

THE MASK

&

GAVEL



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Contents

Messages

Chris Lyons (Journal Editor)	p. 3
Gordon Rees (Coordinator)	p. 3

Feature Articles

Philip Head	Student and Teacher Views on English Language Speech Contests in Japan	p. 5
David Kluge	Performance-Assisted Learning: A Proposal	p. 30
Gordon Rees	What is Reader's Theatre and can it be Used Effectively in Large EFL Classes?	p. 38
Jason White	Andragogy in Action: Drama Techniques for Adult Learning	p. 53

In the Classroom

Mikaela Smith	Connecting Reading to Speaking & Listening Through Debate	p. 69
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Messages from the Editor and Coordinator

Chris Lyons (Editor)

It is my pleasure to introduce the sixth volume of the *Mask & Gavel*. This issue boasts a variety of articles showcasing performance-assisted learning (PAL) and some techniques that can help bring drama to the classroom. **Philip Head** leads our Featured Article section with a thorough study on what contributes to student and teacher motivation for junior high school speech contests. Our next paper by **David Kluge** describes what performance-assisted learning is, and works hard to dispel some preconceived misconceptions about it by providing excellent resources any teacher can incorporate into their classes. Continuing with PAL, **Gordon Rees** delivers a heartfelt article about Reader's Theatre, and details his own experience and method for using the activity in his own teaching. **Jason White** then makes a strong case for using drama techniques with adult students, and how it applies to andragogy and adult learning. Volume six then wraps up with **Mikaela Smith's** practical classroom debate guide which connects reading to speaking and listening skills.

This is my first issue of M&G as editor, and I want to thank everyone involved in assisting with its completion, especially the other staff who volunteered their time to review articles or assist with copy-editing and proofreading. Together we have created a quality publication that we can be proud of. In particular, I would like to thank the Speech, Drama, & Debate SIG Publications Co-Chair, Philip Head, for acting as my mentor and helping with all of my questions. I also want to thank the authors for working to provide fresh, useful, and interesting content for this issue, and for having patience with the publication process. Please enjoy reading these articles, and may you feel inspired to utilize some of the ideas in them in your own teaching and development.

Gordon Rees (Coordinator)

The *Mask & Gavel* staff and contributing authors have worked hard to put together a high quality, new edition that the SD&D SIG can be proud of. I would like to say thank you to all those people who were involved in the effort and who worked hard to make this publication possible. The sixth volume is very well balanced with a total of five articles, two related to drama, one each on debate and speech, and one on performance-assisted learning which encompasses all three fields. In this edition you will find a good mix of theory along with practical examples of ways to implement speech, drama, and debate into the language classroom. So, buckle your seatbelt and get ready to enjoy an intellectually stimulating ride into the fascinating world of speech, drama, and debate in English language teaching!

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Student and Teacher Views on English Language Speech Contests in Japan

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Abstract

English language speech contests are popular in Japanese junior and senior high schools, bringing prestige to winning students' schools and aiding winners to gain admission to university (Nishikawa-Van Eester, 2009). As a result, students and teachers devote a great deal of effort practicing for these high-stakes contests. However, there has been very little research examining what motivates students, especially pre-university ones, to join speech contests or how students feel about their experience of participating. In this study, 25 high school and 73 junior high school speech contest participants completed anonymous surveys (including both Likert-type quantitative questions and qualitative open response questions) examining two areas. The first is the reasons students join speech contests (e.g., to win a prize), and the second is students' overall experience of the contest itself (e.g., was it stressful?). In addition, 36 teachers of speech contest participants were asked why they felt their students joined the contests and their impressions of their students' experiences in order to look for any differences between teacher impressions and the reported experiences of the students. The two surveys showed that both students and teachers felt the most important reason for students joining speech contests, in order of ranking, was a desire for personal growth, followed by self-expression, improving English communication skills, making social connections, and winning a prize. The fact that winning a prize was considered the least important reason to participate indicates that these students were primarily intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated to compete. Regarding the second question, the overall experience of participating in a speech contest was positive for students, with the majority enjoying the contest and wishing to repeat the experience. In addition, students reported feeling more confident in their public speaking as a result of participation, as well as having made improvements in their English

communication abilities. The most surprising result is that students do not consider the experience to be stressful, although outside observers such as teachers may perceive that it was the opposite. Overall, we can conclude that speech contests are a generally positive experience with many benefits for students who participate, thus justifying the heavy time commitment involved for both students and teachers.

English language speech contests have long been popular in Japan, particularly at the junior high and high school level. Contests are held multiple times a year at the school, prefectural, or national level. Speeches are commonly performed by individual students, but depending on the particular contest, speeches can also be done by pairs or small groups.

Speech contests are typically categorized as recitations or original speech contests. Recitations involve students memorizing and presenting a passage from a pre-written source (sometimes slightly modified), often from a class textbook. As a result, recitations often feature multiple presentations of the same passage by different students, and in fact, some contests (such as the Zensho Trophy for commercial high school students) provide a pre-selected set of written passages from which students must choose. In contrast, original speeches are (in principle) written by the students and reflect their own ideas and experiences. These speeches require extra commitment from students due to the additional writing stage and are often perceived as more prestigious than recitations. This can be inferred by the fact that the H.I.H. Prince Takamado Trophy (a nation-wide contest for junior high school students), allows three original speech contestants from each prefecture to proceed to the national competition, but recitation contestants are limited to the prefectural level (JNSA, 2017).

Regardless of the type of speech, it must be memorized by the students. Speeches often have a strict time limit (5 minutes in the case of H.I.H. Prince Takamado Trophy) and students can be penalized for exceeding the limit (JNSA, 2017). Speeches are typically evaluated by multiple judges, including both native and non-native English speakers, who will confer before announcing the final results. The judges may award points for specific aspects of a speech (such as content, English, and delivery in the case of H.I.H. Prince Takamado Trophy), often using rating scales to

ensure consistency between judges, although this is not always possible (see Venema, 2013), or they may rank contestants based on their general impression of the speech.

Speech contests can provide many tangible benefits to winning students, from attending award ceremonies at their school, aiding in applications for admission to schools (Nishikawa-Van Eester, 2009), to lucrative prizes and media attention. For example, the top three winners of the H.I.H. Prince Takamado Trophy in 2017 were invited to a two-week summer school program in the United Kingdom by The Mitsubishi Corp. (JNSA, 2017). The benefits for the school of a speech contest winner include prestige and potentially an increase in enrolment demand.

Motivation for this Study

Despite the ubiquity and history of English speech contests in Japan, there is little available research regarding student and teacher motivations for joining or experiences of participation, particularly in non-university contexts. In order to address this lack of information, this study sought to gather basic data about speech contests, involving three aspects: 1) motivation for entering a speech contest, 2) the experience of participating in a contest, and 3) how the speech was prepared (which is not discussed here due to space constraints).

This study replicates and expands upon a previous pilot study (Head, 2015) which featured surveys of 77 junior high school speech contest participants and eight teachers. That study focused on three areas: motivation of students to participate in speech contests, perceived benefits of participating, and nature of the experience. In terms of motivations, students generally reported intrinsic motivational factors such as a desire to improve their English abilities to be more important than extrinsic factors such as winning prizes. In addition, both teachers and students reported student improvements in pronunciation, intonation, and public speaking skills as a result of speech contest participation. Students also reported that speech contests are not stressful. However, teacher survey results found that teachers perceived the experience to be more stressful and winning prizes to be more important for students than the students themselves did, indicating that there is a difference in how participants and observers view the speech contest experience.

Methods

A two-part student survey (Appendix 1) was written in English and then translated into Japanese by a native speaker. The survey contained both quantitative Likert-scale type sections, as well as spaces for students to write qualitative responses to questions. This mixed-method approach was used in order to ensure specific questions were answered in a way that could easily be compared numerically using the Likert-scales, while allowing for unanticipated and unrestricted responses to be collected through the written qualitative question responses. If a particular question was not answered on a survey or was unclear, that particular response was disregarded and the total response number for that question adjusted. A bilingual survey was used so that participants could answer regardless of their ability in either language. The second part of the survey concerned original speeches (not included in this paper), so students who had performed recitations of texts were asked not to complete the second page. Written comments were transcribed and Japanese comments translated into English prior to analysis. The student surveys were given out at two different prefecture-wide speech contests in Kochi City in the fall of 2015. These contests contained sections for both recitations of English texts, as well as original speeches. The first contest was for students at public commercial high schools and the other was for both junior high and senior high school students from both public and private schools. The surveys were anonymous, the organizers gave permission for the surveys to be distributed at the events, the surveys were given out after the contest had finished, the purpose of the research and its voluntary nature was explained to participants, and only surveys that included written participant consent were included in the results. In total 98 student surveys were included in the results.

The teacher surveys (Appendix 2) were similar to the student surveys (mixed-method, bilingual, and anonymous) and asked many almost identical questions (with “I” being replaced by “students”). They were distributed at the previously mentioned speech contests, as well as the annual Skills Development Conference (SDC) which gathers all JET Programme ALTs (assistant language teachers), along with one Japanese teacher of English (JTE) from each public school in Kochi prefecture. Again, only the 36 surveys containing explicit consent were included in the analysis.

Results and Discussion

Participant Profile

Of the 98 student survey respondents (see Table 1), 25 were in high school and 73 were in junior high school. There were 10 male and 87 female respondents (plus one of unindicated gender). This gender ratio is small, but similar to percentages at other English speech contests as speech contests are often more popular among female than male students (Head, et al., 2018).

Table 1
Student Participant Profiles

Gender		School Level		Type of Speech	
Male	10	High school	25	Original speech	29
Female	87	Junior high school	73	Recitation	57
Unknown	1	Unknown	0	Unknown	12

On the teacher surveys, of the 36 respondents, 24 identified themselves as native-English speakers, seven as non-native English speakers, and 5 did not respond. Teachers had experienced between one and 20 past speech contests (mean 6.03, standard deviation 6.60).

Speech Contest Preparation Time

As shown in Table 2, there is a wide range in the amount of time students spent practicing their speech. The differences probably reflect variations such as the type of speech (original speeches also require writing time), as well as the amount of free time teachers and students have to devote to practice. Practice typically involves students memorizing their speech by themselves at home (often while shadowing a recording provided by an ALT to aid in modeling native-English pronunciation and intonation) and then practicing at school with a JTE and/or ALT. The teachers can correct and model the necessary pronunciation, intonation, and gestures as well as provide prompts when the student forgets the next line of their speech. Some teachers may explicitly teach

phonology, while others may simply have the students repeat individual words until they get the pronunciation right.

It is unclear at this stage what the optimum practice time is since the individual student placements in the contests were not compared with time spent practicing. However, while more practice likely has a positive effect on performance, there is likely a law of diminishing returns at some point. Hopefully there are benefits that students receive in terms of improvements in motivation and English ability that justify this time investment. However, considering that junior high and high school students will have only 262.5 and 612.5 hours respectively of English instruction over the course of three years of study (Hosoki, 2011) it is debateable whether the time spent on speech contest practice is a beneficial supplement to (or a distraction and waste of resources from) regular English class study.

Table 2

Estimated Time Spent Preparing for a Speech Contest

Hours of Practice	Students (Self-Estimate)	Students (Teacher Estimate)	Teachers (Self-Estimate)
Mean (SD)	20.32 (20.67)	29.60 (30.81)	16.51 (15.79)
MIN/MAX	2/100	8/120	1/40

Motivation for Joining a Speech Contest

To determine the relative importance of different aspects of the speech contest experience, and to compare how teachers and students perceive them quantitatively (Figure 1), teachers and students were asked to rate nine statements (Table 3) on a four-point Likert-scale (*1=Very important; 2=Important; 3=Somewhat important; 4=Not important*). Students and teachers were also asked to write the main reason for students to join a speech contest and these qualitative responses were grouped for comparison into categories that emerged (Table 4). If more than one reason was given, the reasons were calculated separately. For example, the response “My teacher recommended I participate. But also, having people listen to my speech. Improving pronunciation.” would be listed in the following three different categories: Students were asked to participate by a teacher; To have people listen to their speech or to communicate their feelings and thoughts; and Students want to improve their English or communication ability.

