive the rehearsal as a fun-oriented activity. In the process of rehearsal, they also gained progressive experience with the text. One student wrote about her willingness to invest time to prepare for the script rehearsal:

(student comment) *I think I worked really hard on this work. I wrote the script and send it to my group members by email. Moreover, I tried to memorise lines. However, some of us forgot our lines because we were nervous. So I think we should rehearse and practise more.*

As RT is an ‘oral interpretation’ activity (Adams, 2003) repeated script reading allows students to develop phonemic awareness and phonics which lead to an overall reading fluency. During the rehearsal, the teacher used a tape recorder to record students’ performance and as students listened to their own rehearsals, they were able to further improve on their script reading. One student wrote how she benefited from listening to the taped rehearsal:

(student comment) *Before the actual performance in front of the audience, we did a rehearsal and then we taped our performance. It helped us. We could check our pronunciation, rate of speaking and accent. Listening to our voice is important. Thank you for giving us such a rich activity.*

### ***Phase Three: Performing the script***

The performance of the script was conducted immediately after the rehearsal. It was observed that students were excited and eager to perform their script in front of an audience. The teacher recorded the script reading performance, and a rubric was used to evaluate students’ performances (see Table 2). A survey was conducted after the RT performance. Students were asked to write down their reactions to the different phases of the RT activity. One student shared his experience of the RT performance in the survey (minor editing to retain authenticity of comments):

(student comment) *It was a very nice lesson! I was very surprised that every student all students play their roles well. Each group also devised their play very well. Everyone spoke clearly and the script performance was easy to understand. I think students put a lot of efforts to practise their scripts for this drama activity.*



## Theoretical Considerations of RT as a Drama Activity for Japanese EFL Learners

### *Can RT lower affective filters of Japanese EFL learners in the classroom?*

Research on individual differences in second language (L2) acquisition has shown that language proficiency is affected by affective variables such as attitudes, motivation, and language anxiety. Horwitz, K., Horwitz, M. & Cope, (1986) defines language anxiety as: a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process (p. 128). A major problem in motivating Japanese EFL learners to speak English in class is due to their level of anxiety in speaking English.

However, through RT, anxiety-ridden English instructions are converted into living language through intense creative energy as students become engaged in their script negotiation and performance. As Adams (2003) suggests, the performance elements in RT allow students to focus on preparing for the show and thus students are fully engaged in the script performance through using every emotion, sense, and voice. During the RT lesson, it was observed that the built-in collaborative nature of script writing and the performance offer students a sense of security. One student wrote how he managed to overcome his anxiety due to the support of his group members during the RT activity: (student comment) *This activity was a opportunity for me to improve my speaking skill. At first, I was worried about my English skill. However, this activity was a group activity so I could relax and enjoy it. My group members supported me, so I thank them from the bottom of my heart. I wouldn't have a confidence without them. Therefore, I am happy I could participate this activity with my classmates.*

RT encourages healthy teamwork since imaginative interaction with peers is required to produce a script. Another student wrote about her experiences with her group members during script negotiation:

(student comment) *I made a script with my classmates. We thought how to persuade the Queen not to change the colour of roses. My classmates thought a lot of ideas. This was very nice, so we could make the script. I enjoyed this activity. In addition, we could cooperate with my classmates.*

Although several students wrote that they were initially afraid to speak English before an audience, they were able to overcome their own anxiety through collaborative efforts of their team members. However with RT, the collaborative aspects of RT allow students to perform in a protected and non-threatening environment where progress can be measured and support from members within the group is available (Adams, 2003). In addition, constant learning reinforcement disguised in rehearsal activity also helps to establish students' confidence in performance. One student wrote how RT experience has helped her overcome her anxiety in speaking English:

(student comment) *I'm usually shy to speak in front of people. So this activity is a practice for overcoming my weakness! If I continue this activity, both my classmates and I will be able to speak English without any fear or anxiety.*

The script negotiation helps Japanese EFL learners learn the use of communicative English in an unhurried and non-threatening way. Instead of perceiving the script performance as an 'anxiety-ridden' activity, a majority of students viewed it as a fun and

enjoyable activity. As one student wrote:

(Student comment) *During the performance, I felt a little nervous but I enjoyed it. I was glad that some of the classmates smiled at our performance. Anyway, it was a fun activity for me.*

### ***Do Japanese EFL learners have positive experiences with RT?***

One of the main aims of the study is to examine Japanese EFL learners' experiences with RT. A survey consisting of 5 questions was designed to investigate students' response to the RT activity. The results of the survey tabulated in percentage are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 : Students' response to the RT activity

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoyed this activity.	72%	24%	4%	0%	0%
I enjoyed the script reading activity.	52%	32%	12%	4%	0%
I think I would be more enthusiastic if I had more time to prepare.	48%	28%	20%	4%	0%
I would have been more enthusiastic if I had played a different role.	24%	20%	40%	12%	4%
This activity increased my enthusiasm to read other graded readers.	48%	28%	20%	4%	0%

The results of the survey showed that students are generally positive about their RT experiences. One significant result of the survey showed that 86% of students agreed that they enjoyed the RT activity. About 84% of the students also stated that they enjoyed the script reading activity. Some reasons for students' positive response towards the RT activity include:

- (student comment) *The RT performance was fun.*
- (student comment) *It was a creative activity.*
- (student comment) *We had to perform for an audience.*
- (student comment) *We can gain confidence in speaking before an audience.*
- (student comment) *It is an effective way to improve our pronunciation.*
- (student comment) *We have opportunity to speak English.*
- (student comment) *We can collaborate with our friends.*

It was observed that because *Alice in Wonderland* was dramatised in class, the interest in the lesson was greatly increased. As Adams (2003) suggests, the class becomes livelier through RT as the level of intellectual and emotional investment is heightened by interaction. RT allows Japanese EFL learners to participate in the story and so they become transformed into participants and thus they were able to identify with the characters in *Alice in Wonderland*. By putting themselves in the shoes of the characters they portrayed, students

were able to grapple with the emotions, tensions, and nuances of each character in the story. One student, who was notoriously passive during English lesson, was observed to be rather active during the RT lesson. He later recounted his experience of the RT activity:

(student comment) *It was enjoyable for me to do this script performance activity. I think this activity is effective as it involves writing, reading and speaking.*

As the mind, emotions, and sensory responses are engaged at the same time, RT transformed participants with responsibility to think and feel and create words that come alive as human experience. One female student also wrote about her positive experience in using her voice to portray the character in her script performance:

(student comment) *In this script activity, I played the role of Alice. I tried to make my voice sound as pretty as possible because the voice of Alice in the movie is very pretty. During the performance, I was a little nervous but I could role-play Alice well. We were able to deliver a good performance.*

The problem scenario allowed students to perform an imaginative and original script conclusion to the story. It was observed that every student became transformed into participants in *Alice in Wonderland* with responsibility for knowing what to say and how to use their voices to make their lines come alive as human experience. The dialogues created were also interesting as students performed their scripts with feeling and dramatic expression. As students are aware of that the script is to be performed before an appreciative classroom audience, they find their self-images being raised to new levels of esteem.

