“The Fact Speaks for Itself”:
Humanistic English Education with “E-job 100” Internet Project
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ABSTRACT
The goal of the “E-Job 100” Internet project (http://e-job-100.sakura.ne.jp/) is to motivate students to learn English as a foreign language and to facilitate their English ability and development of personality. This project has been supported by Teresa Kuwamura, lecturer at Osaka Sangyo University, Japan. The website contains video recordings of scenes in which English is used in various work places in Japan. It also contains English documents used in real work environments. The classroom is regarded as a microcosm of society where people of various occupations are, and students learn English and develop their personality through communication in English.

Keywords: Career Education, CLT, English Education, EFL, Humanism, the Internet, Motivation, Video Educational Material

1. INTRODUCTION
The website of “E-Job 100” contains videos that show how people of various occupations read, write, listen to, and speak English in their workplaces. In addition, students can access English documents that are used in real work environments. Students are able to practice their English in different situations by playing different roles after choosing their favorite occupations. In this way, through understanding why they need to study English, students enhance their motivation and are driven to improve their English ability. As society consists of people of various occupations, in this classroom, students learn English by practicing communication skills, such as negotiation and cooperation, with each other in English. What students improve are not only English skills but also consideration and understanding of others and suitable expressions for different situations. English is a communication tool. Communication is to share information with others by speaking, writing, moving your body, and using other signals in order to help other people understand your thoughts and feelings. Therefore, English as a communication tool can be used in relation to others. If a person is selfish and does not take others into consideration and as a result he or she is alone, do they need English skills? In English education, development of personality as well as English skills should be considered.

2. HOW “E-JOB 100” HAS EVOLVED
2-1. Problems of English Education in Japan
“E-job 100”, at first, started as a solution to a specific, major problem which Japan faces in English education for college students. The problem is a combination of low motivation for learning English and low academic ability. The survey of the Japan Association of College English Teachers (JACET) reports that almost 65% of Japanese college teachers regarded low motivation and academic ability of students as the biggest problem of English education in colleges in Japan. Truly, some Japanese college students even misuse “be” and other common verbs. This is not only due to methodology but to motivation.

Motivation for learning English in Japan has traditionally been enhanced mainly by entrance examinations for college. This does not work well now. Japan faces the problem of low birthrate. For their survival, many colleges in Japan cannot but allow high-school students of low academic ability to pass the examination. In addition, many colleges in Japan admit these students without an achievement test, requiring only a short essay in Japanese. Hence, high-school students who are not good at English do not learn English, and even those who are good at English tend to avoid learning English well. Many Japanese college students get into college with low motivation for learning English and low academic ability.

Conversely, they recognize the importance of English. For example, the Curriculum Research Center in Japan reports that over 80% of pre-college students think learning English is important. This is highly influenced by the mass media. TV, magazines, and the Internet often say English is required of Japanese people because of globalization. Nonetheless, the combination of low motivation for learning English and low academic ability has been problematic. In short, many Japanese students recognize the importance of English in a general way but do not see the importance to themselves personally.

This situation derives from the Japanese social condition. Most Japanese do not need English in their daily lives. However, the Japanese media reports that

(2) Suzuki (2010), pp. 30-33.
employees in many large Japanese companies need English language skills. As is demonstrated by their career goals, attitudes toward learning English among college students in Japan are diversified. Not all Japanese college students target jobs at large companies where English is required according to reports in the mass media. As an example from the school where I was teaching, there were some students in the department of civil engineering who wanted to run a beauty salon and a few other students wanted to develop video games. In addition, college students in Japan cannot accurately comprehend the real work environment due to a lack of information. Moreover, no research has been done currently in Japan to study a various range of occupations to determine whether English is needed. Therefore, even when teachers tell their students that they need English after entering the job market, many of the students tend to take it very lightly.

2-2. “E-job 100” for Problem Solving

The first goal of the “E-job 100” project is to answer the students’ question, “Do Japanese people who live in Japan really need English?” Although many Japanese do not need English in their everyday lives, those working in some fields, such as flight attendants or business employees in international companies, do need it. While these examples are well known, there are many professionals whose need for English is less well known, such as beauty salon staff, pharmacists, musicians, medical processors, sports store staff, and so on.