Table 3

Summary of Student and Teacher Survey Likert Statements Regarding Speech Contest Motivations

Statement Number	Students	Teachers
1	Improving English pronunciation	Improving students' English pronunciation
2	Improving English intonation	Improving students' English intonation
3	Improving public speaking confidence	Improving students' public speaking confidence
4	Improving writing ability	Improving students' writing ability
5	Winning a prize	Students' winning a prize
6	Challenging yourself to do your best	Challenging students to do their best
7	Sending a message / expressing yourself	Allowing students to send a message / expressing themselves
8	Spending time with friends	Allowing students to spend time with friends
9	Spending time with teachers/ALTs	Allowing students to spend time with teachers/ALTs

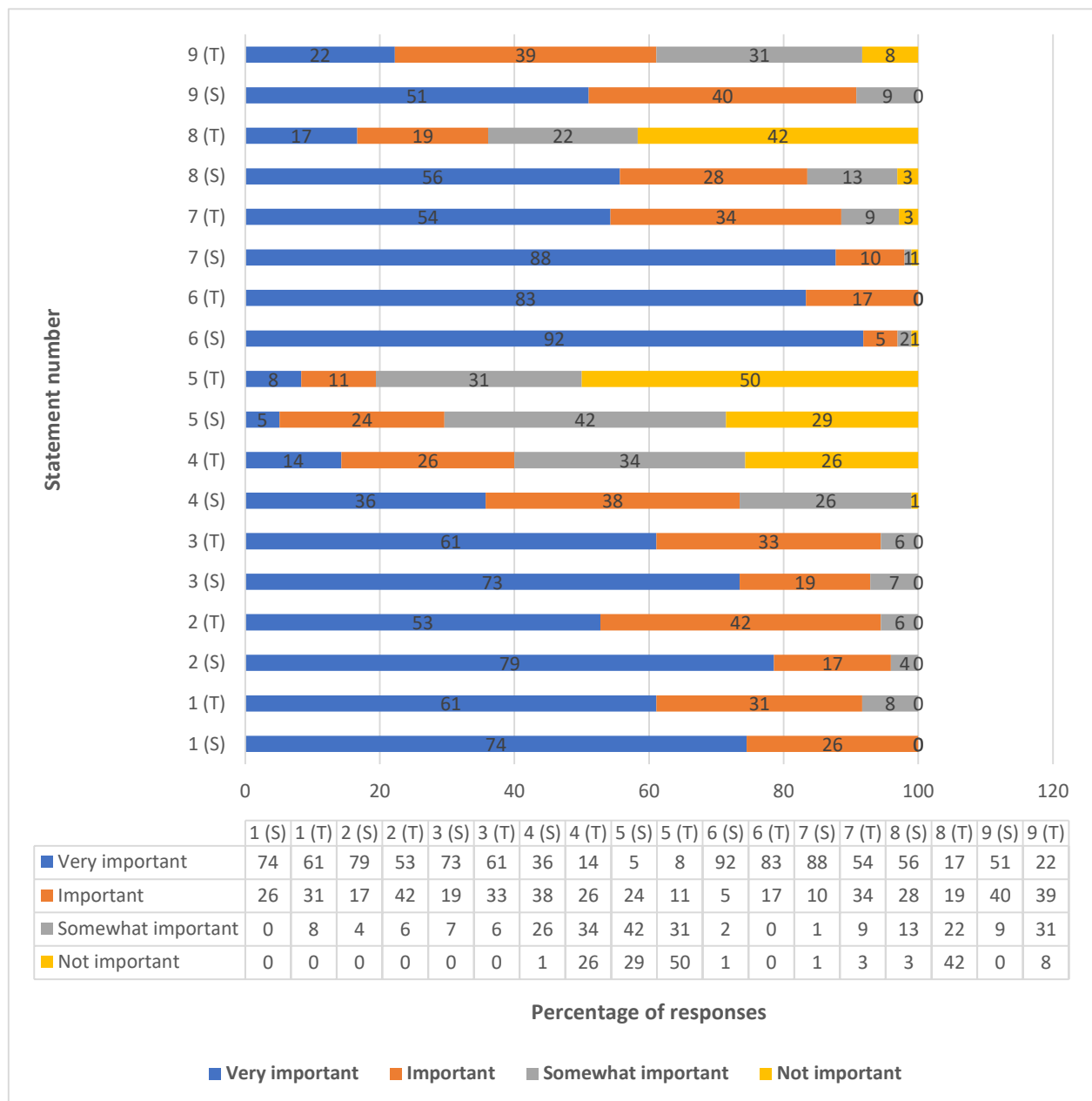


Figure 1. Student and teacher perceptions of various aspects of speech contests.

Personal Growth

The aspect of speech contest participation that was reported as *very important* for the highest percentage of students (92%) and teachers (83%) was challenging themselves to do their best (Figure 1). This is reflected in the 12 mentions of students wanting to challenge themselves, the fourth most common reason listed in the qualitative responses (Table 4). Therefore, personal growth is a key motivator for participating.

Self Expression

The aspect reported as *very important* (Figure 1) for the second highest percentage of students was sending a message (88%). This is also shown in Table 4, with seven mentions of students wanting to have people listen to their speech or communicate their thoughts and feelings, and four mentions of students wanting to express themselves. Interestingly, the percentage of teachers who felt it was *very important* (54%) was less than for technical aspects of speech, such as pronunciation, discussed below. This disparity indicates that the content of the speech is more important for students than teachers may think, suggesting that students should be able to help craft their own speeches or freely choose recitation texts that they feel a connection with.

Improving English Speaking

Next, we look at the more technical aspects of the speech contest. As shown in Figure 1, over 90% of both students and teachers felt that improving pronunciation, intonation, and speaking confidence were *very important* or *important* aspects of speech contests, although the percentage of students who felt it was *very important* was higher than that of the teachers 74% vs 61%, 79% vs 53%, and 73% vs 61% for improving pronunciation, intonation, and speaking confidence respectively). This disparity in values may simply be due to the maturity of the teachers leading them to choose less extremely positive or negative responses on the survey, while still sharing overall similar attitudes to the students as indicated by the near identical scores when the *important* and *very important* responses are pooled. However, in terms of improving writing ability, the percentage who feel it is *very important* or *important* drops to around 75% for students (regardless of whether they participated in a recitation or an original speech, data not shown) and 40% for teachers. In fact, in the written comments none of the students mentioned improving writing skills as a reason for joining a speech contest, whereas there were 12 mentions of students wanting to improve their English abilities and five mentions of wanting to improve their speaking confidence (see Table 2). This is likely because recitation contests do not require any original student writing, and even original speeches are primarily judged on presentation ability rather than speech content, so writing is not a strong consideration. Thus, we can conclude that improving speaking skills is an important aspect of speech contests for students, but writing skills are of secondary importance.

Winning Prizes

By far the least important speech contest factor in this survey was winning a prize. Only 29% of students and 19% of teachers list this as *important* or *very important* (Figure 1), and only two students mentioned winning a prize in their reasons for joining a speech contest (Table 4). On the other hand, rather than winning a prize, nine students mentioned demonstrating their English ability as a reason for joining a contest (Table 4). This could indicate that students are less concerned with an external ranking by judges comparing them to other students as they are with showing themselves what they are capable of.

Social Connections

Another area that shows a gap between teachers and students are the social aspects of speech contests. Eighty-four percent of students reported as *very important* or *important* spending time with friends, and 91% for spending time with teachers, compared with teacher responses of 36% and 61% respectively (Figure 1). As shown in Table 4, seven students mentioned that they joined a contest because it was part of their club activities, and 5 did so because they were asked by a friend. Thus, for many students, doing speech practice with friends or as part of a club likely serves as a motivational factor.

This result differs from that of the previous pilot study (Head, 2015), which found that on average students disagreed that they do speech contests because their friends are participating. However, the teacher responses are similar to the previous study, as on average teachers felt that students are motivated by their friends.

Enjoyment

Finally, looking at the responses in Table 4, the most common reason for participating in a speech contest was that students had previously participated in one (20 responses). This could be interpreted as indicating that students find the speech contest experience to be positive, as students would be unlikely to willingly repeat the process otherwise. This is further supported by the 11 responses indicating that speech contests either were or appeared to be fun. Therefore, while many students indicate that they participate to gain self-confidence or skills, many may choose to do so

out of simple enjoyment. This, and the fact that the majority of students felt that they had accomplished the goals that they had set themselves by joining (Table 5), indicates that the experience of doing a speech contest is positive and hopefully justifies the long hours of preparation involved (a theme that is further examined in the next section).

Table 4

Student Reasons for Joining a Speech Contest

Reasons for Joining a Speech Contest	Number of Mentions	Rank
Students have previously participated in a speech contest	20	1
Students like English	14	2
Students were asked to participate by a teacher	13	3
Students wanted to challenge themselves	12	4
Students want to improve their English or communication ability	12	4
Participating sounded like fun or was fun in the past	11	6
Students wish to demonstrate or test their English ability	9	7
Participating in a speech contest is a useful experience	8	8
To have people listen to their speech or to communicate their feelings and thoughts	7	9
Because speech contests are a part of English club activities	7	9
To experience speaking in front of others	7	9
Students were invited by a friend or wished to spend time with friends	5	12
To improve their confidence	5	12
To express themselves	4	14
They were inspired by watching other participate	3	15
To listen to other people's speeches	2	16
It is their last chance to try participating	2	16
Students wish to broaden their views	2	16
To get a prize	2	16

Table 5

Do Students Feel They Accomplished Their Goals?

Do Students Feel They Accomplished Their Goals?	Number of Responses
Yes	74
No	14
Not sure or somewhat	9

The Experience of Participating in a Speech Contest

In order to gauge the experience of doing a speech contest, students and teachers were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with different statements (Table 6) on a six-point Likert-scale (1=*Strongly agree*, 2=*Agree*, 3=*Slightly agree*, 4=*Slightly disagree*, 5=*Disagree*, 6=*Strongly disagree*) and their quantitative responses were compared (Figure 2). Students and teachers were also asked to write down what they most like and dislike about speech contests. These qualitative statements were then grouped according to common themes and summarized in tables 7 through 10 (What do students most like about English speech contests? What do students most dislike about English speech contests? What do teachers most like about English speech contests? and What do teachers most dislike about English speech contests?).

Table 6

Summary of Student and Teacher Survey Likert Statements Regarding Speech Contest Experiences

Statement number	Students	Teachers
1	I enjoy doing English speech contests	Students enjoy doing English speech contests
2	Speech contests are stressful	Speech contests are stressful for students
3	I feel confident expressing myself in Japanese	Students feel confident expressing themselves in Japanese
4	I feel confident expressing myself in English	Students feel confident expressing themselves in English
5	Public speaking is difficult for me	Public speaking is difficult for students
6	Speech contests participation is useful for my future	Speech contests participation is useful for students' future
7	Speech contests are good preparation for communicating with others	Speech contests are good preparation for communicating with others
8	I want to do speech contests again	Students want to do speech contests again

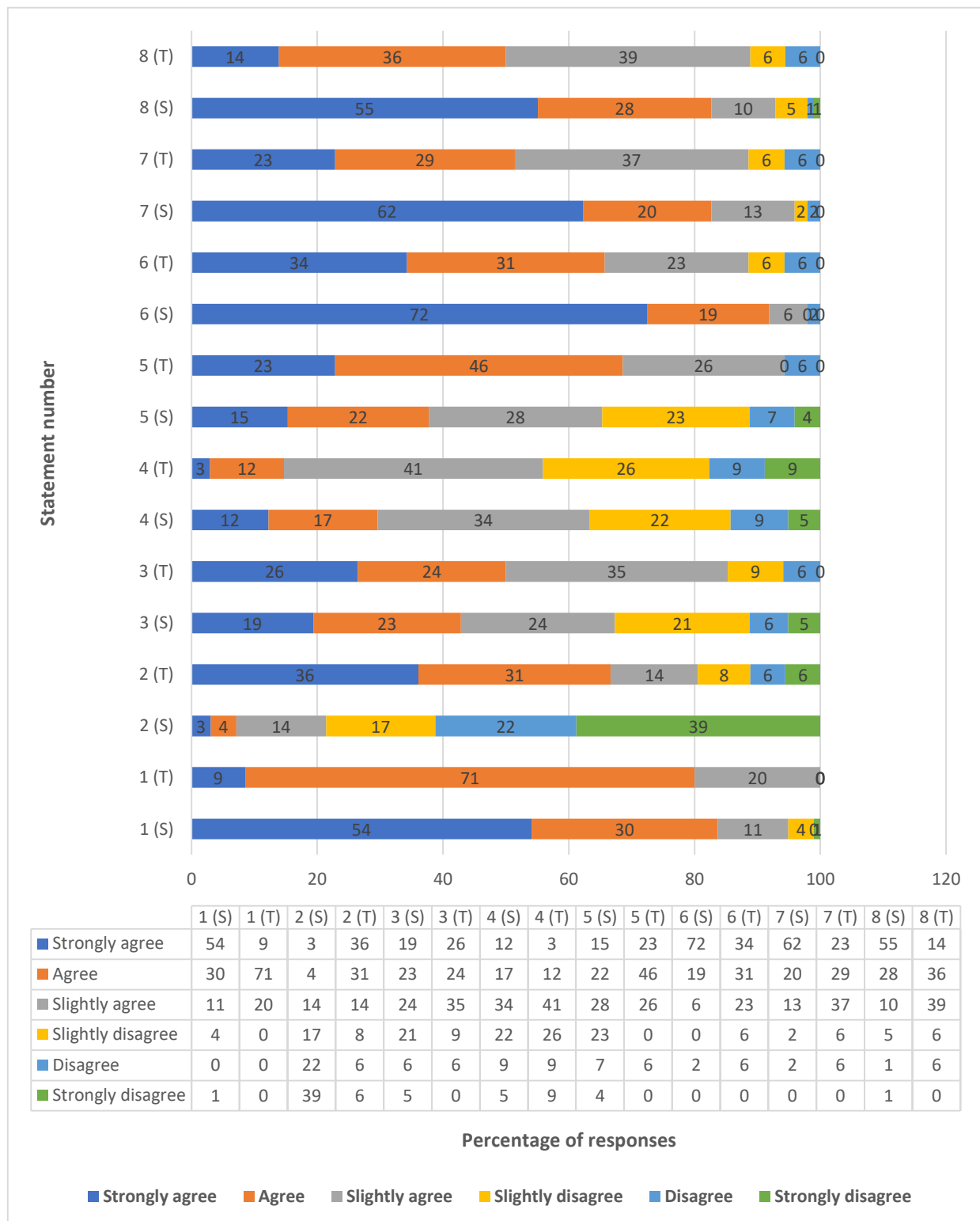


Figure 2. Student and teacher perceptions of participating in speech contests.