During the RT performance, a rubric was used to evaluate students' performance in RT in five areas: knowledge, presentation, voice projection, and overall area (see Table 2):

Table 2: RT rubric for evaluating students' performance

Area	1	2	3	4
Knowledge	Students do not interpret the story	Students interpret the story	Students interpret the story imaginatively	Students interpret the story creatively and with depth
Presentation	Students do not seem to be aware of what they should be doing at all.	Students do not appear confident about what they are doing.	Students appear to be fairly prepared.	Group is well prepared.
Voice	Hard to understand.	Not so well articulated	Well articulated. Easy to understand.	Entire skit was clear, concise, and well articulated.
Projection	Used no expression or inappropriate expression.	Some expression	Used expression in their voices, loud and soft.	Great expression in their voices, loud and soft.
Overall Performance	No enthusiasm	Some enthusiasm	Good enthusiasm	Great enthusiasm

It was observed that all groups scored three in all areas; two groups scored 4. In addition, RT provides students an authentic communicative context to practise their spoken English. This is important for Japanese EFL learners who have little opportunity to speak English in a monolingual sociolinguistic environment. A number of students in class actually have very few opportunities to interact with foreigners in English in their socialization experience. Except for one or two students who had previously lived or studied overseas, few had very close encounters with native speakers of English. RT provides immediate motivations for Japanese EFL learners to focus on improving their reading fluency since they are performing the scripts for an audience and are given a limited time to put on a show. This immediate motivation compels students to improve their spoken English. One student wrote about her RT experience:

(student comment) *When we read the script emotionally, it is like real and natural conversation. We made the script with colloquial expression and we formed many natural expressions which we didn't know. So this activity improved our spoken English.*

However, one major limitation of RT is that students with low English proficiency tend to find it difficult to write a script by themselves. Some students wrote in the survey that the script discussion was difficult but they were motivated to study English after the performance:

(student comment) *Discussion of this activity is very hard for me because I did not have any ideas and couldn't talk well. The activity made me nervous so I couldn't speak well. But I think my English skills will improve through this practice. Today's activity made me realize that I should study English more.*

### **Does RT Have Any Impact on Students' Writing?**

One of the aims of this study is to examine whether RT has any impact on the writing of Japanese EFL learners. The teacher was amazed by the fluency, creativity, and imagination of the script produced which reflected those of proficient writers—fluent, accurate, and complex. Although students did not receive any instructions on the pragmatic aspect of language use, students were able to apply cognitive strategies to express different language functions such as answering questions, solving problems, expressing opinions, arguing, and persuading in their scripts. For instance, one group wrote how Alice managed to persuade the Queen to change her mind about painting the flowers red.

Alice: Why did you order these gardeners to change the white roses to red one?

Queen: Red is my color. White doesn't match me.

Alice: I don't think so. White suits you too. I think you will stand out with white colour. If you wear white, you will be very attractive.

Narrator: Then Alice brought a white rose and handed it to the Queen. The Queen received it and put in her head. She gradually changed her mind.

As suggested by Olsenland (2007), students who apply cognitive strategies (goal setting, ask questions, make predictions, monitor, reflect, and evaluate) are likely to create meaningful text. The problem scenario in the RT allows students to ask questions about the development of the story and the role of the character. Compared to the traditional writing task, the performance slant in RT motivates students to monitor, reflect, and evaluate their

script. Students who are proficient writers use writing as a means to transform their knowledge through reflection and analysis of the character rather than simply regurgitating what they have read from the story. One student wrote how she decided to portray the Queen in her script:

(student comment) *I thought it is good to change the story, so I suggested the line, 'The Queen hates milk, so she hates white colour'. Also I played the role of the Queen and so I tried to change my voice.*

Research in writing shows that motivation influences writing development (Graham & Harris, 2009). Motivation includes a desire to write, one's attitude toward writing, persistence in writing, and self-efficacy, or the belief that one can produce a desired result (such as a persuasive essay). It would be true to say that RT provides strong motivation for Japanese EFL learners to become more proficient writers. In fact, students took their own initiative to improve their scripts through multiple negotiations to decide which lines to keep and what to edit and revise in order to produce an original script. Although RT was time-consuming—the RT activity was conducted in four lessons—students were willing to put in extra hours of hardwork to produce a well-written script. However, it was observed that several students with a lower level of English proficiency found the script writing cognitively demanding and experienced difficulties writing the script. As one student wrote in the survey:

(student comment) *I felt it was a little difficult to write the script because we had to make it so that the audience can understand the story easily.*

## **Conclusion : Implications for the Classroom**

There is no doubt that RT has pedagogical relevance and implications in the Japanese EFL classroom. RT takes the study of foreign language out of the rule book and into the mouths of living people. It may be argued that the previous learning experiences of Japanese EFL learners may not be a natural match for the use of RT. However, if RT is set up carefully, it provides Japanese EFL learners useful language practice in a real communicative context. As Yashima (2002, p. 63) suggests, to encourage Japanese students to communicate in English, lessons should be designed to enhance students' interests in different cultures as well as to reduce anxiety and build confidence in communication. RT can be harnessed to help Japanese EFL learners develop confidence in order to deal with unpredictability inherent in real world communication as well as enhance their interest in foreign literature. RT is a powerful pedagogical tool in the EFL classroom as it encourages student participation and is non-threatening to students (Liu, 2000). However, as the script writing is cognitively demanding, RT is more suitable for intermediate and advanced EFL students. There is a need to explore fully which aspects of RT—script negotiation, script writing, or script performance—are relevant for which groups of EFL learners in other teaching contexts.

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## Appendix

### ***Sample Scenario and Instructions for Readers Theatre from Alice in Wonderland (Carroll, 2000)***

Read the following scene adapted from Chapter 8 “Inside the Garden.”

Near Alice was a small tree with flowers on it. There were three gardeners by the tree.

‘Be careful, Five!’ one of them said.

‘I’m always careful, Seven,’ answered Five.

Alice went to them. ‘What are you doing?’ she asked.

‘We’re making the flowers red,’ one of the gardeners said.

‘That’s strange!’ thought Alice. ‘Why?’ she asked.

‘Well, Miss, the Queen wanted flowers with red flowers on them. But this tree’s got white flowers! We don’t want the Queen to see it. She’ll be angry and cut off our heads. So we’re making the flowers red before she sees them.’

Imagine you are Alice. You disagree with the Queen’s decision to paint the flowers red. You decided to stop the Queen from changing the color of the flower. Based on your reading of the character of Alice and the Queen, create an original conversational script to persuade the Queen to change her mind.

#### Sample script

Alice: Hello, Madam. My name is Alice.

(The Queen was surprised to see a little girl. She decided to find out where she came from.)

Queen: Who are you? Where are you from? What do you want from me?

(Alice was afraid of the Queen but pretended to be calm and confident)

Alice: I . . .

\*Your script should be at least half a page long and you should include a short introduction and the role of a narrator.

