



Cooperation, Communication and  
Team Learning in Asian ELT  
In commemoration of the 30<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary of the JET Programme

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Happy 30<sup>th</sup>, Jeters!



"Two of the main goals of the ALT Skill Development Conferences are to facilitate communication between ALT and JTEs and to improve the quality of team teaching. These conferences are a valuable opportunity for ALTs and JTEs to attend workshops together and openly share their opinions with each other."

<http://jetprogramme.org/en/acs-con/>

### Changes in Japan over 30 years

From high growth to post bubble  
From Nihonjinron to Kokusaika  
From Westernization to Globalization  
From Terebikko to Netizen  
From Henna Gaijin to Cultural Cool  
From examination hell to yutori sedai  
From EFL to ELF  
From TAE to TTE

### Outline

- Ever-changing Japan
- JTE-ALT collaboration and communication (some things never change.)
- The class, the team, the roadblocks
- What to communicate: A solution, maybe?
- How to communicate: from World Englishes and EIL theory

### 20<sup>th</sup> century culture to 21<sup>st</sup> century culture

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>THEN:</b></li> <li>• Demographics and examination hell</li> <li>• Bubble economy</li> <li>• "Japan as Number 1"</li> <li>• "Japan that can say no" (1989)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NOW:</b></li> <li>• Internet           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– SNS, instant world communication, information overload</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Post bubble economy; PTJ as number 1</li> <li>• Gross national cool: a reassessment of Japanese culture</li> </ul> |
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### 20<sup>th</sup> century students to 21<sup>st</sup> century students

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>THEN:</b></li> <li>• "monkey show"</li> <li>• "gaijin"</li> <li>• Reading, grammar skills</li> <li>• "This is a pen."</li> <li>• "Harro"</li> <li>• "A foreigner can never understand Japanese mind."</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NOW:</b></li> <li>• They can say "hello" but ...do they want to?</li> <li>• Listening, speaking skills</li> <li>• Change in motivation—resistance</li> <li>• The "thirstless horse" syndrome</li> <li>• PTJ -&gt; class -&gt; club</li> </ul> |
|--|---|
- \*Hard-working, motivated  
\*Club -> class -> PTJ

## 20<sup>th</sup> century to 21<sup>st</sup> century ELT

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| • THEN:   | • NOW:                      |
| JHS and HS  | Elementary schools          |
| Explaining Japan to foreigners (=Americans)           | Teaching English in English |
| general proficiency                                   | CLIL                        |
| reading-grammar-translation                           | Respect for other Englishes |
| communicative methods (communicative competence, CLT) | Active learning             |
| Textbooks and tape recorders                          | CEF-R and Can-do statements |
| EFL   | student centered learning   |
|   | PICT motivation             |
|   | Communication skills        |
|   | ELF                         |

## The Jet Programme after 30 years

Interested observers typically divide into either JET-lovers or haters. Supporters, underlining the word “exchange” in the program’s title, defend it for helping internationalize Japan. Critics, pointing to the word “teaching,” attack it for failing to improve students’ English proficiency and wasting money.

**As Japan’s JET Programme hits its 30s, the jury’s still out** (Japan Times, May 3, 2017)

## From the literature

- “Almost all team teaching programs in Japan are imposed on teachers by school administrators. Teaming teachers who are not satisfied with their programs have only one option. They must work with their colleagues to improve their team teaching experience.” (Tonks, online)
- In practice, JTEs are very busy and ALTs are often visiting multiple schools. Making time for planning and reflection sessions is challenging given such constraints. (Sponseller, 2017, p. 129)

## In Japan

- The challenge of time constraints has been reported in Kachi and Lee’s (op cit) interview research of two Local English Teachers (LETs) and three American Language Teachers (ALTs) on the JET programme. In particular, the LETs were found to have very busy schedules, with insufficient time for joint lesson preparation with the ALTs. As a result, ALTs felt that they were treated more as visitors than as insiders in the Japanese educational system. This suggests that when two teachers do not spend sufficient time working closely with each other or engaging in ongoing communication, their team teaching relationship tends to be problematic.
- (Copland, Garton and Mann 2016)