Enjoyment of Speech Contests

First, looking at student enjoyment of speech contests (Figure 2), 95% of students and 100% of teachers at least slightly agree that students enjoy doing speech contests (with 54% of students and

9% of teachers strongly agreeing), indicating that the experience is largely positive. This is supported by the fact that the most common student response to what they dislike about speech contests was “nothing” (Table 8).

Student Stress

Next, we look at the issue of stress. At first glance, speech contests appear to have the potential to be very stressful. Not only is there limited time to get ready for a contest, but on the day itself students only have one chance to impress the judges while speaking in a foreign language in public. Surprisingly, the pilot study found that the majority of students and (to a lesser extent) teachers disagreed that speech contests were stressful (Head, 2015).

Interestingly, the results of this survey show almost an inverse between the student and teacher responses, with 3% of students strongly agreeing that speech contests are stressful for students and 39% strongly disagreeing, whereas 36% of teachers strongly agree and 6% strongly disagree. This appears to indicate a large difference between how observers and participants interpret the experience. For example, while two teachers mentioned student stress as something that they dislike about speech contests (Table 8), no students specifically mentioned stress in their responses (Table 7). On the other hand, the second most common thing that students dislike about speech contests is being nervous (Table 7). However, it is possible that the feeling of being nervous is temporary (for example, just before a student is about to go on stage) and the rest of the contest is enjoyable rather than stressful. For example, the third most common thing that students like about speech contests is listening to other people’s speeches, indicating that even if they are nervous they can enjoy the contest at the same time.

Student Confidence

In terms of confidence, students and teachers both felt that students are less confident expressing themselves in English than Japanese, although it should be noted that the difference between students’ confidence in expressing themselves in Japanese (66% at least slightly agreeing) and in English (63% at least slightly agreeing) is not large. Also, 65% at least slightly agree that public speaking is difficult for them, so it may be reasonable to assume that confidence in publicly

expressing themselves at an English speech contest is less due to issues with English ability and more to do with general shyness. However, when looking at the qualitative data concerning what students most like about speech contests (Table 7), we see that improving speaking ability and/or being able to speak publicly is the most common response, and that an increase in confidence is the second most common response. Gains in student confidence is also the most common thing that teachers like about speech contests (Table 9). Thus, while students may lack confidence in public speaking, regardless of the language, participating in a speech contest may serve to increase their confidence. On the other hand, losing confidence and/or failing to perform well was the third most mentioned dislike of students (Table 8), so gains in confidence are not universally guaranteed. It should also be noted that a certain amount of self-confidence is likely necessary to consider entering a public speech contest in the first place, so if all students were required to participate in a speech contest the results may be very different.

Practical Benefits

Next, exploring the practical benefits of doing a speech contest, a large majority of students felt that speech contest participation is useful for their future (with 72% strongly agreeing and only 2% disagreeing (Figure 2)). Similarly, most students felt that speech contests were good preparation for communicating with other people (62% strongly agreeing and only 4% disagreeing or slightly disagreeing (Figure 2)). In both these cases, the percentage of teachers agreeing with those statements was less than for the students while still being generally positive, with only 12% disagreeing or slightly disagreeing. Looking at the written comments in Table 7, the seventh most common comment was that speech contests are a useful experience for the future, and many other comments mentioned practical English communication benefits such as improving pronunciation and/or intonation (fourth ranked), improving English vocabulary and/or understanding (fifth ranked), and improving writing ability (tenth ranked). Teachers also commented on students' practical skill improvement among the things that they most like about speech contests (Table 9), with mentions of improvements in intonation (second ranked), learning skills (fourth ranked), and improving public speaking (also fourth ranked). Thus, we can conclude that students felt that they received practical benefits from participation that will continue into their future.

Overall Experience

Finally, one of the greatest indicators of how speech contests can be a positive experience is the fact that 93% of students at least slightly agree that they want to do speech contests again (with 55% strongly agreeing). This is supported by the fact that the most common reason for joining a speech contest was that students had joined one in the past (Table 4). If students did not feel the experience was worthwhile and fun, or if they felt it was unduly stressful, it is unlikely that they would continue to participate in future contests. This does not mean that all the aspects of the speech contest experience were considered positive, however.

Table 7

What do Students Most Like About English Speech Contests?

What do Students Most Like About English Speech Contests?	Number of Mentions	Rank
Improving speaking ability and/or being able to speak in front of others	23	1
Gaining confidence and/or a feeling of accomplishment	22	2
Listening to other people's speeches	15	3
Improving pronunciation and/or intonation	13	4
Improving vocabulary and/or English understanding	9	5
Making friends and/or connecting with others	7	6
Expressing yourself and/or writing your own speech	5	7
It will be a useful experience for the future	5	7
Having people listen to your speech	3	9
Improving writing ability	2	10
Doing the speech well	2	10
Others	5	

Table 8

What do Students Most Dislike About English Speech Contests?

What do Students Most Dislike About English Speech Contests?	Number of Mentions	Rank
Nothing	24	1
Being nervous	19	2
Losing confidence and/or failing to perform well	7	3
Memorizing the speech	6	4
The time commitment and/or difficulty of practice	5	5
The length of the contest and/or judging is too long	2	6
Being shy and/or embarrassed	2	6
Others	5	

Table 9

What do Teachers Most Like About English Speech Contests?

What do Teachers Most Like About English Speech Contests?	Number of Mentions	Rank
Students can gain confidence	6	1
Students can improve their intonation	5	2
Students become more motivated and/or challenge themselves	5	2
Spending time practicing with students	4	4
Students can use English outside the classroom	4	4
Students learn skills	4	4
Students can express themselves	4	4
Students improve their public speaking	2	8
Others	2	

Table 10

What do Teachers Most Dislike About English Speech Contests?

What do Teachers Most Dislike About English Speech Contests?	Number of Mentions	Rank
The speech preparation schedule	3	1
Adjusting speech content in order to impress judges	2	2
Emphasis by judges on technical aspects of speeches rather than on fluency or self-expression	2	2
Student memorize but don't understand the content of their speeches	2	2
The need to memorize speeches	2	2
Students learn unnatural gestures and speaking styles	2	2
It is stressful for students	2	2
Others	6	

Areas for Improvement

In terms of negative aspects of speech contests, both students (Table 8) and teachers (Table 10) mention speech memorization. On a related note, some teachers mention that while students memorize their speech, they may not actually understand the meaning of the words they are presenting. This calls into question some of the claimed benefits regarding improvements in English understanding that result from doing English speeches. Perhaps allowing students to bring notes on stage would be a way of reducing the time needed to prepare for a speech contest (the fifth most common complaint among students (Table 8)) and allow time to be spent on ensuring that students are learning English. Considering that people delivering public speeches outside of a contest setting almost always rely on notes (or teleprompters), the rationale for denying students

access to these aids is questionable as it prioritizes rote memorization ability over all else. Another way to ensure student comprehension of the speech content is to have impromptu speeches where students are told the speech topic and are only given a few minutes to prepare before presenting their speech. However, the level of English ability required for this type of speech is likely beyond the grasp of most students at this stage in their education. Perhaps another way to focus on student understanding of the speech content would be for judges to ask a few questions related to the speech content (in Japanese).

Another aspect of contests that causes concern is the judging. While students were mostly concerned with the time taken by judges to reach a decision (Table 8), the teachers were concerned about the negative results on student learning of trying to impress the judges. For instance, there are two mentions of adjusting the content to impress judges. Often contests will have the same judges each year, often from universities so as to avoid the appearance of bias (Sawa, 2010). Also, judge panels often consist of two Japanese and one native English speakers (often an ALT). As many have observed, the native and non-native judges may emphasize different aspects of speech contest evaluation, with some (native English speaking) observers feeling that technical proficiency is more prized by non-natives and “natural” delivery more prized by native speakers (Carrigan, 2017; Markewicz, 2014; Sawa, 2010). The researcher has observed this leading to teachers tailoring the student’s speech content (and accompanying gestures) to suit the known tastes of the Japanese judges in order to win, as they outnumber the native English judges (whose turnover rate is also higher). One way to combat this may be to attempt to recruit more judges (both native and non-native English speakers) so that there can be a greater variety of judges to draw on and thus less predictability concerning who will be present and what will appeal to the judging panel. In addition, some sort of formal training to ensure that judges apply evaluation rubrics consistently could help reduce variation in results between judges, especially since judges may be judging a contest for the first time (Venema, 2013).

Limitations of the Study

These were samples of convenience, however, due to the prefecture-wide gathering of teachers and students at these events, the researcher feels that these form a representative sample of the

prefecture. It should also be noted that not all speech contests are identical in terms of level of competition, so students entering other contests may have had different experiences. In addition, the student comments were translated into English before being analysed, so some nuances may have been lost in translation. Also, the categorization of responses into different categories can be subjective.

Conclusion

This study examined two main questions from the perspectives of both students and teachers: 1) what motivates students to join a speech contest? and 2) what is the experience of participation?

Looking at the first research question, the results of this survey showed that there are many overlapping factors involved in students joining speech contests. However, the most important factors (in descending order) appear to be personal growth, followed by self-expression, improving English communication skills, social connections, and winning a prize. The fact that winning a prize was considered the least important factor by students and teachers indicates that participants are primarily intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated (or it could mean that only intrinsically motivated students are able to and willing to go through the extensive commitment required in the first place). This is encouraging as extrinsic motivation such as winning a prize is considered less valuable for learning than intrinsic motivation, such as a desire to challenge yourself (Brown, 2007). Finally, many students appear to join speech contests out of past enjoyment, indicating that the experience is positive, which is further supported by the responses to the second research question.

In answer to the second research question, the experience of doing an English speech contest is very positive. The majority of students reported enjoying the contest and wishing to repeat the experience. In addition, students reported feeling more confident in their public speaking as a result of participation, as well as having made improvements in their English communication abilities. The most surprising result is that students do not consider the experience to be stressful, although outside observers such as teachers may think the opposite.

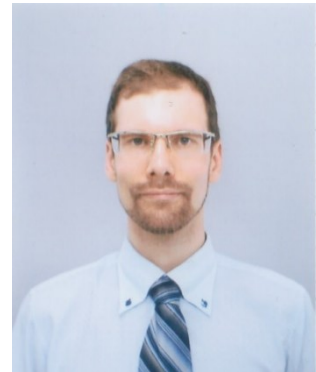
Overall, we can conclude that speech contests are a generally positive experience with many benefits for students who participate, thus justifying the sometimes heavy time commitment

involved for both students and teachers. However, there are areas that could be improved, particularly in terms of the judging of contests, that can make the experience even more beneficial for student development and self-improvement.

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Appendix 1

Bilingual Student Survey

★Grade 学年（ ）

★Male / female 男 / 女

★Original speech / recitation オリジナルスピーチ / レシテーション（暗唱）

★I practiced my speech for approximately _____ hours in total.（私は、合計で約_____時間スピーチの練習をした）

★Please rate the following aspects of speech contests（スピーチコンテストに関する下記の質問に番号で答えてください。）

1=Very important（とても重要）2=Important（重要） 3=Somewhat important（やや重要）4=Not important（重要でない）	
Improving English pronunciation.（英語の発音）	
Improving English intonation.（英語のイントネーション・抑揚）	
Improving public speaking confidence.（人前で話す自信）	
Improving writing ability.（英語を書く力）	
Winning a prize.（受賞すること）	
Challenging yourself to do your best.（ベストを尽くすこと）	
Sending a message / expressing yourself.（思いを伝えること・自分を表現すること）	
Spending time with friends.（仲間と時間を過ごすこと）	
Spending time with teachers/ALTs.（先生や、ALTと時間を過ごすこと）	

★Please state your agreement/disagreement with the following statements:

（下記の文に、賛成（そう思う） / 不賛成（そう思わない）で答えてください。）

1=Strongly agree（まったくそう思う）、2=Agree（そう思う）、3=Slightly agree（まあまあそう思う）、 4=Slightly disagree（あまり思わない）、5=Disagree（思わない）、6=Strongly disagree（まったくそう思わない）	
I enjoy doing English speech contests.（私はスピーチコンテストを楽しんでいる）	
Speech contests are stressful.（スピーチコンテストはストレスを感じる）	
I feel confident expressing myself in Japanese.（私は日本語で自分を表現することに自信がある）	
I feel confident expressing myself in English.（私は英語で自分を表現することに自信がある）	
Public speaking is difficult for me.（スピーチは私にとって難しい）	
Speech contests participation is useful for my future.（コンテストに参加することは将来役立つ）	
Speech contests are good preparation for communicating with others. （スピーチコンテストは他人とのコミュニケーションの良い準備になる）	
I want to do speech contests again.（私はまたスピーチコンテストに出場したい）	

★What was your main reason(s) for entering this speech contest?