What is the true degree of English knowledge required by Japanese employees? To answer this question, first I researched approximately 180 kinds of jobs to find out whether they require English or not. I asked people in different occupations if they need English, when, how, at what level, how often, and for what purpose. All the occupations except tax accountant now require the use of English. In fact, most Japanese now need to use some English in their work.

At first, in order to increase students’ motivation, I informed them of this fact which was made clear by the questionnaire to Japanese companies, and I showed them various documents used in real work environments which the companies gave me. This did not have the expected impact on students. To put simply the reason for failure, students did not understand how realistic the situation was. Students regarded the documents as if a part of English textbook. As mentioned earlier, students could not imagine a whole picture of each job, so they could not feel how important the English documents were for each job and thus for their future lives: in other words, how important English is in work places in Japan. As a result, the failure was ascribed to the inability of the students to comprehend the importance.

Therefore, due to the answers of the survey I sent to the companies, I started going to each job site and recording video of scenes in which English is used and then recording an interview with the staff. I have edited the video to approximately two minutes’ duration. My creed is “The fact speaks for itself”.

Since I started using the video in my English classes, the attitudes and motivation of Japanese college students toward learning English have dramatically changed. Every year I conduct a questionnaire for students in free format. Typical answers to the questionnaire before students watch the videos are “I hope I can get the credits very easily”, “I don’t expect anything”, “Be enjoyable”, “Be easy”, and “I don’t like English”. However, common answers to the questionnaire after they watched the videos are “I realized we need English”, “I realized the fact”, “I need English for my future”, and “I want to learn English spontaneously”. In the questionnaire survey in the last class in 2007, 97.2% (74 respondents) answered “easily comprehensible”, 90.4% “Predigested”, and 90.2% “Interested in this class”, as I reported in another paper.

The students deeply understand the significance of English skills and start seriously learning English.

In the questionnaire, all the students wanted to watch the videos outside of the classroom, too, so I started making a website which allows students to freely watch the videos of their favorite jobs. The concept of the website is that Japanese college students can deeply understand the significance of learning English with their career plan. I named the homepage “E-job 100”. The “E” in the name of “E-job” comes from the initials of three key words in its concept: English, electronic, “e” [i:] (“good” in Japanese).

2-3. Contents of “E-job 100”

Figure 1 is the top page of the website. Figure 2 is a part of one of the top pages of each occupation. The top page has four items: 1. “Why do they need English?”, 2. “Required Skills”, 3. “Educational Materials”, 4. “Job Information”. In the first item students can watch the video records of the scenes where Japanese people use English in their work places in Japan.

(5) Suzuki & Kuwamura, p.156.

(6) Suzuki & Kuwamura, p.158.
Figures 3-1 to 3-8 are the scenes of the videos. One of the characteristics of the videos in “E-job 100” is the range of employment sectors. Many occupations in the range are familiar to the students and are popular but have not been regarded as jobs where English is needed. Another characteristic is a recording of a scene of an English conversation with persons of various races and nationalities. When Japanese hear that they need English, they tend to think of conversations with just native English speakers, such as Americans and the British. Considered in the light of actuality, such a slanted view should be dispelled. Dismissing this view would make Japanese students realize more clearly the necessity of English in Japan.

Figure 3-1. Nurse with a Chinese person

Figure 3-2. Musician

Figure 3-3. Printing CO staff with a Finnish person

Figure 3-4. Doctor with a Chinese person

Figure 3-5. Pharmacist

Figure 3-6. Waiter with a Nepalese person

Figure 3-7. Beautician with a Chinese person

Figure 3-8. Medical processor with a Saudi Arabian person

The second item on the top page of each occupation has the video focusing on the English skills which are required in the workplace (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Videos by Skills
Figure 5 is a picture of English documents which companies actually use in their everyday work, such as material for meetings, invoices, e-mails, and so on. They are in the third item of the top page of each occupation. There, students can read the documents and use them as a guide for writing invoices and e-mails.

The fourth item of the top page of each occupation is job information. Students can get information on things such as job interviews, CVs, cover letters, requirements, average salaries, and average ages of their intended jobs.

There are not enough videos on the website now, so I am increasing the number of videos with help of Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research from the Japanese government. The current goal is 100 kinds of occupations, as the title “E-job 100” suggests.