#### Sample Introduction:

Alice left the tea party and wandered into a strange garden. She saw two gardeners painting the flowers red. She was surprised and asked them why. The gardeners told Alice that the Queen had ordered them to do so. Alice felt it was a bad idea. She decided to stop the Queen from doing this.

Instructions : (1) Use as much English as possible when discussing the script. (2) Rehearse your script when you have completed it (3) Perform your script when you are ready to do so.

Marks awarded for: (a) creativity (b) language accuracy in writing (c) observation of English used in discussion

# In the Classroom

## Drama in Project-Based Learning

**James Carpenter**

**FORWARD English School for Change**

**James\_c@ltrs.co.jp**

### **Abstract**

*This paper describes a student-centered project-based language learning approach currently practiced at an English language school in Japan. The approach focuses on the creation and performance of original dramas as part of a school festival held every six months. These dramas are written and staged entirely by students. Instructors are responsible for providing language support and content feedback. Assessments are handled through peer and self-assessment based on criteria developed in consultation with instructors. While there are a number of important empirical questions about both project-based learning generally and this learning approach specifically that need to be addressed, the learning approach outlined here provides a good organizing frame for incorporating drama into more rigorous, student-centered project-based language courses in a variety of contexts, e.g., elementary, high school, or university English language courses.*



The present paper describes an approach to using drama as the basis for project-based learning (PBL) courses. First, PBL is described in terms of a dialectic relationship between course content and language tasks. Then, this relationship is situated in the context of student centered learning: specifically a distributed view of language learning and a negotiated syllabus. Then, drama is introduced as the primary course content, and a general structure for the course is given. After this, a list of ten principles for those interested in developing a similar course is given. Finally, implications and future directions for a course of this type are discussed.

The instructional approach described here is currently practiced at an English language school in Tokyo. The school serves approximately 300 hundred students aged 15 to 80 years old. The majority of students are university educated and currently working fulltime jobs. Under the school's curriculum, students generally take a public speaking class, a pronunciation class, an elective class focusing on one of the four macro-skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and a PBL course. All students are required to take PBL courses. These courses last approximately six months, and serve as the foundation of the curriculum. The content of each course focuses on presentation, debate, or original student dramas.

## **Project-based Learning**

Any discussion of PBL must begin with a discussion of content-based instruction (CBI) and task-based language teaching (TBLT). As noted by Stoller (2006), successful PBL will accommodate student-centered learning focused around a long-term set of tasks that lead to a concrete final product. This final product emerges from a synthesis of the language and content knowledge acquired during the project's development. Therefore, a successful PBL course will use both CBI and TBLT syllabi as primary points of departure. In this way, PBL may be understood in terms of the tasks that lead to the project's completion, and the content that focuses those tasks.

The instructional approach described here generally assumes the definition of language learning 'task' laid out by Ellis (2003) as "activities that call for meaning-focused language use" (p. 3). Meaning is primary because a successful task will naturally focus students around the language needed to accommodate the cognitive processes within the task. This may be contrasted with the more form-focused instruction first articulated by Long (1991) as explicit attention to grammatical language forms. Unlike form-focused instruction,

the tasks in the instructional approach described here determine the language forms emphasized in class; the language forms do not themselves determine the types of tasks that are done.

PBL may be understood as a series of tasks that act as steps towards the completion of the project. This means that the content of each task must be related to one another. In this context, content means the overarching topic or focus of the class. Because the focus of a PBL course is the completion of a project, the course must make a dual commitment to both the language skills and the content knowledge needed to complete the project successfully (Stoller, 2006). CBI generally refers to courses that balance non-language content instruction with the language needed to work with that content effectively (Stoller, 2008). In this way, PBL is a natural extension of CBI because the tasks within the project are sequenced to facilitate students' deep understanding of the content (Stoller, 1997).

However, it would be inaccurate to say that explicit attention to language forms is not a central concern in PBL. Rather, it is the ways in which students identify the specific language forms they learn that makes PBL distinct. That is, the relationship between tasks and content determine the language forms that are taught. This relationship may be understood in terms of Folse's (2006) distinction between the language forms *for* a task and the language forms *in* a task. In the context of this distinction, the language needed to complete the tasks within the project constitute the language forms for the task, while the language forms necessary to understand and show knowledge of the content constitute the language in the task. A successful PBL course will balance CBI and TBLT elements with an appropriate commitment to these language forms.

In the author's experience, the language necessary to complete the task requires explicit teacher support. This includes providing vocabulary, some grammar, appropriate content readings, and other media with support activities. For example, in one recent project that focused on the musical *Les Miserables*, students were given support through vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation instruction in order to help them discuss the staging of the drama in meaningful terms. This support constituted the language for a task or the TBLT element within the course. However, the teacher did not dictate the way students staged the drama—which constituted the language in the task or the CBI element of the course. Instead, the CBI elements were decided through student-centered learning activities.

## **Student-centered Learning as Distributed Learning**

As noted above, the CBI element of a PBL course is focused around the content of the project. However, the instructional approach outlined here assumes a student-centered

orientation to this content. Generally, student-centered learning can refer to any number of instructional practices that represent a contradistinction from what may be conceptualized as teacher-fronted or teacher-directed classrooms (Stoller, 2006). In this context, student-centered learning refers to course content organized around a negotiated syllabus. According to Nation and Macalister (2010), a negotiated syllabus allows students to decide elements of the course design. This can include learning objectives, topics covered in class, or methods of assessment.

The instructional approach outlined here adopts a negotiated syllabus based on the assumption that language learning is a distributed process. This means that language is always context specific, with context being rooted in what Thibault (2011) calls first-order and second-order languaging. The term ‘languaging’ refers to the emergence of language in response to both the physical environment and the other language users therein. First-order languaging emerges in real time relative to the immediate environment. Second-order languaging emerges relative to the value systems and creativity of each language user. In other words, first-order languaging is the language involved in the completion of a task, while second-order languaging interprets the meaning of the task for each individual. Second-order languaging causes first order languaging because an individual learner’s value system determines how they interpret the task they are completing.

This instructional approach assumes that when first-order and second-order languaging are brought into alignment, successful language learning can occur. However, such alignment is only possible if students can engage meaningfully in language tasks that are both immediately challenging and allow them to bring their personal value systems and creativity to bear (Zheng, 2012). In the instructional approach outlined here, the negotiated syllabus effectively integrates second-order languaging into the course by allowing students to determine the content and the learning objectives entirely by themselves. The teacher integrates first-order languaging into the course by determining the format of the project, the tasks required to complete it, and the language support needed for the task.

### ***Self-assessment***

Naturally the question arises: how can a negotiated syllabus like this be effectively assessed? At present, the instructional approach outlined here relies on ‘can-do statements’ as its primary form of language assessment. Can-do statements are essentially succinct declarative sentences that represent a certain level of language ability (e.g. “I can answer simple predictable questions”) (ALTE, 2002). These statements are then self-evaluated as true or false at the end of a course of study, in consultation with the instructor. In the context of

both a negotiated syllabus and the instructional approach outlined here, these statements are devised entirely by students and self-evaluated at the end of the project.