（あなたが、スピーチコンテストに出場した主な理由は何ですか？）

★Do you feel you achieved your goal(s)?（あなたは、目標を達成したと感じますか？）

★What do you most like and dislike about English speech contests?

（あなたにとって、英語スピーチコンテストに関して最も良いこと（楽しいこと）と悪いこと（嫌なこと）は何ですか？）

Head: Student and Teacher Views on English Language Speech Contests in Japan

★What best describes how your speech was written?

(あなたがスピーチを書いた方法を下記から選び、記号で答えてください。)

- 1) I wrote my speech in English. (私は、英語でスピーチを書いた。)
- 2) I wrote my speech in Japanese and then I translated it into English (私は、日本語でスピーチを書き、それから英語に訳した。)
- 3) A teacher interviewed me about my ideas and then wrote the speech in English. (先生が私の考えを聞きだして、先生が英語で書いた。)
- 4) Someone wrote the speech for me. (ほかの人が書いてくれた。)
- 5) Other (please specify) (その他・詳しく書いてください)

★Who helped you prepare the speech? (more than one answer is ok).

(誰が、スピーチの準備を手伝ってくれましたか? いくつでも OK)

- 1) Family members (家族)
- 2) A Japanese teacher (日本人の先生)
- 3) A native English teacher (外国人の先生)
- 4) No one (誰も手伝っていない)
- 5) Other (please specify) (その他・詳しく書いてください)

★What best describes your speech preparation? (スピーチの準備について下記から選び、番号で答えてください。)

- 1) I re-wrote my speech after getting advice. (私はアドバイスをもらった後スピーチを書き直した)
- 2) A teacher re-wrote my speech. (先生がスピーチを書き直した)
- 3) Several people re-wrote my speech. (何人かの人が私のスピーチを書き直した)
- 4) A teacher re-wrote my speech and explained why they made changes. (先生が書き直して、なぜ変更したかを説明してくれた)
- 5) My speech wasn't re-written. (書き直さなかった)

★Please state your agreement/disagreement with the following statements:

(下記の質問に、賛成(そう思う) / 不賛成(そう思わない) で答えてください)

1=Strongly agree (まったくそう思う), 2=Agree (そう思う), 3=Slightly agree (まあまあそう思う),
4=Slightly disagree (あまり思わない), 5=Disagree (思わない), 6=Strongly disagree (まったくそう思わない)

★The final version of the speech reflects my personal views. (スピーチの完成版は私の意見が反映されている)

★It was easy to think of a topic. (トピックを考えるのは簡単だった)

★I learned how to present my ideas clearly. (私は、考えを明白に表現する方法を学んだ)

Do you consent to the use of this survey for Philip Head's research purposes? No identifying information will be published.

(ここで得た個人情報は公表されません。この結果をフィリップヘッドの研究目的に使用することに同意しますか?)

- ☐ Yes, you can use my responses. (同意します)
- ☐ No, don't use my responses. (同意しません)

Appendix 2

Bilingual Teacher Survey

★Number of speech contests you have prepared students for () 回

(これまで、何回コンテストの指導を行ってきましたか?)

★Native English speaker / Non-native English speaker

★I helped my students practice their speech for approximately _____ hours in total.

(私は、合計で約 _____ 時間スピーチの指導をした)

★My students practiced their speech for approximately _____ hours in total.

(生徒は、合計で約 _____ 時間スピーチの練習をした)

★Please rate the following aspects of speech contest

(スピーチコンテストに関する下記の質問に番号で答えてください。)

1=Very important (とても重要) 2=Important (重要) 3=Somewhat important (やや重要) 4=Not important (重要でない)	
Improving students' English pronunciation. (英語の発音)	
Improving students' English intonation. (英語のイントネーション・抑揚)	
Improving students' public speaking confidence. (人前で話す自信)	
Improving students' writing ability. (英語を書く力)	
Students winning a prize. (受賞すること)	
Challenging students' to do their best. (ベストを尽くすこと)	
Allowing students to send a message / express themselves. (思いを伝えること・自分を表現すること)	
Allowing students to spend time with friends. (仲間と時間を過ごすこと)	
Allowing students to spend time with teachers/ALTs. (先生や、ALTと時間を過ごすこと)	

★Please state your agreement/disagreement with the following statements:

(下記の文に、賛成 (そう思う) / 不賛成 (そう思わない) で答えてください。)

1=Strongly agree (まったくそう思う), 2=Agree (そう思う), 3=Slightly agree (まあまあそう思う), 4=Slightly disagree (あまり思わない), 5=Disagree (思わない), 6=Strongly disagree (まったくそう思わない)	
Students enjoy doing English speech contests. (生徒はスピーチコンテストを楽しんでいる)	
Speech contests are stressful for students. (スピーチコンテストは生徒にとってストレスである)	
Students feel confident expressing themselves in Japanese. (生徒は日本語で自分を表現することに自信がある)	
Students feel confident expressing themselves in English. (生徒は英語で自分を表現することに自信がある)	
Public speaking is difficult for students. (スピーチは生徒にとって難しい)	
Speech contests participation is useful for students' future. (コンテストに参加することは生徒の将来役立つ)	
Speech contests are good preparation for communicating with others. (スピーチコンテストは他人とのコミュニケーションの良い準備になる)	
Students want to do speech contests again. (生徒はまたスピーチコンテストに出場したい)	

★What do you most like and dislike about English speech contests?

(あなたにとって、英語スピーチコンテストに関して最も良いこと (楽しいこと) と悪いこと (嫌なこと) は何ですか?)

Head: Student and Teacher Views on English Language Speech Contests in Japan

★What best describes how your student's speech was written?

(あなたの生徒がスピーチを書いた方法を下記から選び、記号で答えてください。)

- 6) The student wrote their speech in English. (生徒が、英語でスピーチを書いた。)
- 7) The student wrote their speech in Japanese and then they translated it into English. (生徒が、日本語でスピーチを書き、それから英語に訳した。)
- 8) I interviewed the student about their ideas and then wrote the speech in English. (先生が生徒の考えを聞きだして、先生が英語で書いた。)
- 9) Someone else wrote the speech for the student. (ほかの人が書いてくれた。)
- 10) Other (please specify) (その他・詳しく書いてください)

★Who helped the student prepare the speech? (more than one answer is ok).

(誰が、スピーチの準備を手伝いましたか?いくつかでも OK)

- 1) Family members (家族)
- 2) A Japanese teacher (日本人の先生)
- 3) A native English teacher (外国人の先生)
- 4) No one (誰も手伝っていない)
- 5) Other (please specify) (その他・詳しく書いてください)

★What best describes the speech preparation? (スピーチの準備について下記から選び、番号で答えてください。)

- 6) The student re-wrote my speech after getting advice. (生徒が、私のアドバイスをもらった後、原稿を書き直した)
- 7) A teacher re-wrote the student's speech. (先生が原稿を書き直した)
- 8) Several people re-wrote the student's speech. (何人かの人が生徒の原稿を書き直した)
- 9) A teacher re-wrote the student's speech and explained why they made changes. (先生が書き直して、なぜ変更したかを説明した)
- 10) The student's speech wasn't re-written. (生徒の原稿は書き直さなかった)

★Please state your agreement/disagreement with the following statements:

(下記の質問に、賛成(そう思う) / 不賛成(そう思わない) で答えてください)

1=Strongly agree (まったくそう思う), 2=Agree (そう思う), 3=Slightly agree (まあまあそう思う), 4=Slightly disagree (あまり思わない), 5=Disagree (思わない), 6=Strongly disagree (まったくそう思わない)	
The final version of the speech reflects the student's personal views.	(スピーチの完成版は生徒の意見が反映されている)
It was easy for the student to think of a topic. (生徒がトピックを考えるのは簡単だった)	
The student learned how to present their ideas clearly. (生徒は、考えを明白に表現する方法を学んだ)	

Do you consent to the use of this survey for Philip Head's research purposes? No identifying information will be published.

(ここで得た個人情報は公表されません。この結果をフィリップヘッドの研究目的に使用することに同意しますか?)

- ☐ Yes, you can use my responses. (同意します)
- ☐ No, don't use my responses. (同意しません)

Can Philip contact you at a later date to ask questions about speech contest preparations?

(フィリップが、スピーチ準備について聞き取るために、後日連絡をしてもよろしいですか?)

- ☐ Yes, you can contact me at the following email/telephone: (はい。次のメールアドレスか電話番号に連絡してください)

Performance-Assisted Learning: A Proposal

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Abstract

Speech as a performance activity is accepted by English teachers and administrators, and speech performances are done in classes as well as at contests. Formal debate is accepted by teachers, but not taught so often in classes because of a perception that it requires special expertise on the part of the teacher, and that it is too complex and difficult a task for most students. Other performance activities, such as drama, dance, and music, receive less acceptance and support for a variety of reasons. This paper discusses the acceptance of performance in courses, explains the concept of Performance-Assisted Learning (PAL), and gives examples of what PAL would look like.

There is strong general support for the use of speech in English language education in Japan, along with acknowledgement of the ability of debate to teach, encourage the use of, and improve critical thinking skills. On the other hand, there is little interest in implementing formal debate in courses, and some, but not much, general interest in the use of drama in English. However, there seems to be no interest in the areas of puppetry, performing of songs with dance, the making of movies, lipdups (described below), and other activities that could benefit language learning.

Why is this? Of course, it could be a publicity problem, but it is more likely that the problem lies deeper, perhaps with teachers' preconceived notions of the value of such activities and of what is required to implement speech, drama, and debate (SDD) in their classrooms.

Preconceived Notions of Implementation of Speech, Drama, and Debate

In addition to a lack of information or publicity concerning SDD, perhaps many language teachers have the misconception that only a special type of person, a “drama” person, or specialists (such as a person who was a debater in high school and college), are able to implement speech, drama, or debate, which, of course, is not the case. Rather than sponsoring a speech contest, putting on an entire play, or hosting a debate tournament, some micro-activities such as short impromptu speeches, simple role-plays, or ten-minute debates can be done easily by any teacher using a step-by-step explanation of the activity, such as can be found in *CLASSROOM RESOURCES: Practical Ideas for Teachers* (Head, 2015), a resource book explaining performance activities.

There is another perception that perhaps inhibits teachers, making them reluctant to try to use these aids to language learning, and that is the false perception that these activities are not central to learning, but are fun, superfluous activities. To the contrary, as a result of research funded by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, Newmann & Wehlage (1995) conclude that “academic achievement can be judged satisfactory only if students are required to express the results of [their] disciplined inquiry in written, symbolic, and oral discourse by making things, and in performances for audiences.” (p. 8). That is, performances, rather than being superfluous, are the necessary last step in demonstrating achievement of knowledge or skill, and so should be used more extensively in language and content courses.

Finally, there is the perception that these performances require a large amount of time; in the case of drama or debate, it could take an entire semester, which would not allow enough time for more “obviously useful activities” such as TOEIC practice, grammar and vocabulary lessons, or listening and writing activities. This is connected to the false impression that if a teacher is going to implement drama, debate, or speech, a large-scale activity has to be planned instead of the micro-activities mentioned above. This implementation of micro-activities of performance in order to learn, consolidate learning, and evaluate learning is the definition of Performance-Assisted Learning (PAL). PAL is not confined to language learning, but encompasses content courses, focusing on the use of micro-activities from performance areas of study in order to ensure that students have truly learned the material of the courses.

PAL Rationale

In discussion with Donna Tatsuki of Kobe City University of Foreign Studies (August 2017, personal communication), she stated that we need to move beyond the idea of language competence, especially as shown by commercial proficiency exam scores, and instead require language performance. Within the discussion, this first came from the position that students should show they have acquired language skills, but also included the idea that knowledge is not gained through memorization, but through constructing it in the mind. This idea that knowledge comes through constructing it in the mind is a key concept of Constructivism (Betts, 1991). Students who are not required to produce “expressions” that are meaningful outside of the classroom are generally not involved in “constructing or producing meaning or knowledge” (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995, p. 8). Their conclusion that performance in front of an audience as one way students show academic achievement is a strong rationale for the need for dissemination of the PAL concept.

Another area of research that informs PAL is CAC (Communication Across the Curriculum), which came about as a result of the consensus that U.S. university students lacked the abilities to effectively communicate their research in writing and spoken word (Cronin & Glenn, 1991). WAC (Writing Across the Curriculum) is the most accepted and effective form of CAC (Walvoord, 1996). Bellon (2000), building on the success of CAC, proposed DAC (Debate Across the Curriculum).

These movements form a basis for PAL. Perhaps PAC, Performance Across the Curriculum, would be a better term for the concept of PAL. Either of the two terms could be used interchangeably, depending on whether emphasis is placed on the use of the micro-activities (PAL), or on the use of performance in any course, no matter the content area (PAC).