3. “E-JOB 100” CLASS AS HUMANISTIC COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING FOR JAPANESE LEARNERS (HCLTJL)

As mentioned earlier, I started making the homepage of “E-job 100” for the purpose of increasing the motivation of Japanese college students for learning English by making them deeply understand the significance of learning English in Japan by themselves. However, as the next step, when I started making the homepage, I began thinking about how “E-job 100” could be put into English classes where students cannot speak or hear English. The educational method can be introduced as Humanistic Communicative Language Teaching for Japanese Learners (HCLTJL).

3-1. Why Humanistic CLT?
3-1-1. Solution of the Problem of CLT in Japan

Presently, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is popular in English education of Japan. This is a counterblast against a traditional English teaching method in Japan. English teaching in Japan was teacher-centered and translation-centered education for a long time. The method was criticized because Japanese people cannot communicate in English no matter how long they study English. With this criticism and globalization, the current slogan of English education in Japan is “practical English”.

From the viewpoint of motivation, however, the use of CLT in Japan has a problem. It is a contradiction between the principle of CLT and the facts of Japan. Summing up David Nunan’s study, CLT has the following five features:

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
2. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language but also on the learning management process.
4. An enhancement of the learner’s own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

Reality is essential for CLT. Is the use of English in Japan realistic? Are there “language activities outside the classroom” in Japan? CLT in Japan, first of all, must answer this question.

To the question, I can answer “Yes” because I have been researching. However, I started the research because it had not been previously done and because nobody had known the necessity of English for many Japanese people. In other words, English was not thought to be “outside the classroom”.

The more important point in CLT is that the students can realize learning English in the classroom links with activities outside the classroom. Otherwise, they cannot think of English learning as significant learning. It would have a bad effect on their motivation for learning English, as Zoltan Dörnyei, Teresa Kuwamura, and an authority on their motivation theory—Carl Rogers—proved. When students cannot regard their own study as significant learning, the best the teacher can do is that they “can lead a horse to the water but cannot make him drink”.

“E-job 100” was created based on reality in Japan. “E-job 100” can be effective for solving the problem of CLT for Japanese learners.

3-1-2. Humanism

English is a communication tool. That is why CLT emphasizes learning to communicate through interaction in English. Communication is to share information with others and help other people to understand; however, without consideration of others, it is not communication but mere monologue. Therefore, teaching English as a communication tool should not be just focused on improving competence of language. It also should seriously think of the development of the students’ personality. English education should be education of a whole person.

This view comes not only from academic logic but also from my experience of shooting video in work places. I often shoot video of an interview, too (which
is in Japanese and students can watch on the website “E-job 100”). The interviews made me vividly aware of this view.

For instance, the nurse in the video says, “English is important in our job. Of course, we must read technical books in English to learn more and always update knowledge, but it is not enough. Another important job of a nurse is to let a patient feel secure. Whoever comes down with an illness feels anxious. Now in Japan, many foreigners come to hospital or clinic. In order to release them, a nurse should let them speak out anything in their own words, listen to them, and empathize and understand them. In the sense, English is very important for us because foreigners in Japan usually speak out anxiety in English”. The doctor in the video also makes a similar speech. He says, “For a doctor, the ability of English is very important. Many foreigners in Japan desperately look for a doctor who can speak English. When they can meet the doctor, they really feel secure”.

Consideration, empathy, and understanding of others are important not only in workplaces but also in the world. We can consider, empathize, and understand others with the use of language. Hence, the important role of language teaching is to educate students to consider, empathize, and understand others. Therefore, English teachers should facilitate the development of students’ personalities through the practice of communication in English.

In this point, Li Xiaoju’s educational theory is suggestive. She created Communicative English for Chinese Learners (CECL). Its educational principle consists of three dimensions: the ability of language, the ability of thinking, and the ability of feeling. Students take the central role in teaching and learning, and they learn English by doing things with the language on their own. Keeping these three dimensions in mind, teachers facilitate students’ study and development of personality.\(^{(7)}\)

I observed English classes of Deng Xiaotao, who is one of Li’s pupils and an English teacher at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. She effectively practiced CECL. Whenever she introduced and explained something new to students, such as English expressions, grammar, and words, she let them think of others’ feelings and try to empathize and understand them. In other words, she always makes students understand the meaning of expressions, grammar, and words from the viewpoint of consideration of others in the real, human world. In this way, she practices Li’s three-dimensional English education and successfully facilitates students’ English ability and the development of their personality. It is a whole person education.