## In Korea

- the limited English proficiency of LETs works as a barrier to communication between the two groups (Arva and Medgyes, op cit). In addition, collaboration seems to be influenced by various institutional contexts (Jeon, op cit). For example, primary school teachers were found to collaborate more often than their secondary school counterparts, probably because primary school English education places more focus on spoken language development than secondary school education. Ideally, NESTs and LETs are expected to collaborate throughout the entire process, from planning to instruction and then to evaluation. In reality, however, the collaboration seems to be very limited and is rarely carried out (Chung et al, op cit; Kim, op cit). In fact, NESTs and LETs may not communicate sufficiently (Kwon and Kellogg, 2005; Park, op cit).
- (Copland, Garton and Mann 2016)

## In Taiwan

- *Communication is continuing to be a challenge for me. I think that is my biggest challenge ... There have been times the particular teacher (NNEST) ... Her English is an obstacle. Many times I talked with her one on one trying to explain what I am going to try and do in a particular lesson. And when we get in, she starts translating ... And there have been times when she did that, and the kids do something kind of contrary to what I want them to do. And the same thing happens in the lesson plan meetings. Even though more proficient non-native teachers are in the meeting, I tried to explain what I would like to do and it gets misinterpreted.* (Brian)
- (Copland, Garton and Mann 2016)

## In Hong Kong

- in an investigation based on Storey et al's (op cit) study of teacher collaboration in Hong Kong secondary classes, Carless and Walker (op cit: 465) report that they did not work closely with each other and that there was 'a lack of genuine collaboration' between NESTs and LETs. As a result, there was little mutual understanding and sharing between the team teachers. In particular, there were some tensions in their educational philosophies and practices, such that they could not find a common voice in the practice of their team teaching.
- (Copland, Garton and Mann 2016)

### Linguistically powerful AETs vs. Culturally Powerful JTES (Miyazato 2009)

JTEs have:

- 1. (better) understanding of classroom culture
- 2. (more) inclusion in major decision-making
- 3. power as a role model

AETs have:

- 4. (more) English conversation ability
- 5 (more) student/society admiration
- 6. (more) "native English"

"Planned status difference" = use the imbalances for more power

### Roadblocks to communication between teacher teams

- Different people, different situations, different class cultures
- Communication under time constraints

## Reverse Team Teaching

- The JTE is more "responsible" but the ALT plays a more leading role in the classroom (Browne 2008)
- Wada (1994) recommends that the Alt should actively engage in communication with Japanese students, and the JTE should explain the English language, specific concerns and facts, and answer learners' questions. (Browne 2008)
- Macedo (2002) found that RTT is most common in JHS (Browne 2008)

### Team members should make important decisions about:

- (1) **what** will be presented (e.g., the units, lesson objectives) and in what order,
- (2) **how** the material is to be presented (e.g., to a large or small group presentation),
- (3) **who** is to present the information,
- (4) **how** the students will be assessed, and
- (5) **how** small groups will be organized and which team teacher will be assigned to each small group.
- (Goetz, 2000, online)

### TCC (Teacher Communication Checklist): A solution?

- English (or other L2) and Japanese
- Tailored for HS, JHS, ES
  - Initial meeting (2 pages >20 min)
  - Pre-class meeting (1/2 page >5 min)
  - Post-class meetings (1/2 page >5 min)
- This is the vision!

## Initial meeting checklist contents

Teacher personality  
 Student characteristics  
 classroom style  
 Materials and teaching aids  
 Classroom goals  
 Teacher roles (JTE, ALT)  
 Use of language  
 Classroom communication  
 Student discipline  
 Emergencies  
 Duties outside class  
 Homework/evaluation

## Pre-lesson briefing

- Is there a lesson plan?
- Warm-up?
- Activities?
- Anything new?
- Homework?

## Post-lesson briefing

- What went wrong? Why?
- What was successful? Why?
- What needed more communication?
- What could have gone better?
- How could students be more motivated?
- Preparation for next lesson?
- (homework, activities)

## PART 2: Using English as a Lingua Franca



## ELF: How to Communicate

- Recognize, respect and honor differences
  - Japanese English vs. Wrong English
- Use communication/accommodation skills
  - (be) Friendly
  - Repeat
  - Ask again
  - Change (expressions)
  - Explain (with) Examples
  - Remember (with mnemonics)

FRACER

Vive la difference: respecting other  
Englishes

- Pronunciation – what will hinder communication?
- Grammar – Is it really so bad to “discuss about” it?
- Pragmatics – “Yes, I don’t eat sashimi.”

## Communication Accommodation Strategies: Learning from Degawa



## Try communicating classroom arrangements

- ACTUAL
- IDEAL



## Communicate for the future

- New testing
- Changes in government expectations
- Changes in incoming students due to ES instruction

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