PAL Performance Types

The performance types that would be included in PAL are theater (e.g., plays, role-plays, theater games, process drama, simulations, roleplaying games), oral interpretation/readers theater, speech, presentation (PowerPoint or lightning styles like PechaKucha – a twenty-slide presentation software presentation format where each slide is timed to automatically advance after 20 seconds),

debate, puppetry, music, dance, lipdub (described below), film-making, and other performance types.

PAL Scope

The scope of PAL would be language courses (oral communication, presentation, writing, reading, or discussion), but would also include content courses (e.g., intercultural communication, history, sociology, psychology, law, medicine, healthcare, etc.).

PAL Examples

What are some examples of PAL? Below are a few, but by no means an exhaustive list, of such activities in both language and content classes.

Theater (plays, roleplays, theater games, process drama, simulations, roleplaying games)

In oral communication classes, rather than the somewhat uninteresting reading of dialogues, the participants could create back-stories for the characters by giving them names, jobs, families, personality characteristics, etc. One teacher at Nanzan University, William Kumai (November 2017, personal communication) has his students write their own short dramas for other students to perform. This also could be done by turning generic textbook conversations into more interesting role-plays. For content classes, simulations and role-plays could be used to illustrate situations or events covered in the class.

Oral Interpretation/Readers Theater

In language classes, oral interpretation (expressive reading of text out loud) could be used in reading or writing classes. Students could read or write a poem or story and then perform it in solo or group performances. In content classes, students could perform short pieces of important text in solo or group performances.

Speech

In language classes students could take essays that they write in composition class and perform them in class. In content classes, students could do short one- to three-minute impromptu speeches on key concepts of the course. Important speech concepts, such as eye contact, varying voice volume, speed, pitch, and style, and the use of gesture and movement, could be required for oral reports.

Presentation (PowerPoint, PechaKucha)

In language and content courses, presentations using computers are common, but the principles of creating a good presentation (simple slides, with graphics and little or no text) with clear organization (introduction, body, conclusion) and good presentation style (eye contact, gestures, movement, not looking at the screen) could be taught. The format and standardized automatic movement of slides makes PechaKucha-like lightning presentations interesting, also make it more important for students to practice more, and often encourages more spontaneity.

Debate

In language classes, specifically discussion classes, one of the types of formal debate (policy, public forum, Lincoln-Douglas, etc.) can be used or modified to match your content course needs (IDEA, n.d.). In content classes, simplified formal debate can be used to deeply explore issues.

Puppetry

In language classes, puppetry is a little-used activity, but has great possibilities in that it allows one person to play both characters in a dialog, thereby allowing a small group of people to play a large cast of characters. In content classes, puppets, especially paper-stick puppets (a picture of the character attached to a stick) allow the student to easily play historical characters or important people in the world, recreate historical events, or recreate other narratives.

Music

In language classes, the lyrics of songs are often used to demonstrate grammar points, or songs are used as listening exercises. However, if a performance of the lyrics in karaoke-style is required, or if the students perform an oral interpretation by speaking the lyrics dramatically, the meaning of the lyrics can be more deeply experienced. In content classes, performance of lyrics to songs can be used to illustrate historical, social, or political situations.

Dance

In advanced language classes dance is not used much, although it is used with young low-level learners to teach basic vocabulary and grammar with songs like “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes,” or “The Hokey-pokey.” However, when included in drama or oral interpretation performances, dance can add more excitement and motivation for the students. In content classes, dance would probably be rarely used as it does not employ language, but could be used in psychology or mental health classes to portray emotions or emotional situations that would be too painful using words (death of a family member or friend, feelings about a natural catastrophe such as a flood, earthquake, or tsunami). Dance, without words, can be emotionally strong.

Lipdup

Lipdup, or lipdub, is making a music video where students do not actually sing, but lipsync (move their lips to match the words to a song). The video is done nonstop in one shot and the only editing done is the addition of the music track. In language classes it has been used to motivate students with lower level English skills (Kluge & Catanzariti, 2013). In content classes, this would probably not be used as it takes a large amount of time and practice.

Film-making

In language classes film-making is rarely done because of the expense of the equipment, the high level of technical knowledge required of the teacher, and for the students the large amount of preparation, the time to think, create a story, plan the shots, rehearse the scenes, and then edit the resulting material are prohibitive. However, with the use of the students’ own smartphones, and

with free video editing applications, it is becoming much easier to do, so that students can do their own editing (Ford & Kluge, 2015). In content classes, film-making could be used to create multi-media projects on the topic of study.

Conclusion

If attitudes toward performance in university education were changed so that performances were considered a necessary component of the education process and a good sign that learning has been internalized by students, and if teachers discovered ways like the ones described in this paper to use performance, not as the main goal, but as a tool to learn different skills and contents, then performance might be embraced by a larger number of teachers. This is a worthy goal of organizations like the Speech, Drama, & Debate SIG.

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What is Reader's Theatre and can it be Used Effectively in Large EFL Classes?

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Abstract

Having the ability to make an effective presentation in English is becoming more essential in the modern, global economy. In response to this need, many Japanese universities are introducing presentation skills-type courses into the English curriculum. However, shy students can be a challenge for EFL teachers who must teach courses that emphasize public speaking, resulting in students reading directly from their script, failing to make eye contact with the audience, and speaking in a barely audible, monotone voice. Apprehensive students often fail to engage the audience and their speeches are uninteresting and lack energy. This paper introduces Reader's Theatre, a collaborative group drama activity, and discusses how the author implemented it into large English communication classes in an attempt to build student confidence, teach basic presentation skills, and encourage students to speak and read English with more expression.

Throughout my 17 years of teaching EFL at the university level in Japan, I have observed that Japanese students are typically shy and inhibited about speaking with much expression in front of an entire class, particularly in courses where they are required to make short speeches or presentations. This provides a challenge for instructors tasked with teaching presentation classes. In a conversation, words alone are not enough to fully understand what your partner is trying to say. Gestures, facial expressions, posture, and intonation can all convey or add something to a message. In public speaking, voice inflection and projection, gestures to emphasize key words, and facial expressions to show emotion are considered to be

essential elements of a good presentation. Without them, a speech lacks energy, is uninteresting, and may be difficult to understand. I believe that Japanese students need to be given time to practice and learn these kinds of communication skills in a non-threatening, collaborative environment.

Over the last few years, I have had success integrating drama into some of my English communication classes in an attempt to build student confidence and make them more comfortable speaking English expressively in front of an audience. In addition to confidence building, I have found that drama is also a good method for teaching voice inflection, voice projection, and gesture use. However, acting in a drama requires students to memorize lines, which is not easy for them. I have also found that putting on an in-class play takes up a lot of class time.

I had been searching for a teaching method that could provide the same benefits as drama, but wouldn't burden students with line-memorization or take up lots of valuable class time, when I was introduced to the concept of Reader's Theatre (hereafter RT) at an academic conference about two years ago. After researching RT and successfully integrating it into a small, 4th-year seminar class (see Head, Kluge, Morris, & Rees, 2017), I wanted to see if I could do so in larger classes as well. In this paper I will explain the methodology I used to introduce RT into a first-year, required English communication course for non-English majors, discuss the results, and further explore the potential of RT in EFL as a method for helping students acquire the skills and confidence needed to try and speak English more dynamically in front of others.

What is Reader's Theatre?

RT is an oral presentation of a drama, prose, or poetry by at least two people (Ng & Boucher-Yip, 2010). In RT, readers read a script adapted from an original story, and the audience imagines the action while listening to the script being read aloud. Instead of acting out the script as in a play, the goal of each performer is to read their lines aloud effectively, enabling the audience to visualize the action (Cornwell, n.d.). RT is basically group storytelling. Reading the text with expressive voices, facial expressions, and gestures is the focus of the performance. It can also liven up a story and make comprehending the text meaningful and enjoyable for students (Taylor de Caballero, 2013).

RT Script Selection

RT may be performed with many kinds of literature: picture books, short-stories, parts of novels, poetry, folk tales, works of non-fiction, or newspaper and magazine articles (Cornwell, n.d.). The script selection process for an RT performance involves first reading and becoming familiar with the original text, and then transforming it into a script involving several characters. Another option is to use ready-made RT scripts, which can be downloaded for free or can be purchased online (Ng and Boucher-Yip, 2010).

Differences Between Stage Plays and RT

The main difference between RT and a stage play is, as mentioned above, that in RT, readers do not have to memorize lines. According to Taylor de Caballero (2015, para. 7):

Unlike conventional theater, RT participants do not aim to memorize lines or parts; rather, they practice and deliver the written script while holding their scripts formally in one or both hands, much in the way singers in a chorus might. Also unlike regular theater, RT takes place without the use of sets, staging or props, relying solely on the participants' voices to convey the message or story.

In traditional RT, readers usually stand or sit in chairs in line and look out at the audience. Normally, they do not face other actors who are also in the performance. The readers direct their lines towards the audience. A specified narrator usually reads the lines or passages that explain an action or describe a scene or character.

Potential Benefits of Using RT in the Classroom

Research on RT in EFL is lacking as most of the available data is based on research on RT in L1 settings. However, there are many potential benefits of using RT in the L2 classroom. Through repeated readings of the text, students can improve reading rate and the ability to decode words

quickly and accurately (Carrick, 2006). Role-play and theatrical text reading build oral communication skills and reading fluency because students must act in character and say their lines expressively at the right time. The shared reading experience also promotes bonding between classmates, and helps build interpersonal skills and teamwork in the classroom (Cornwell, n.d.). RT is a powerful experience for all participants because it is an active learning experience and students do not read indifferently, but instead become active participants in the story (Cornwell, n.d.). Many RT practitioners who teach in L1 settings say RT is a fun and collaborative activity (e.g., Cox, n.d.; The National Children's Book and Literacy Alliance, n.d.). RT is also said to be inclusive and work well with all kinds of students (MDEMEIO, 2012). This may be because even lower-level, less confident students can actively participate as they do not have to memorize lines. The collaborative aspect of RT seems well suited for EFL in Japan, as I have observed that many Japanese students like and value being part of a group or team, as opposed to working individually.

Steps for Implementing RT in the Classroom

Taylor de Caballero (2013) provides some helpful guidelines for teachers interested in implementing RT.

- *Select a text* – it should be interesting and a little more advanced than current student reading level.
- *Class reading* – read the text with students and pronounce unfamiliar words and explain vocabulary as necessary.
- *Assign roles* – divide the text depending on the number of readers you have, or use a ready-made RT script that has a definite number of roles.
- *Practice- Explore- Practice Cycle* – practice reading the text and work on specific skills that you would like to focus on (projection, voice inflection, intonation, simple gestures, facial expression, emotion, etc.). This is called "meaningful reading."
- *Performance* – perform for an audience.

Implementing RT in a Required English Communication Course

I wanted to find out if RT could be integrated successfully into a larger, required course. I have had success over the last few years integrating drama into a one-semester, required English communication course for first year students at Suzuka University of Medical Science (SUMS). The sub-theme of the course is presentation skills. Students typically make two or three speeches or presentations over the course of the semester.

In addition to basic English language skills, I generally spend a little time teaching voice inflection, gesture use, and voice projection. In order to reinforce these skills and boost student confidence, I usually do a drama project where students act out a short play called *Slow Food* in small groups of seven or eight students. The drama project usually takes about five full class periods to complete, which is a big chunk of time out of a fifteen-week course. I wanted to see if I could obtain the same positive results as the drama project by implementing an RT project that would hopefully take up less class time. After the RT project, I planned to have the students make a final, short speech. I planned to observe their speeches and then survey the students to try and gauge if students' use of basic presentation skills had improved and if their confidence had increased due to participation in the RT project.

In order to keep the theme of the RT project centered on nutrition, I decided to integrate an RT called *Snack Attack* (Bafle, 2008) into two classes of first-year students in the Nursing Department at SUMS. There were roughly 45 students in each class. *Snack Attack* is a story about two siblings, Fred and Virginia, who on their way to grab a snack in a supermarket, encounter some talkative produce that persuade them to choose fresh, healthy alternatives to potato chips and cookies. The twenty-some other characters in the play are all various fruits and vegetables that try and coax the children into choosing them as a snack. They do this by providing the kids with nutritional information and interesting trivia about themselves. Halfway through the story the fruits and vegetables get into an argument as to which is a healthier snack. There is a lot of lively debate among the characters in the second half of the play, which I thought would be fun for the students.

Mom:	Fred! Virginia! Find your snacks and meet me at checkout in five.
Fred:	Quick! Chips and cookies in aisle three!
Virginia:	I'll race you!
Narrator:	Virginia took a shortcut through produce, but soon was stopped in her tracks.
Fred:	Come on, Virginia!
Virginia:	Wait. I hear something.
Fred:	What is it?
Salad Mix:	(muffled) <i>Lettuce</i> out! <i>Lettuce</i> out! We're snacks, too!
Fred:	Who's that?
Star Fruit:	Just ignore them. The salad mix wants to go for a spin.
Virginia:	Who's talking?
Fred:	I think it's the produce.
Star Fruit:	They never give up! No one is going to buy a bag of leafy greens when a beautiful star fruit is available.
Banana:	That <i>carambola</i> is so self-centered. The banana is the most popular fruit in the United States. Americans eat an average of 28 pounds each per year, but you don't hear me <i>peeling</i> on and on, do you?
Virginia:	I <i>like</i> bananas, but we're looking for other snacks. Right, Fred?
Potato:	Enough with the fruit! Fred, how about the vegetables? Everybody loves a spud! Baked or mashed, we're packed with potassium.