Though a teaching model of HCLTJL with “E-job 100” is introduced in the next section, the methodology has a great influence from Li’s CECL and Deng’s practice in her English classes.

3-2. Teaching the Model of HCLTJL with “E-job 100”

Students are required to play roles by mainly speaking and hearing English needed for their intended future job. The classroom which is used is usually a CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) classroom. Students access the website “E-job 100” and research both their favorite job and the use of English in workplaces in order to deeply understand the significance of learning English by themselves.

Based on their motivation for learning English, first, students build the basis for communication in English. For this purpose, they make a presentation about goods or services to introduce them to selling. They write sentences for the introduction, following some patterns of paragraph writing from English for Academic Purposes (EAP) which their teacher gives them. After their teacher reviews what they wrote, they memorize it. Then they each make a presentation. Following this, the teacher gives each speaker feedback and asks several questions. The questions include ones about goods or services about which they did not remark. This is done so students can practice speaking English with a wide application of the English sentences which they memorized. According to the teacher’s feedback and questions, the students will need to conduct more research on the Internet, rewrite and memorize their presentations, and then present again.

During the second presentation, the rest of the students pretend to be the clients and the customers. The listeners ask a couple of questions of the speaker after their presentation as the teacher did. This enables students to become accustomed to communicating in English and to practice it amongst other students.

The second step is that each of the students memorizes the conversations which are short and simple but essential for his or her intended future job. Students learn them in the second and the third items on the top page of each occupation on the “E-job 100” website. For example, a student who chose postal worker memorizes the following conversation.

C: This is a notice of delivery. Do you have a package for me?
P: Yes. Do you have an ID?
C: Why do you need to see my ID?
P: For security reasons.
C: I have it. This is my ID.
P: Thank you. Do you have a stamp?
C: Oh, I’m sorry, I don’t have it.
P: Then, could you sign here please?
C: Yes.
P: Thank you. Here you are. Here is your package.
C: Thank you. Have a nice day.
P: You too.

After this, students pair up, and both memorize conversations with each other. Students start practicing the conversations. In the practice, they are required to introduce goods or services for selling and

\(^{(7)}\) Li, pp.3-116.
to create some questions. Changing pairs, students repeat this practice, so they can get more used to English conversation and express more of what they want to say and ask.

The third step is task-based learning. The teacher gives each student a set of directions: for instance, “First, go to the post office to pick up your package. Second, talk about at least five kinds of medicine with a visitor in the post office. Finally go to a computer shop, ask about some computers and get an invoice from the clerk”.

The teacher gives each student a different direction every week. Of course, the teacher must create the directions based on the range of occupations which students chose, of what they learned, and of what they can learn by themselves on the “E-job 100” website and the Internet.

The teacher walks around in the classroom. He or she supports the students’ communication in English, corrects errors, and sometimes joins students’ conversations. In addition, the teacher reminds students of consideration, empathy, and understanding of others and teaches them English expressions suitable for them.

4. EFFECT

I practiced the teaching model in one of my English classes in 2009. I conducted a questionnaire for students in free format in the first class and the last class (31 respondents).

To the questionnaire in the first class, 97% of the students answered “Japanese do not need English as long as they live in Japan”. On the other hand, in the questionnaire survey in the last class, 100% answered “I need English”.

Regarding their communication ability, nobody could communicate with people in English in the first class. However, as time went by, they began to spontaneously communicate with each other in English. In the last class, their communication in English still sometimes needed support from the teacher, but they could manage to communicate with me solely in English. In addition, they could express thoughtful words.

In the process of class, students grew in the competence of language and in personality as well.

5. CONCLUSION

“E-job 100” has been created to increase the motivation of Japanese college students for learning English by showing them the reality that English is used in many various occupations in Japan. The classroom is regarded as a microcosm of society where people of various occupations are, and students learn English and develop their personalities through communication in English. Students realize the reality and develop their English ability and personality in real situations.

“E-job 100” can bring Japanese college students and English closer together. Japanese college students learn English as a foreign language (EFL). A method like “E-job 100” might be effective for learners of EFL in other countries, too.

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