It should be noted here that traditionally the content of a negotiated syllabus was only partially decided by students (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Particularly in institutional settings where the quantitative assessment of carefully defined learning objectives is central to the curriculum, a negotiated syllabus where content and objectives are chosen entirely by students may seem both radical and untenable. However, these are empirical questions that require investigation beyond the scope of this paper.

### ***The Teacher's Role***

As noted above, while the students have primary control over determining the content of the project, the teacher is responsible for directing students through the completion of project-related tasks. Practically speaking, this involves setting clear deadlines and providing feedback on student progress. In terms of language feedback, the instructional approach outlined here can be loosely associated with Community Language Learning (CLL) (LaForge, 1971), in the sense that the teacher remains on the periphery of the classroom while students engage in project tasks, and only offers language feedback in order to ease student communication. Another similarity with CLL is that the bulk of teacher feedback comes at the end of class, after students have completed their project tasks.

### **Drama as the Content for Project-based Learning**

As Kawakami (2012) has observed, the language tasks involved in drama are challenging by nature. Like PBL, a drama project requires students to work collaboratively through a series of tasks towards the concrete outcome of performing the drama on stage. In the instructional approach outlined here, these tasks generally include: (1) choosing a premise for a drama, (2) presenting that premise to other students and faculty as part of a 'mini-presentation,' (3) deciding on roles for the staging and performance of the drama, (4) writing the script, staging, and lighting plans, (5) revising the script and rehearsing, and finally (6) performing the drama live on stage.

It is here that a distinction must be drawn between drama as the basis for PBL, and drama exercises as part of a traditional language class. Kobayashi (2012) observed that drama exercises are different from drama as it is described here because drama exercises do not culminate in a live performance. If drama is used as the basis for a course, but that course does not culminate in a presentation of student work, then it is not a PBL course. This is not to negate the many benefits of using drama exercises in a language course, but in order for

drama to serve as the basis for a PBL course, there must be a culminating project.

### **Student Roles**

In order to facilitate the completion of the project, and to give students a sense of personal investment in the process, it can be helpful to create a number of roles and responsibilities as part of the instructional approach outlined here. The roles are typically related to the tasks necessary for the completion of the project, and can include: (1) a group leader and at least two sub-leaders who work with the teacher to guide other members through project tasks, (2) a director, (3) a script writing team, (4) a staging team which is responsible for props, costume design, sound effects, and lighting, and (5) the actors who perform the drama. These roles are salient, and often students will take on multiple roles throughout the course of the project. In addition to these roles, every class meeting has a facilitator who prepares the agenda for the day, and a minutes writer, who takes attendance and notes what was covered in class. Students who are new to this instructional approach are assigned a mentor, who can guide them through each of these roles.

### **10 Principles for Implementing this Approach**

Based on the above discussion, 10 key principles appear to be necessary for the successful implementation of this type of course. These elements are:

1. The drama should be broken down into a series of tasks that lead to a final performance.
2. Explicit language instruction should be incidental; i.e., the tasks naturally determine the language forms taught—language forms do not determine the nature of the tasks.
3. The content of the drama and the ways in which students approach the tasks in producing the drama should be completely determined by students.
4. Learning objectives should be determined entirely by students.
5. Can-do statements should be written by students at the beginning of the course in order to assess their learning objectives, and reviewed in consultation with the teacher at the end of the course.
6. The teacher should provide clear deadlines for each of the tasks involved in producing the drama.
7. The teacher should remain on the periphery of the classroom, and contribute language feedback during discussions only when necessary to clarify meaning.

8. The teacher should give substantive language and content feedback at the end of every class.
9. Students should work with the teacher to design specific roles and responsibilities in the service of producing the drama (i.e., leader, director, minutes writer).
10. Every class should be run by a student facilitator and documented by a student minutes writer.

## **Conclusion**

As Stoller (2006) noted, support for PBL is largely anecdotal and more empirical research is needed. This instructional approach is even more anecdotal in that support for negotiated syllabi, distributed views of language, self-assessment, and the efficacy of drama as a basis for language learning are largely untested areas within the field of TESOL and Applied Linguistics. Yet, personal testimonies of success abound among educators who have implemented any combination of these elements into their classrooms, and so there is no reason to believe that empirical studies looking at the efficacy of one or all of the elements in this instructional approach cannot or should not be done.

Specifically, there is an urgent need for experimental studies that measure project-based learning in terms of specific language learning outcomes. The same can be said for negotiated syllabi at all levels of teacher involvement. Lastly, while measures of self-assessment such as can-do statements seem to necessarily preclude any formalized third party assessment measures, studies are still necessary to establish correlations between self-assessment outcomes and the formal learning objectives often required by institutions and tests. It is only through studies of this type that instructional approaches like the one outlined here can gain broader acceptance among stakeholders across language learning communities and contexts.

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# JOESC

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## Theme

### **'Bonds - Kizuna'**

Entrants make a 2-minute  
video recording of their  
speech and submit it to the  
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Winners will be announced  
in November.

## Categories

- High School
- University students
- Special High school
- Special University
- Adult Free-for-all

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Great prizes for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and  
3<sup>rd</sup> place in each category!

Certificate of participation  
and practical feedback for  
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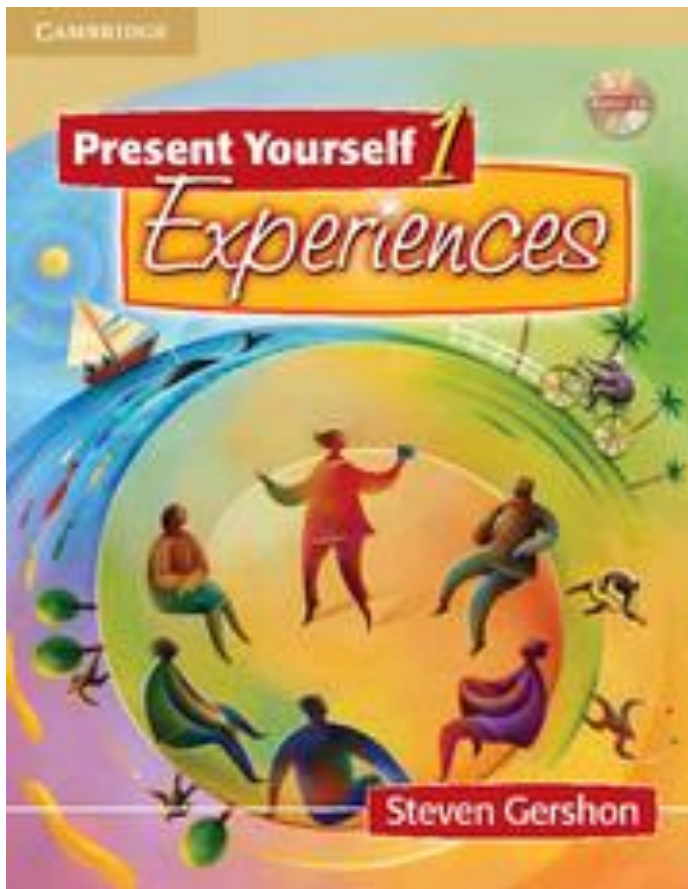
*Prizes kindly donated by SDD  
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## Entry Details