Figure 1. Excerpt from the *Snack Attack* RT script (Bafile, 2008).

Implementing the *Snack Attack* RT Project

First, I explained to the students what RT is and also told them the purpose of the project. We had done some class work on gesturing and voice inflection in previous classes. I told students that the purpose of the project was to practice using these skills, as well as to try to develop some confidence for the upcoming short speech that they would give in front of the class after the RT project was completed. I then gave the students the ready-made RT *Snack Attack* script. We did a class reading of the RT script and I explained some of the difficult vocabulary and modeled the

words that were difficult to pronounce. Roles were then assigned to students by having them draw playing cards. The card each student drew corresponded to a predetermined character in the script.

With roughly 45 students in a class, there were enough students to make two RT groups. After determining their roles and breaking into two groups, I had the students read the script one time at their desks in their groups with a focus on voice projection. In order to ensure that students comprehended their lines, I asked them to translate their lines into Japanese as a homework assignment to be completed by the next class. In addition to the translation, students were also tasked with adding simple gestures and voice inflection to their lines as part of the homework.

First Rehearsal

In the next class period, we worked on staging for the final performance and had a rehearsal. In my mind, I had pictured having the students line up in multiple rows in the front of the classroom with the fruits on one side and the vegetables on the other. However, with the large number of characters in this RT script I found that it was difficult for these first-year students to group together like that and stay in focus for an extended period of time. The urge to talk with other students standing close by was too great for them. After failing with the initial grouping because of excess chatting and lack of student concentration, I had them line up in one long line that spread from the front of the room around to one side of the classroom. I also had them open up a little space between each fruit or vegetable group. Lining them up in this way eliminated some of the unwanted chatting and student focus improved. However, the students ended up being very spread out around the room.

Next, each group read and “walked through” the script two times. The first time, I emphasized voice projection, trying to make sure that student voices carried throughout the classroom. In addition to reading practice, we also had to figure out how Fred and Virginia would make their way along the line of fruits and vegetables. In traditional RT there is usually no physical movement around the stage and readers look at the audience, not at other performers. However, I felt that having Fred and Virginia moving and interacting somewhat with the other characters would help increase student comprehension of the RT script. There were also some

choral lines in the script, so in the first reading we also determined how we would handle the timing of the choral lines.

The second reading focused on adding gestures and voice inflection. Students had not done much preparation before class, so this did not go as well as I had hoped. After the second rehearsal, I asked them to prepare for the final performance the following week by doing expressive reading outside of class. I also asked them again to be sure to add voice inflection and gestures to their lines. In traditional RT, there are usually no costumes, and props are kept to a minimum. However, I thought it would help audience comprehension if students wore clothing that corresponded to the color of their fruit or vegetable for the performance, so I requested the students to wear clothing like that on final performance day.

Final Performance

The final performance took place the following week. Only about half of the students prepared for their part by wearing some kind of clothing that corresponded to the color of their fruit or vegetable. To begin the performance, I had the students all group together in the front of the classroom. They did a very simple introduction. All the characters said, "Readers Theatre! Snack Attack!" at the same time and then walked quickly to their positions in line.

It became clear quite quickly who had prepared for the final performance and who had not. Students who had prepared had good voice projection, used simple gestures, and could read their parts smoothly. Students that hadn't prepared did not project their voices at all, had trouble with pronunciation, and could not read their parts without difficulty. Because there were two RT groups, one group served as the other group's audience during the performance. Students in both groups were able to read through to the end of the script without any major mistakes. The *Snack Attack* RT script concludes with a play-on-words type joke by one of the siblings. The students decided to finish the performance by having the entire cast laugh loudly at the joke. This signaled to the audience that the performance was over.

Teacher Observations of the *Snack Attack* RT

The students seemed to enjoy collaborating with each other and performing together in their RT teams in the *Snack Attack* RT project. However, staging for the final performance was somewhat problematic. The students were spread out in a long line that wrapped around one side of the room. Because they were so spread out, the lively debate between the fruits and vegetables did not work well because the characters were too far apart. It would probably work better to have the fruits and vegetables closer together and somewhat facing each other to enhance the fruit versus vegetable conflict. In addition, because the characters were so far apart, it was difficult for the audience, as well as other performers in the skit, to hear the students who didn't project their voices well.

Shepard (2004) gives some general advice for character staging. He says characters should be arranged so they can face the audience as much as possible when speaking. Narrators, he advises, can be placed wherever, but they usually should stand in the front at either end of the stage. Shepard offers a practical method for discerning between which characters are "on stage" and which are "off stage." He says, in RT, that "off stage" characters should stay turned with their backs to the audience. In this way, Shepard says, it lets the audience know that the readers are out of the scene, even if they are still visible. When it's time to come back on stage, he suggests that they turn back around and move forward.

We were able to prepare and perform the RT in three class periods and I did not feel that students were overburdened with having to learn how to read too many lines. In total, each fruit and vegetable only had two or three short lines to read throughout the entire performance. However, these large groups of first-year students proved difficult to organize and keep on track. Even though the RT was somewhat successful, it might be better to do RT in smaller groups with fewer characters for easier classroom management.

There are over 20 characters in the *Snack Attack* RT script. That means performers had to wait a long time between lines to speak. The action picks up halfway through the story when the fruits and vegetables start arguing amongst themselves and the dialogue becomes snappy. When selecting an RT script Shepard (2004, p. 41) says that, "Almost any story can be scripted for reader's theater, but some are easier and work better than others. In general, look for stories that

are simple and lively, with lots of dialog or action, and with not too many scenes or characters." The action in *Snack Attack* is particularly slow in the first part of the story and this may have contributed to the lapse in concentration during rehearsal for these large groups of first-year students.

Although the student performance was far from perfect, overall I was actually pleased with the results, although more time probably needed to be dedicated to reading rehearsal. The better students in the class who had done a good job with preparation performed well. However, about half of the students did not project their voices and could not read their part smoothly. These were first-year students just in their third month of university in a required English course, so it would be unrealistic to expect all of them to perform flawlessly. Perhaps, part of one or two more class periods should have been spent on reading rehearsal with more gesture and voice inflection practice. Another idea would be to have students submit an audio file of their reading as a homework assignment before the final performance. In this way, the teacher could ensure that the students actually practiced reading their part for the final performance.

I explained what RT was to the students before implementing the project. However, it might have been a good idea to show them some video of an actual RT performance so that they could get a better feel for how they need to use their voice when reading their lines. Each of the two RT groups served as the other group's audience for the final performance. This worked out well, but to bolster student motivation a little more, inviting an outside audience to watch the final performance might have incited them to prepare more thoroughly.

The two siblings in the play, Fred and Virginia, have many more lines than other characters in the RT script. Two of the lower-level English speakers in the class ended up drawing the parts of Fred and Virginia. To ensure a smoother performance it might behoove the instructor to either ask for volunteers, or to assign more proficient English speakers to play these parts that require a higher English ability.

The introduction to the *Snack Attack* RT was very underwhelming. More thought needed to be put into it. The students just said, "Reader's theatre! Snack Attack!" in chorus and ran to their spot on stage and started the performance. Shepard (2004) says that a good beginning and ending

are crucial for an effective performance. He recommends giving a few words of greeting, introducing the group and saying a few words about what it's presenting and the purpose of the performance. Shepard also says that the intro can present a fact, an idea, an anecdote or even a question. After introducing the story, he suggests announcing the author and the title, and then having the readers wait to begin until all performers are in place and frozen and the audience is quiet.

The conclusion to the *Snack Attack* RT could have been better. The RT ended with the entire cast laughing at a play-on-words type joke. This indicated to the audience that the RT was over, but something seemed lacking. Shepard (2004) also provides some good advice on how to end an RT performance. As the story ends, he says that the last words should be spoken slowly and exaggerated so the audience realizes the story is over. After that, Shepard suggests that the readers should freeze for a few seconds and then close their scripts, face the audience, and bow all together. This is a simple technique that might be easy for students to implement.

Post-*Snack Attack* RT Student Speeches

In the following two weeks after the *Snack Attack* RT, students prepared for their final presentation of the semester, a short speech where they introduced their hometowns. Students were required to use voice projection and to incorporate voice inflection and gestures into their presentations. In the last class of the semester, I divided the class into two groups. One student from each of the two groups gave a presentation simultaneously on opposite ends of the classroom to one half of the class. In this way, all forty-some presentations could be completed in one class period. I watched and graded one group of students on one end of the classroom, and had students videotape the other group on the other side of the room so that I could grade their speeches afterwards. I was pleasantly surprised with student use of the basic presentation skills in their speeches that we had worked on throughout the semester and in the RT project. The students also seemed to be more confident. However, I wanted to find out if that was true and also to get their feelings on the RT project. After they completed their speeches, I had them fill out a short, six-question Likert scale survey about the RT project.

Analysis of *Snack Attack* RT Student Survey Results

The purpose of the *Snack Attack* RT project was to give students an opportunity to work on the basic presentation skills of voice projection, voice inflection, and gesture use that we had worked on in class. In addition, through the project, I hoped that by collaborating with other students as an RT team in a non-threatening environment, students would gain more confidence speaking English in front of an audience. As shown in Table 1, 98% of the students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed the *Snack Attack* RT project. The results of this question indicate that I was able to create an environment where students did not feel threatened in any way by the RT project. However, the RT project was not easy for all the students. 40% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that the project was difficult for them. In spite of the project being somewhat difficult for many of the students, 75% of them agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to take part in another RT project.

As far as basic presentation skill development went, 93% of the students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the RT project helped them learn voice inflection. 72% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more comfortable using gestures after the *Snack Attack* RT. In regards to confidence gained for the final speech, 74% of the students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more confident for the final speech once they had completed the RT project. From this data it can be concluded that the *Snack Attack* RT project helped a majority of students develop and gain confidence in basic presentation skills that are necessary to make dynamic presentations. In addition, through participation in the RT project, speaking confidence increased for a greater part of the students. These results lead me to believe that RT has potential in EFL as an instrument that teachers can use to help students develop the confidence and skills needed to speak English with more expression.

Table 1

Student Survey Results (n = 88)

Statement	# who strongly agree	# who agree	# who partly agree	# who partly disagree	# who disagree	# who strongly disagree
I enjoyed the Snack Attack RT	61	25	1	0	1	0
The RT project helped me learn voice inflection	51	31	6	0	0	0
The RT project was difficult	13	22	28	0	16	9
I felt confident for the final speech after the RT	21	44	19	0	3	1
I felt more confident using gestures after the RT project	28	35	22	0	3	0
I would like to take part in another RT project	32	34	19	0	3	0

Summary

As there is no need for students to memorize lines, RT is a non-threatening, fun, inclusive, and collaborative activity that can help students improve fluency, comprehension, and confidence. However, student interests probably need to be taken into account when choosing the RT script and repeated readings of the text in class, as well as ample rehearsal time are needed for students to benefit the most from RT. Teachers also need to utilize Taylor de Caballero's (2013) practice-explore-practice cycle to do "meaningful" reading and work on specific skills. The instructor also needs to make clear to students what is expected of them in the final performance. If possible, to maintain student motivation, RT should be performed in front of an out-of-class audience.

Although I felt that the *Snack Attack* RT project was successful and believe from this experiment that RT can be used effectively in large classes, classroom management and staging of the RT teams proved to be challenging. Choosing an RT script that has fewer characters and with lively dialogue throughout the entire script could help students stay on track and prevent lapses in concentration. With fewer characters, staging would also be less problematic as students could be

grouped closer together and all cast members could directly face the audience. Over the years I have observed that Japanese students feel comfortable in, and like to be part of, a team. RT is non-threatening and collaborative in nature. Much more research needs to be done on RT in large EFL classes, but I think RT shows promise as a method for helping Japanese students learn presentation skills and build the confidence needed to try and speak English more dynamically in front of others.

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Andragogy in Action: Drama Techniques for Adult Learning

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Abstract

Along with a discussion of andragogy, which is the concept that adults learn differently than younger learners, and therefore require different teaching methods, this paper also explores a specific set of exercises, called drama techniques, to increase the effectiveness of adult foreign language teaching and learning that can be employed within the framework of andragogy. Each of Knowles's assumptions (see Knowles, 1984; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007), which form the basis for the andragogy concept, will be analyzed in conjunction with specific drama techniques. Through this exposition it will be shown that drama techniques are effective tools for implementing the andragogical approach to adult foreign language teaching.