For details on how to enter  
go to:  
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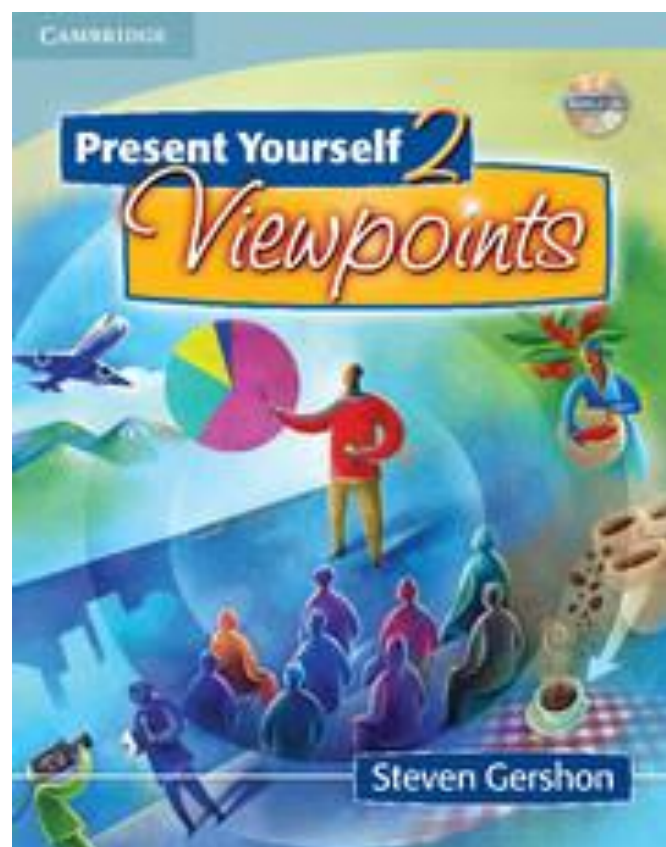






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# My View

## **Towards a Merit-Based Award System for Speech Contests**

***Matthew Shannon***

***Saitama JALT; Saitama City Board of Education***

***mailmatt@gmail.com***

***www.matthewshannon.net***

**I**t is a struggle to enjoy the municipal speech contests which my school is a part of. I know that only seven candidates of any competition will have their work recognized in the form of a certificate and award ceremony, regardless of effort invested, while the rest are left to wonder what more they could have done. As everyone knows that the judging varies from year to year, and region to region, there's very little comfort for our students, teachers, and extended English community that those who worked hardest for their laurels did in fact earn them. Considering that the role of these speech contests is to foster and develop the English skills and expressions that are unfortunately missing from many schools, it seems a very poor model to follow for the future. I would like to suggest we instead look towards the pedagogy associated with badges, training certificates, and other merit-based systems.

### **A Lack of Clarity and Consistency**

The current public school system which students and teachers are familiar with provides few rules, an empty rubric that lacks detail on what is meant by “composition” or “delivery,” and no supporting documents to recommend best-practices for participants,

coaches, or judges. It does, however take, pains to state who may or may not participate based on ethnicity—and I do mean, “may not participate”—students with parents from English-speaking countries are simply banned from participation in their third year. I cannot speak to the origin of this document, but the effect upon first-time coaches and administration is not one of awe and inspiration with the program. The effect upon eighth-timers like myself is appropriately morose.

There are two fields of competition which may be entered in the national speech contest. The first, Recitation, requires students to recite a passage of their choosing from their English textbook. First-year students may participate with a partner from their school, while second-year students must perform alone. The second category, Composition, asks students from the second- or third-year of junior high school to create an original speech. There is no differentiation between second- or third-year participants in this category. Here is the entirety of the information relayed to the majority of judges for both formats of the speech contest:

Pronunciation	50%
Delivery	50%
Time Limit	3:00

**Figure 1. Recitation Competition Scoring Chart**

Pronunciation	30%
Delivery	30%
Composition	40%
Time Limit	5:00

**Figure 2. Composition Competition Scoring Chart**

While I am hopeful that other regions expound upon this scoring guide, neither I nor my teaching staff have seen evidence to support the hope. There seems to be little institutional memory that the previous year was spent with two or more judges sitting at a table asking “what does composition mean?” or at least little agency to address these continued problems.

For those unfamiliar with the speech contest, here are actual issues associated with the current scoring system:

- What manner of deduction should be associated with a deviation from native-English pronunciation? 1 point each? a sliding scale?
- Is the pronounced *tone* of their utterances scored under pronunciation, or under delivery?
- How should one score a student with a systematic speech error (or impediment)? Is a speech with systematic *th*- pronunciation to be scored higher or lower than a speech with fewer overall errors, but a greater variety of errors?
- Is there any allowance for students with non-native accents of words, but otherwise accurate pronunciations? Is the word “ceremony” rendered as “serimo-ni” to be scored as equal to or greater/less than a non-accented pronunciation error?
- What is an appropriate gesture? (Last year we gave that kid top marks who gestured kicking a soccer ball around, but what should we give this year’s fisherman and ballet dancer?)
- What am I supposed to do with “composition”? How should I grade this boring, grammatically correct speech, versus this compelling but poorly formatted and rendered speech? Can I deduct points from the seven speeches this year titled *My Dream* for not considering their audience?

As a result of a lack of a specific rubric, there is no consistency in scoring habits over time, little faith that there is consistent scoring by region, and accordingly there is no opportunity for students or teachers to apply the rubric at any point in their training. Furthermore, despite having multiple judges, there is rarely any critical feedback able to be afforded to the student or their coaches regarding their speech. In cases of speeches judged by both Japanese nationals and native English speakers, this lack of clarity creates a gulf rather than an understanding—many, many times I have seen judges from these groups arrive at very different interpretations of the day’s performances, with an opportunity for improved understanding between them often defaulting into “well, that’s okay I guess, but I really disagree with you.” The effects of the system’s ambiguity are profound, with maybe the only positive thing being that finding and “training” judges is no headache for speech contest organizers. This ambiguity is unacceptable.

## **Few Winners**

While it is clear that the criteria for judging winners is in need of restructuring, it must also be seen how few winners the system produces. Generally, participants may advance to the next round of competition if they are part of the top seven of their competition level; this means seven individual students or student pairs for first year recitation, seven students for second-year recitation, and seven second- and third-year students for the original composition contest. These seven winners come from an already small (and non-uniform) sample of the total student body. Each school can only send up to five participants, whether they are a school of 200 or a school of 1100. Consider that in the B-Block competition of my city, which draws from Urawa, Omiya, Kita, and Minami wards of Saitama (with respective populations of 150,408; 109,681; 140,528; 175,794 (“さいたま市”, 2014)) for the composition category, exactly seven students are going to be awarded any sort of official recognition for their efforts in creating and executing an original L2 speech in front of peers and strangers, an undertaking which easily takes upwards of 20 hours of time outside of their regular duties as a student.