There are several theories of adult learning prevalent in the field of education today, but the most well-known of these is andragogy by Malcolm Knowles, which he first proposed in his original book on adult learning, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus Pedagogy* (Knowles, 1970, 1980). Although Knowles was the first researcher to define the concept of adult learning in terms of specific criteria, which he stated as four assumptions, the idea of teaching differently to adults than to younger learners has been in existence for as long as humans have been teaching and learning. As Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) state in reference to great teachers in history such as Confucius, Socrates, Cicero, and others, "Because their experiences were with adults, they developed a very different concept of the learning/teaching process from the one that later dominated formal education" (p. 35). The term andragogy was first proposed by Knowles (1968) and, as quoted in Merriam, Caffarella, and

Baumgartner (2007), Knowles defined andragogy as “the art and science of helping adults learn.” Knowles originally published his work as a theory of adult learning, but after further research and consideration, he revised the theory into a set of assumptions, which he continued to call andragogy (Knowles, 1980).

Knowles’s four assumptions about adult learners (Knowles, et al., 2005, p. 39-40) are as follow:

1. As a person matures, his or her self-concept moves from that of a dependent personality toward one of a self-directing human being.
2. An adult accumulates a growing reservoir of experience, which is a rich resource for learning.
3. The readiness of an adult to learn is closely related to the developmental tasks of his or her social role.
4. There is a change in time perspective as people mature – from future application of knowledge to immediacy of application. Thus, an adult is more problem-centered than subject-centered in learning.

Knowles (1984) later revised his original set of four assumptions by adding two more assumptions. These are:

5. The most potent motivations are internal rather than external.
6. Adults need to know why they learn something.

Background

Prior to the official publication of Knowles’s theory of andragogy, the standard of pedagogy, which is defined by dictionary.com (2017) as “the art and science of teaching; education; instructional methods,” was widely accepted as the common practice for learners of all ages and grade levels. Pedagogy can be seen at its most basic level as the practice and activities wherein a teacher or instructor gives information and disseminates educational materials, intended to create knowledge acquisition and learning, to a group of students in a teacher-centered environment. Knowles understood what many educators and researchers have discovered after attempting to use standard

pedagogical teaching practices with adult learners, often without success; that many pedagogical practices were not designed to be effective for adult learners. While children are well-equipped to take in information simply because it is being delivered to them by a recognized authority figure such as a teacher, coach, or counselor, this is not the case when adult learners are involved.

Knowles believed that the study of adult education must focus on the learner. As Smith (2002) notes, “Knowles was convinced that adults learned differently to children – and that this provided the basis for a distinctive field of enquiry. Subsequently, Knowles dedicated his life’s work to examining and defining the specific constructs of adult learners. Specifically, Knowles was interested in how adults were different from younger learners in terms of attitude, motivation, and experience. His findings resulted in his groundbreaking set of assumptions known as andragogy.

Criticisms of Andragogy

One of the most controversial aspects of andragogy is the inability to definitively classify what activities fit into the mold of andragogy. When discussing the efficacy of andragogy in terms of what can be empirically defined, Rachal (2002) notes, “Such investigations are further impeded by the absence of clear meaning as to what procedures constitute andragogical practice” (p.211).

For many educators the lack of empirical data and established methodology is reason enough to discard andragogy as a viable system for adult education. There simply is not enough solid proof for some practitioners to accept andragogy and abandon the pedagogical practices that they are used to. However, the implementation of performance-assisted language learning techniques, especially drama techniques, can satisfy each of Knowles’s assumptions about adult learners.

Also included in the many criticisms of Knowles’s andragogy is the idea that individual learners cannot be pigeon-holed into one clearly defined group. According to Cooke (2010), “The ‘theory’ of andragogy was criticized for implying that all adult learners are self-directed and that children are not” (p. 214). It is unreasonable to claim that every learner of a certain age group is exactly the same, but this does not discredit andragogy and the assumption that adult learners are self-directed. There will always be outliers in any theory or concept of learning, but common characteristics are still valid when they describe a large majority of a particular subset of learners.

This paper will present an account of various performance-assisted language learning activities that are successful in addressing one of the main criticisms of andragogy, which is the inability to concretely define learning activities as either andragogy or not andragogy.

Learning Environments

Once andragogy is accepted, it becomes necessary to define the exact learning environments where it can be implemented successfully. Andragogy should be applied not only in universities, but in all fields of education that involve adult learners. In addition to the traditional universities and community colleges, there is an increasing need for continued professional development and skills training in today's modern global world. Additionally, societal changes and technological advances have created an environment where learning is pursued well into adulthood. No longer does the standard education track consist of four to eight years of college and then a career bereft of adult education. As noted by Chao (2009), "With the changing demographic situation of the developed world, there has been a focus on the concept of lifelong learning, where people are learning throughout their lives. The emergence of the knowledge society, rapid introduction of new technology and the changing work place increases the importance of adult learning" (p. 905). This concept is supported by Kilpi-Jakonen, Vono de Vilhena, and Blossfeld (2015) who state, "Adult education is an increasingly important form of education in globalized and aging societies" (p. 1). Andragogy, which can be applied to many forms of adult education, including specialized skill training for professional advancement, focused-knowledge acquisition for specific projects or endeavors, and connected content for expanding existing base knowledge in a given field, may potentially become even more prominent in the coming decades.

Andragogy in Japanese Education

In relation to Japan, andragogy can be applied to university EFL teaching, business English classes, leadership studies, as well as older adult learning environments such as community centers and hobby groups where Japanese learners want to increase their English skill level simply for fun or for future travel. The rapidly aging population in Japan creates a unique opportunity for EFL teaching in which andragogical practices can be utilized to their full potential. One of the most

effective ways to make use of the adult learning concepts Knowles has presented is to blend drama techniques into the standard curriculum of adult education at every level within Japan.

What are Drama Techniques?

Within the framework of the six assumptions that make up Knowles's andragogy, drama techniques can be implemented as a catalyst for deeper engagement and increased motivation in various adult learning settings. However, before precise analysis of each of Knowles's assumptions it is useful to define and explore the broad concept of drama techniques, and to state why they are a beneficial strategy for use in foreign language education. Firstly, drama techniques can be utilized in various adult learning environments to heighten the quality of engagement for language learners, as well as increasing the motivational level of participants. One of the most discouraging aspects of foreign language learning is the stress and anxiety many EFL learners suffer from. The Japanese system of high pressure testing and focus on rote learning and memorization can cause many students to become disengaged at an early age, particularly in foreign language environments. Drama techniques, in the focus of andragogical practices, directly combat this often-debilitating construct of foreign language learning. Drama techniques can unleash creative energy that students possess but are rarely given the opportunity to express in typical pedagogical learning environments. As Kobayashi (2012) states, "Drama techniques are basically games that are used to help actors enhance their creativity and unlock spontaneity" (p. 30).

Although this definition of drama techniques would seem to imply that the user must be an actor, this is not the case. The original design of drama techniques was for actors, but they can be transformed or adapted for use by adult learners as well. When using drama techniques in the classroom students become the actors. They participate in meaningful exercises that increase learning because they are physically and emotionally invested in the learning process, just as actors are invested in the piece they are performing.

Another characteristic of drama techniques that lend themselves to more effective adult learning is the inclusive nature of all members of the learning group, as well as the intrinsic ability to build motivation and lower anxiety for learners of any adult age, regardless of individual backgrounds and experiences. The importance of raising motivation and lowering anxiety in adult

learners cannot be overstated. As Cooke (2010) noted, “Whatever benefits adult learners may reap in their pursuit of education, there are fears, anxiety and mental barriers to overcome, which will hopefully not overwhelm or squelch learner motivation and success” (p. 212).

The use of drama techniques also ties in with andragogical belief that the focus should be on the learner and the activity rather than a piece of information or a particular concept. Along with a focus on the learner, the theatrical nature of drama techniques contains elements such as fun, energy, creativity, and enjoyment that satisfy the assumptions of andragogy in unique fashion. In fact, it is as if Knowles had drama techniques in mind when he was defining his methodology.

Andragogy activities can be implemented in all forms of adult learning; however, the following discussion will focus on formal and non-formal settings. Adult education can be classified into three distinct modes (Merriam, et al., 2007): Formal education, which involves colleges and universities where students work towards obtaining formal degrees; non-formal education, which does not lead to formal degrees but may lead to certifications, and is usually sponsored by employers or community-based organizations such as libraries and civic centers; and informal education, which includes self-directed learning and learning gained from general life experiences. In the next section, the six assumptions of andragogy will be discussed in terms of university and college, business English classes, and non-formal settings.

Drama Techniques Within the Framework of Andragogy

The following is an exploration of each assumption of andragogy and examples of drama techniques that satisfy that premise. Within this discussion, the connection between drama techniques and andragogy as a system for adult learning will be made clear.

Assumption #1: As a person matures, his or her self-concept moves from that of a dependent personality toward one of a self-directing human being.

Improvisation is a fun and exciting drama technique that satisfies the first assumption of andragogy. Improvisation is defined as “the act or art of speaking or performing without practicing or preparing ahead of time” (Merriam-Webster.com, 2017). Improvisation, or ‘improv’ as it is often referred to, can take place in any setting and within any field, including athletics, academics,

business, etc. Within the field of academics, and specifically relating to English language teaching, improvisation refers to a group of dramatic exercises and activities that can be implemented to help students increase learning and enjoyment. While it is natural for children to play and act creatively in normal interactions, it is much more difficult to perform structured improvisation games with young learners. Improvisation, by definition, should be creative and spontaneous; however, there still must be an element of structure involved if the improv is to be performed successfully. Structured improvisation is difficult or impossible to implement effectively with young learners because they are not self-directed in many instances, and therefore they likely lack the necessary life experience that must be brought to improvisation games if they are to be performed effectively. However, by the time students have matured into adulthood they are able to participate in improvisation activities, even without using foreign language skills. Furthermore, for adult learners within the Japanese education system, improvisation can be an effective tool for promoting critical thinking skills. Many improvisation games, such as 'Fruit', 'Numbers', and 'Mirror, Mirror' outlined below, do not require any language skills because they involve little or no actual conversation but they still promote critical thinking because students must decide the course of the activity while the game is happening.

The improv game 'Fruit' involves two or more students acting out a real-life situation but using only one word- a pre-chosen fruit such as 'banana', to express ideas and thoughts. For example, two students could improv a wedding proposal, but instead of "Will you marry me" the student simply says "Banana" with his biggest 'I love you' smile.

The improv game 'Numbers' is similar to 'Fruit' in regard to using no conversation, but in this game the students go back and forth counting up to 50 (or any predetermined number) in any group of numbers the participants choose. The key is that the students must act as if they are having a conversation but using only number sequences. For example, the first student may begin by saying "one, two, three, four," but with a questioning tone. Then the second student may reply with "five, six, seven," but in a tone of response or further questioning. Through the use of consecutive number sequences and tone the students are directing their own learning.

Another example of an improv game that shows self-directed learning is the popular game 'Tag'. Participants begin a scene, and then another student can yell 'tag' and replace one of the

players. The interloper must then change the scene in some way, which allows for self-directed learning because the new direction of the improv scene is determined by the learner rather than the teacher.

There are hundreds of improvisation games that can be used within the scope of andragogical teaching and learning because improv games require self-direction from the participants.

Assumption #2: An adult accumulates a growing reservoir of experience, which is a rich resource for learning.

One example of a suitable drama technique that satisfies the second assumption of andragogy is role-play. Throughout the history of adult education both informed educators and drama enthusiasts alike have worked to develop and implement a wide variety of drama techniques that relate to real-life situations and are useful in learning environments involving students from varying backgrounds and experiences. Role-play as a communicative activity involves students acting out a situation, usually with a loosely defined circumstance and some kind of conflict to resolve or obstacle to overcome. In this exercise the students decide which information is important and where the resolution will come from. Role-play is a powerful drama technique that is sometimes implemented in pedagogical teaching but can be equally or more valuable for adult learners in an andragogical teaching environment based on the common themes of role-play in EFL contexts, as we shall see below.

Assumption #3: The readiness of an adult to learn is closely related to the developmental tasks of his or her social role.

Many junior high and high school textbooks in Japan involve role-plays where participants are doing activities that they have no foundation for, such as checking in at a hotel, ordering from a menu at a restaurant, or asking for or giving directions to a foreigner. With andragogy, the adult learners have much more experience and life skills to bring to the activity. Because of the life experiences they bring to the activity, older students are much more likely to problem-solve effectively or to try new ideas as well when these common role-play scenarios are explored.

Assumption #4: There is a change in time perspective as people mature – from future application of knowledge to immediacy of application.

Another facet of role-play that relates to the third and fourth assumptions is the ability of the adult learner to imagine various situations that younger learners have no basis for imagining. These assumptions have their foundation in the concept that an adult learner is ready to learn certain ideas which will be useful in real life and which can be applied immediately to their daily life rather than stored away for future use, as is the case with pedagogical learning. As stated by Knowles et al. (2005),

Adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situations... furthermore, they learn new knowledge, understandings, skills, values, and attitudes most effectively when they are presented in the context of application to real-life situations. (p. 67)

Role-plays about checking in at hotels and airports are examples of how this drama technique is an effective learning tool within the framework of andragogy. The life experiences of an adult learner allow them to try new possibilities and interact with others to problem-solve, even in unfamiliar situations.