This lack of total opportunities for a student’s work to be recognized, combined with a general lack of satisfaction in the scoring process, lead to very few winners indeed.

## **Effects on Training/The Tremendously Bad Effects on Training**

As it is simply the case that the greatest factor of a student’s success in the speech contest is if a judge “likes it,” very few of the teaching staff are interested in throwing their full weight behind the effort of training—it is impossible for any of them to “teach for the test” in this case. This uninterested relation with the program is easily seen in stark contrast to the levels of involvement for every other sports or competition-based club or event. This once again puts an English-related activity into that special category of irregular, unfamiliar, and incomprehensible activity.

Ironically, the absence of a clear rubric increases the demand for direct instruction from coaches (English teachers and Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs)). As stated earlier, as teachers are structurally unable to determine how best to coach their students towards success (and are unable to see a likely return on their investment of time), it is often the case that the yoke of speech contest training will fall on ALTs, individuals who are rarely if ever specially trained, interested, or compensated for their involvement. It is entirely possible for an ALT to train students counter to the preferences of the judges, just as it is possible for them to “do a good job.”

There are further opportunities for bad habits. Currently, students are asked to “write their own speech,” which might mean students compose their speech in English, that they may produce a rough draft in Japanese and conference with teachers until they arrive at a translation together, or the all-too-common “translation” by teacher, in which a perfectly and fantastically arrived-at version of the student’s original is produced by virtue of an ALT or English teacher. Even the second option tends to lean in favor of a glut of teacher corrections, with some edification on general meaning provided by the student. In most cases, you will find no culture of self-correction develop—the lack of a clear rubric or guideline does nothing to help, while even the most basic, critical rubric can help a teacher ask, “Have you checked your speech manuscript?” As self-corrected errors are found to be some of the least likely to be repeated (Riddell, 2001, p. 152), we should actively pursue such natural opportunities to foster and develop the skills and attitudes inherent in self-editing and awareness. As the system stands now, these teacher translations help support a system of thinking that says, “Japanese students aren’t good at English.”

### **Towards Merit-Based Achievement**

The simplest way to think of how we might better promote skills, train students, and recognize their achievements is by thinking of scouting organizations and merit badges. Such organizations also look to promote a set of skills, attitudes, and relationships between young learners and an established field. Additionally, they also attempt to do so across a spectrum of ability, incomes, and awareness of the topic, and do so in a way that not only recognizes an individual’s merit, but do so without being at the expense of others’ recognition. The system is comprised of an achievement-based rubric, a method to check that rubric (in the form of an adult supervisor-teacher), and an award showing completion of the rubric. In scope and application, we can borrow this model for our own use, satisfying our need for a rubric, resolving the issue of a culture of poor training, and recognize students far in excess of seven individuals per category per competition per year.

Here is a proposal for five core skills interpreted through this model that aim to improve English attitudes and abilities with specific attention paid to composition, performance, and relationships. (See Figure 3) They are modeled after can-do statements which are becoming the preferred form of assessment under MEXT. This rubric’s values and tasks are based on many conversations with other judges, English teachers, and students, but are by no means comprehensive.

### **Composition**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Student can create a speech utilizing an opening, body, and ending format.                       |
| 2 | Student can assess their own composition for proper capitalization, punctuation, and formatting. |
| 3 | Student can request help in editing their speech from an English educator or speaker.            |
| 4 | Student can correct their composition based on suggestions or advice from their editor.          |
| 5 | Student can produce a speech which can be said to inform, persuade, or amuse.                    |
| 6 | Student can compose a speech reflective of their interests, experiences, opinions, or future.    |

### **Non-Verbal Delivery**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Student can utilize gestures which are not explicit/literal in execution.  |
| 2 | Student can deliver a speech with regular frequency of gestures.   |
| 3 | Student can utilize gestures which are brief in duration.  |
| 4 | Student can present themselves with proper posture and an absence of idle shifting of weight, movement of hands, or nodding. |
| 5 | Student can present with an expression natural and appropriate to their content.   |

### **Vocal Delivery**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Student can project their voice so as to be clearly understood by a listener 25m away.                         |
| 2 | Student can recover from an error in delivery (mispronunciation, forgetting a line, etc.) without self-remarks |
| 3 | Student can utilize intonation at the word and sentence level to appropriately reflect content.                |
| 4 | Student can utilize speed of delivery to appropriately reflect content.  |
| 5 | Student can practice to the extent that their rehearsals are free of delivery errors.                          |

<b>Pronunciation</b>	
1	Student can assess their own performance through recording of their own speeches.
2	Student can deliver pronunciation with accurate long and short vowel sounds.
3	Student can accurately produce Th, B, P, V, and F sounds.
4	Student can accurately produce L and R sounds.
5	Student can improve their pronunciation of specific words with the assistance of a coach or teacher.
6	Student can utilize phonological training (to include tongue/mouth/teeth diagrams) to improve their pronunciation

**Figure 3. Proposed Rubric for Five Core Speech Skills**

There are immediate points to be addressed in this proposal—should language as simple as “Th, B, P, V, and F sounds” be used when phonetically accurate terms and characters exist to best represent this? In developing this paper and list, it was clear that the forms most widely understood are the most likely to be of benefit. It is the case that, given the current culture surrounding speech contests, a teacher may not invest the time to understand what a nasal plosive is, and how to improve upon its pronunciation. However, there is no confusion when “L and R sounds” are referenced. As such, this list was crafted simply in attempt to reflect language that is the most practical, rather than language that is the most accurate.

Additionally, this list does not make recommendations on how to assess speeches in competition by points—it’s still the case that we have not arrived at a decision for which is more harmful, a systematic Th- error, or several unrelated errors, but it does divide the criteria into smaller portions, and I would advise that one failure in an element of one checklist not weigh so heavily as to invalidate other areas of positive assessment within the same list.

Further points of contention are the choice to break “delivery” into verbal and non-verbal components, the choice to be decidedly less than comprehensive in pronunciation issues, and the demand to ask students to record their own speeches. These are worthwhile conversations to have, but smaller points than the scope of this paper.

### **Application of the Rubric/Can-Do List**

For the majority of the list, participants can reliably determine whether or not they have indeed met the abilities set forth by the assessment. In all cases, the can-do list



assessments should be checked and verified by the student's English teacher or coach, providing both guidance for the teacher, and a context for a functional relationship between two people regarding the common language of English. Upon successful completion of this rubric, as verified by their English teacher, it should be sufficient for speech contest administrators or school officials to present a certificate or award signifying the student's competence and labors towards English and self-improvement, suitable for recognition before their peers at opening ceremonies or other school meetings.

Such a system would finally recognize the efforts of tens of thousands of young students, help develop relationships in English and with English, and would foster the skills of self-awareness, performance, editing, and phonological improvement that the current system aims to improve, but fails to achieve.

## **Conclusion**

As the adoption of this system would require little extra more than several meetings to adopt a set rubric, photocopies and web hosting to make that rubric available to students and teachers, and time and paper for all those additional awards, it seems that this is a fair price to pay for the likely benefits.