Some critics argue that just because a person is of adult age does not mean their life experiences are sufficient to enhance their learning process. Again, drama techniques can answer this criticism because they can be used with all types of adult learners, regardless of their individual life experiences and collective knowledge. In fact, the nature of adult individuals' various experiences works to increase the effectiveness of drama techniques within the scope of adult learning because each activity will be enhanced only when each individual learner brings something unique to the table. By contrast, pedagogical practices (which focus on instruction and dissemination of knowledge) with adult learners, may impede the use of life experiences to increase learning due to the teacher-centered nature of pedagogy.

Furthermore, role-play allows students the freedom of becoming someone new for a brief moment during the learning process. Instead of being a student sitting at a desk listening to a lecture (pedagogical practice), the student can become a flight attendant or tourist in a foreign country. This transformation, regardless of how brief, can have a powerful effect on the learning

process. According to Bray (2010), role-play can “transform the atmosphere of a classroom because it encourages students to step out of themselves to take on roles and respond appropriately to others in the present moment” (p. 13). The key aspect of andragogical practices that students bring their own life experiences to the learning environment will show clearly in role-play activities because there is no script provided. Students choose the direction and output for the activity while the teacher merely facilitates the creative process from a bystander’s position. Additionally, role-play is a perfect example of a drama technique that has intrinsic problem-solving features. According to Kawakami (2012), “Drama techniques are problem solving in nature, often about conflict resolution – they require students to work together towards a concrete goal that they can perceive easily” (p. 18).

Assumption #5: The most potent motivations are internal rather than external.

Adult students who participate in drama techniques are more motivated to succeed because they must work as a group in many situations. One example of a group-focused drama technique is ‘Description Circle’. In this exercise students form small groups and then work together to create a list of descriptive words or phrases in reference to a certain topic. For example, students might view nature pictures and then go in turn to create their descriptive list. After creating their list, they then write complete sentences using the words and phrases. This activity satisfies the fifth assumption of andragogy because students who work together are motivated by the ordinary desire to be part of a team and to help your ‘group’ achieve success in a given task. When students work together they are naturally invested in the learning outcome, which satisfies Knowles’s assumption that students “possess a desire to actively participate in the learning process,” as well as the assumption that ‘students are highly motivated to learn’ (Cooke, 2010, p. 209). The internal motivations that adult possess come to the surface when drama techniques like “Description Circle’ are implemented, regardless of the topic or lesson focus.

Furthermore, drama techniques like ‘Description Circle’ and role-play are useful catalysts for expressing preexisting internal motivation, as well as increasing engagement and enjoyment for adult learners. Kobayashi (2012) says drama techniques “can be used to develop students’ creativity and to boost confidence; encourage group participation and build trust and acceptance in

the group; utilize cooperative noncompetitive interaction; and support learner autonomy” (p. 30). These concepts all tie in closely with internal motivation.

Assumption #6: Adults need to know why they learn something.

This assumption was added by Knowles (1989) later in his research when it became obvious that there was a connection between meaning and action in adult learning. Adults have a different mindset because the world that they function in, regardless of their individual circumstances, is based on vastly different parameters than that of younger learners. Even those in their late-teens have different views and ideas based on the general constructs of a teenage world as opposed to an adult world. In regard to elementary and preschool learners, the differences in mindset and general constructs of daily living and thinking can only be described as night and day.

Improvisation can be applied to this assumption as well because the participants in any improv game must use their own experiences, perceptions, and ideas to create the outcomes. Like role-play, improvisation involves students actively engaging in situational drama, with the difference being that improvisation gives nothing more than a general starting point. There is no stated conflict to resolve or obstacle to overcome, just a general situation. The students then decide collaboratively where the scene will go. The benefits are the same as with role-play, but the input from the learners involved is even greater. As noted by Barbee (2016) in reference to Spada’s (2007) support of drama techniques for use in the L2 language classroom, “The learner becomes an active participant in the language learning and teachers are expected to develop activities to promote self-learning, group interaction in real situations and peer-teaching,” (p. 7). Furthermore, Barbee (2016) discussed Maley and Duff’s (1978) ideas related to dramatic activities, which directly tie into the concepts of andragogy, “They [dramatic activities] are activities which give the student an opportunity to use his own personality in creating the material on which the language class is to be based. These activities draw on the natural ability of every person to imitate, mimic, and express himself through gesture. They draw, too, on his imagination and memory” (p. 8).

When implementing improvisation games, the students can choose the starting points for each exercise, thereby satisfying Knowles’s assumption that students must value what they are

being taught, and they must play an active role in choosing the learning outcomes. The only contribution of the teacher is to possibly facilitate the starting and finishing points, but even these can be determined by the students if desired. It is possible to allow the activity to come to a natural end when the students decide they are finished. An example of an improvisation game that demonstrates these concepts is 'Freeze'. Similar to 'Tag', 'Freeze' involves two or more students acting out a scenario with a starting point but no predetermined direction or ending point. In 'Freeze' any student who wishes to join the activity can call out 'freeze' and then take the place of someone already doing the improv. The main difference between 'Tag' and 'Freeze' is that the interloper must join the scene in the exact physical position of the person they are replacing. Then the new participant must change the direction of the interaction, which allows the new player to bring their own life experiences and ideas into the mix, thereby creating meaning and learning outcomes. This is a direct result of the andragogical mode of adult learning because the entire activity is based around students creating meaning and controlling learning.

Teacher's Role

It is true that the concepts of andragogy are based on student-centered learning. However, this does not mean that the teacher can simply begin an exercise or present a dramatic technique such as improvisation or role-play, and then sit back and watch the action. The teacher plays a central role in the learning process through facilitation of dramatic techniques, followed by discussion and reflection of learning outcomes. It has been stated clearly in relation to the six assumptions that students must bring their own personal life experiences to the dramatic techniques that are implemented, but the teacher must also allow time for discussion of what actually takes place. Drama games are not only used to create fun and excitement in language learning; they must also be analyzed and discussed in whole-class settings to determine precisely what learning has taken place and how the actions can be built on to further the learning process. Students may not even realize that they have brought their own experiences and ideas into the drama games that they have participated in; therefore, the teacher must facilitate the learning process by helping the students recognize the context of personal experience that naturally comes to the surface when adult students participate in drama techniques such as role-play, improvisation, and 'Description Circle'.

Need for Further Research

Knowles's set of assumptions have been around for more than 50 years, yet there is still a lack of scholarly research into the efficacy of andragogical practices in the spectrum of adult education. One such study conducted by Merriam et al. in 2007 used Knowles's original andragogy idea as the basis for their exploration of learning in adulthood. According to Merriam et al. (2007), "Andragogy focuses on the adult learner and his or her life situation" (p. 22). Furthermore, "appreciating and taking into consideration the prior knowledge and experience of learners has become a basic assumption of our practice as educators of adults, wherever this knowledge was learned" (22). This study is useful in some aspects, but there is a strong need for more advanced and in-depth scholarly research into andragogy and performance-assisted language learning techniques. Presently there are scholarly articles supporting the usefulness of dramatic techniques in language learning, but there is a need for more focused research that uses specific techniques in recording data in support of andragogical teaching and learning.

Conclusion

Knowles et al. (2005) discuss other theories of adult learning that have been developed, such as Rogers's focus on teacher as facilitator, Brown's 'confluent education', and Houle's 'fundamental system' of educational design, yet none have remained relevant or have continued to gain in acceptance and popularity at the same rate as andragogy. Without question andragogy is a controversial topic in adult learning, but if the appropriate activities are implemented, Knowles's assumptions about adult learners can be satisfied. Once the assumptions are satisfied, then the benefits of andragogy can be achieved. Drama techniques can be applied in various adult learning situations because they allow students to bring their own unique life experiences to the forefront. Drama techniques are not hindered by cultural aspects of the learner, which can be the case for pedagogical teaching situations, because the adult learner plays the primary role in every andragogical learning activity. The value of these activities is also inherent because the learner decides the outcomes rather than the teacher. Furthermore, drama techniques are valuable for promoting student engagement and motivation while lowering anxiety and fear within the foreign language learning environment, as stated by Maley and Duff (1978; 2011, see Barbee, 2016). The

six assumptions of andragogy align fully with the use of dramatic techniques in language education because of the focus on the learner and the innate value of drama as a medium for learning and exploring individual thoughts and ideas in a foreign language classroom setting.

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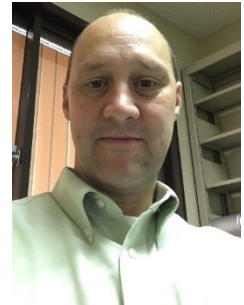
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In the Classroom

Connecting Reading to Speaking & Listening Through Debate

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Quick Guide

Keywords: Debate, literature, parliamentary debate, reading, speech

Learner English Level: Intermediate – advanced

Learner Maturity: Junior high school and above

Activity Time: 1-2 class periods (for preparation and debate)

Materials: Novel, stop watch

Novels are excellent tools for teachers to introduce vocabulary and are often used to explain the meaning and nuance of words. The use of both graded readers and authentic texts has been increasing in popularity in the ESL and EFL communities, especially in reading classes. However, speaking and listening classes can also benefit from the use of novels and this can lead to cross-class connections. Using novels as a source of debate material allows students to practice and reinforce language learned in their reading classes while encouraging them to explore the ideas, characters, and issues presented in the readings in a deep and meaningful way.

Preparation

Before this activity, all students should read the same novel. The type of book, with the possible exceptions of biographies and histories, does not matter. I personally have used both Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and John Grisham's *The Client*, in graded reader form, with equal success. Students should learn the vocabulary, discuss plot points, and do character analysis as they normally would in a reading class until the book is finished.

Procedure

First Class Period

Step 1: Divide the class into small groups. Ask the students to come up with around three questions about the ideas, themes, characters, or problems faced in the book. These questions can be very specific to the novel discussed or extrapolated from its content. For example, in the case of *Frankenstein* there were questions ranging from *Who is responsible for the deaths in the novel: Dr. Frankenstein or the creature?* to *Do scientists have the right to create life?* Students may need some help coming up with good questions.

Step 2: Have students exchange their questions with another group. Ask them to come up with arguments and support for both sides of the questions their classmates asked. The students may take notes on the questions and discussion. This step only needs to be done once, but you may continue switching papers until all groups have had the chance to take notes on each other's papers.

Before the next class period, turn one of the questions into a debate motion. For example, in the earlier example of "*Do scientists have the right to create life?*" you might get either "This House believes that scientists have the right to create life" or "This House believes that scientists do not have the right to create life." You may choose the motion yourself based on what you think would be the easiest to make into a fair debate, or older students may want to choose a motion for themselves.

Second Class Period

Step 1: Choose the debaters and ask them to come to the front of the room. In earlier debates, you may want to specifically pick stronger students to model the activity, although I tend to let students volunteer or just pick them at random. Decide the Affirmative/Government and Negative/Opposition teams (again, either at random or by mutual agreement) and assign a motion. Students have 10-20 minutes to prepare.

Step 2: Have the audience vote on the motion before the debate by using a slip of paper or an online survey. They should choose one of the following: agree, disagree or undecided. Gather the results. I use an online survey tool like Kahoot! to tally the scores.

Step 3: Debate on the topic in your preferred style, using a stop-watch to keep track of the time per speech. I use Parliamentary Debate Association (PDA) style with 15-minutes of preparation, three-minute constructive speeches, and two-minute reply speeches because it fits into one 50-minute class period. I also prefer parliamentary style because it is more like natural conversation than evidence-heavy styles.

Step 4: When the debate is finished, ask the audience members to vote again. This time there should be only two options: agree or disagree. The group with the highest degree of positive change wins.

Adaptation

While debate may seem like an advanced activity, it can be practiced with lower level students. In this case, the flow of a debate needs to be explained with more scaffolding and Japanese support, depending on time constraints. I give my students an outline and encourage them to make their sentences on the spot, but it is also possible to make a blank “script” that students can fill in with their own information. Students may also benefit from watching a debate, either in English or Japanese, before jumping in themselves.

In terms of the content itself, both graded readers and original novels work for this activity. Simple stories, such as “The Boy Who Cried Wolf” or “Beauty and the Beast” are good options for young students or those with a limited vocabulary.

Smith: Connecting Reading to Speaking & Listening Through Debate

Option

Continue debating using other topics discussed in the first class period. This allows all students an opportunity to try debating on the same book and allows the teacher to cover multiple aspects of the text.

Extension

Ask students to write a reflection about what they learned. They should include comments about both the content of the debate (their feelings about the arguments and evidence presented compared to their own ideas and beliefs) and the debate itself (the importance of speech manner, organization, etc.).

Conclusion

Giving students the opportunity to discuss and debate about topics related to their reading in another class allows for a deeper understanding of and connection to the ideas and situations in that text. As teachers, we are always looking for ways to increase our students' understanding and interest in what we teach. Using debate to bring the issues and ideas presented in a text to life in the real world is one way to achieve this goal.

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 - Kanto (July 21, Shonan Institute of Technology, Fujisawa, Kanagawa)
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