For judges and administrators of speech contests, adopting a merit-based achievement system would be a first step to resolving the issues of an inability to "teach for the test," consistency between schools and different years, and issues on how to interpret that grand soccer gesture from a few years ago.

It is the hope of this author that the adoption of merit-based assessment systems leads to an escalation in quality, which in turn would drive further discussions on just what to do with all these high-performing students.

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# Book Review

## Speaking of Speech, New Edition

[David Harrington and Charles LeBeau. Oxford: Macmillan LanguageHouse. 2009. 118 p. ¥2,500. **ISBN:** 978-4-7773-6271-4. Level: TOEIC 400-550, CEFR A1-A2.]

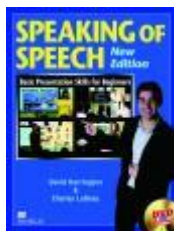
Reviewed by David Kluge, Nanzan Junior College, Nanzan University

Before 1996, for teachers wanting to teach the basics of speech to Japanese students there were only a few options: choose a speech textbook created for native speakers of English, choose a speech textbook created for ESL students, choose a textbook created for the Japanese market, create your own speech textbook, or choose not to use a textbook. Looking at textbooks created for native speakers, it was clear that the level of the explanations was too high for most if not all Japanese students. The same is true of textbooks created for ESL students, many of whom have gone to English language institutes attached to universities, then passed the language requirement to enter universities. Textbooks created for the Japanese market were often uninteresting in content and activities. It was a lot of work for teachers to create a textbook or handouts for the class.



Then, in 1996, Macmillan LanguageHouse released a book called *Speaking of Speech*, written by David Harrington and Charles LeBeau, and illustrated by Ty Semeca. The sub-title was “Basic Presentation Skills for Beginners,” and it was just that. It had a simple organization: the physical message (how to stand and give a speech), the story message (how to arrange the contents of the speech), and the visual message (at that time this meant the use of audio-visual aids like charts and posters). It had little text, and the text was in easy-to-understand English. Instead of long explanations, the book used many clear, humorous illustrations. The activities were interesting and useful. It was the book that many speech teachers had been waiting for, and they purchased the book.

However, while using the book, the teachers found some weak points: it only taught two speeches—an informational speech and a persuasive speech, although there were many interesting illustrations, it contained no color and so was not visually appealing to students, and there were no sample speeches for students to use as models. Teachers either supplemented the textbook, used it as a resource book, or reluctantly abandoned it.



Thirteen years later, in 2009, these deficiencies were addressed in *Speaking of Speech, New Edition*. In terms of layout, it became full color, with many photos (see Figure 1) added to the entertaining color illustrations (see Figure 2), making this a very attractive book.

**Step 1 INTRODUCE:**  
First, *introduce* the chart. Tell the audience what kind of chart it is.



"This bar graph shows monthly sales from January to October."

Figure 1. Photos

**Problem 1:** Standing in front of visual and blocking the audience's view.

**Solution:** Stand off to the side.

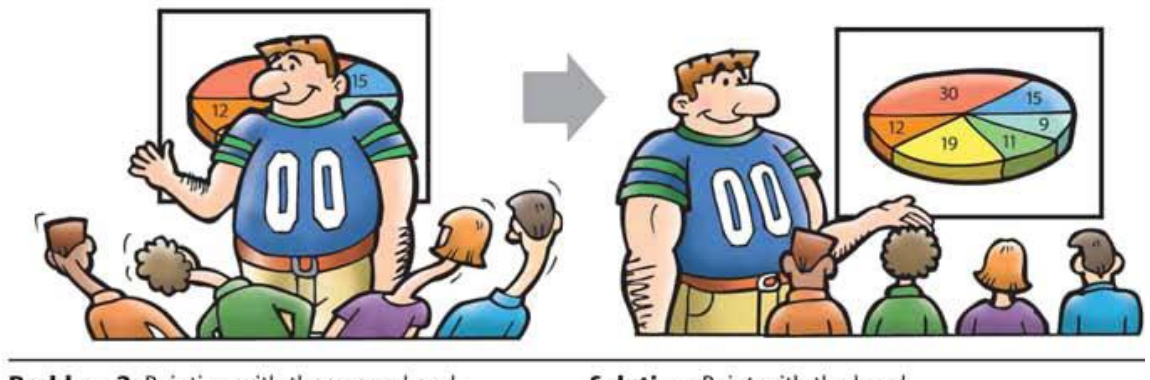


Figure 2. Interesting Color Illustrations

The number and types of speeches taught increased to five speeches: an informative speech, a descriptive speech, a demonstration speech, and two comparison speeches. There is a

teacher's manual that includes answers to the activities, teaching tips, and the audioscript. Most importantly, a DVD of model speeches was bundled with the book. How useful is the new edition? After using it for two and a half years in classes for first and second year English majors at the university level, here are some observations.

The layout, as was mentioned above, includes interesting color illustrations and photos and is appealing, but that is expected of textbooks these days. The activities, which at first glance seem a little too simple, are actually quite useful and interesting to students, many of whom are perhaps preparing and giving a speech in English for the first time. (Remember that this book teaches the basics of speech and is aimed at a low English level audience.) Students enthusiastically do the activities. The activities are extremely well thought-out and are easy for teacher and students to comprehend what to do.

The original concept of dividing the act of giving a speech into three areas (physical, story, and visual) is retained in the new edition and remains an appropriate and comprehensible format for teachers to teach speech, and for students to comprehend what they have to do to give a good speech. The book includes checklists to remind students of important elements and steps, and at the back of the book there are photocopiable evaluation sheets. Of course, teachers can choose to adapt the evaluation sheets, or even create and use their own.

One modification to the visual message section of the book is that instead of referring to audio-visual aids like posters and charts, the book now refers to slides that reflects the move away from paper posters to computer presentation software to create presentations. A whole new section deals with what to avoid while using such software, and how to use the software to create good presentations. Of course, teachers can choose to still have students use paper posters instead of presentation software, as the advice in the new section can mostly be applicable to the non-digital audio-visual aid.

One of the most valuable components is the DVD that is bundled with the student textbook. It is a professionally-created DVD with extremely high production values. It presents a model of each kind of speech. It highlights the important parts of the speech that is being taught. Some students laugh at some of the reactions of the audience, especially some of the reactions of the guys to comments by the female presenters, but this is a minor defect, and does not significantly alter the teaching value of the DVD. The DVD comes with an English subtitle option, which is useful for all students. Rather than providing only a teacher's DVD, the bundled DVD allows students to view the model speech when they need to and as many times as they want to see it.

One problem with the original *Speaking of Speech* book that still remains in the new

edition is how the three basic messages (physical, visual, and story) are presented. All three messages are presented on the first page of the textbook (p. 5), which is fine. However, for students to learn much about the visual message, they have to wait until they prepare their third presentation. That is, they have already presented two speeches without having the benefit of the good advice regarding the visual message. The same is true regarding the story message. Students have to wait until they are finished with the fourth speech before they learn how to craft a good story (how to put the information together in the speech) for the fifth and last presentation.. Teachers can deal with this “defect” by some judicious jumping around in the textbook to provide the necessary advice for the physical, visual, and story messages for all five presentations. The DVD model speech helps in this regard, as advice about the visual and story messages can be given to students while they view the DVD in class.

*Speaking of Speech, New Edition* is an excellent textbook to teach basic speech for university students of all levels, even CEF B1 to C1 (which is intermediate to near-native level). Teachers who are interested can download the table of contents and some sample pages from

<http://www.mlh.co.jp/catalog/product.php?la=en&i=617&openedtag=0> and can see a video by one of the authors at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04nBzIk6W18>. Sample copies of the book can be requested from Macmillan LanguageHouse. In 2013 Macmillan came out with a DIGIBOOK version of the book so that students and teachers can use a digital copy of the book and not have to bring the paper book to class. Macmillan does warn that people who download an illegal copy of the book from the Internet are liable for criminal action (Halliday, 2014). For students who have already used *Speaking of Speech, New Edition* there are books like Powell’s (2011) *Presenting in English: How to Give Successful Presentations* (see the 2012 review by Miles) and textbooks by other publishers, but for those teachers who have appreciated the approach of *Speaking of Speech, New Edition*, there is good news—Macmillan has announced that *Speaking of Speech Book Two* will be coming out in November, ready for the JALT International Conference.

For teachers in 2014 there are still the same options as in 1996, choose a speech textbook created for native speakers of English, choose a speech textbook created for ESL students, choose a textbook created for the Japanese market, create your own speech textbook, or choose not to use a textbook, but it is fortunate that teachers have *Speaking of Speech, New Edition* to teach basic presentation skills.

*Special thanks to Darren Halliday of Macmillan LanguageHouse for allowing use of graphics from the book.*

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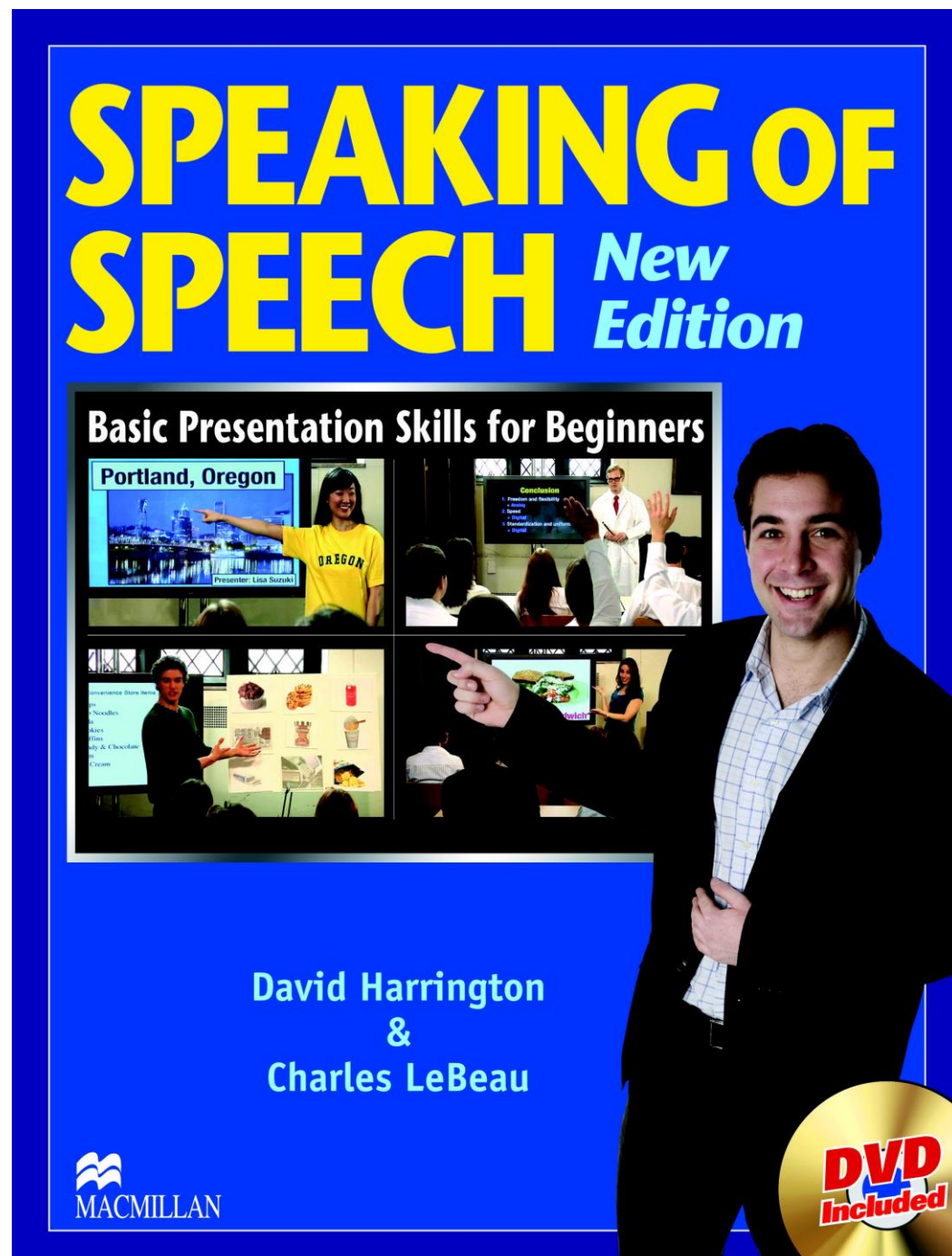
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The Speech, Drama, and Debate SIG would like to thank Macmillan LanguageHouse for their continued support of our events and speakers. You can find their excellent materials for speech and presentations at <http://www.mlh.co.jp/>





## Call for Papers for *Mask & Gavel*, the publication of the Speech, Drama, and Debate SIG

We are now open for submissions for the second edition of the third volume of *Mask and Gavel*, a peer-reviewed publication of the Speech, Drama, and Debate SIG. We welcome the following kinds of submissions:

1. Research articles on topics connected to the themes of our SIG, speech, drama and debate. (For submission guidelines please refer to the guidelines for the Feature Articles section of *The Language Teacher*.) Submissions for research articles will be read by two referees who will make a decision on whether the article can be accepted for publication, as is or with rewriting.
2. Practical or opinion articles on topics connected to the themes of our SIG. (For submission guidelines please refer to the guidelines for the Reader's Forum section of *The Language Teacher*.)
3. Conference, workshop, and book reviews. (For submission guidelines please refer to the guidelines for the Conference Reports section of *The Language Teacher*.)

Submission guidelines for *The Language Teacher* can be found at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/submissions>.

Submissions should be sent to the editor, Paul Nehls, at <nehls@yokohama-cu.ac.jp>.

\* *Mask & Gavel* is a peer-reviewed journal and submissions will be sent to two anonymous reviewers from the review board.

