【Article】

Communicative Competence in the 21st Century:

Issues in Japan's University English Language Education

Keiko Tanaka

Abstract

This paper is written with a view of preparing future global citizens for communicative competence in the 21st century from the perspective of university English program education and administration.　The specific goal of this paper is to examine the issues that need to be addressed and discuss what it would take to solve the issues and make substantive changes in the way English is taught in Japanese universities.　Now that communicative language teaching is becoming a standard for English language teaching in Japan, the paper also critiques how it is being implemented in the university and outlines topics for consideration for English language program enhancement.

Divided Perspectives and Diverse Approaches

The question of what objective University English language education in Japan should uphold has been a subject of debate for some time, divided roughly into those who view the objective as the acquisition of "intellectual acuity" and those who endorse the acquisition of language skills for communicative and other practical purposes.　This divide is also reflected in a survey conducted by Japan Association of College English Teachers (JACET) in 2003 that received responses from 787 university English instructors.　The survey indicates that 35.5 percent of respondents viewed the objective of foreign language education in the university as the acquisition of intellectual acuity and 51.7 percent viewed the objective as understanding of the culture and circumstances of other countries.　Those who responded that the objective is the acquisition of an ability to use the new language for practical purposes such as communication was merely 24.0 percent (Morizumi et al., 2010).[1]

Some scholars suggest these are not mutually exclusive goals.　For example, Tajino (2004) states that practical language skills are necessary to facilitate the comprehension of literary works and academic papers that ultimately facilitate "intellectual

acuity" and that "intellectual acuity" is critical in order to communicate substantive thoughts and arguments. Nonetheless, it is somewhat disquieting to note that such disparate thinking about the fundamental goals has existed among university English instructors. More importantly, it is a problem that a significant number of instructors have not supported the instruction of communicative English as a goal of English language education despite the widely-voiced need of the learners to acquire English in order to meet their career and personal goals. Today, more than ever before, a vibrant discussion of what curriculum and instructional approaches will best prepare students to develop the type of English language proficiency that meets the communicative needs of a rapidly globalizing world is imperative. As Tsui and Tollefson (2007) state, English proficiency along with information-technology skills are inseparable mediational tools that are critical in the global age. Not having one important mediational tool as a mother tongue is an incredible challenge for many countries including Japan.

Although it is not known what results a similar survey conducted today will reveal, a cursory examination of the syllabus for first year English as Foreign Language (EFL) courses[2] offered in private and public universities in Japan shows an amazing diversity in how EFL is actually taught in the university classrooms.[3] For example, an English communication course in one university has as its goal, communicative competence in English which incorporates the four skills—listening-speaking and reading-writing. In another university, the emphasis is placed on pronunciation and basic conversation with no instruction in reading or writing.

The diverse approaches to university English education have to do in part with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) directives for university reform that began with the sweeping revision of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities and allowed the individual universities to push for innovative ways to enhance their uniqueness. Influenced by the reform initiatives, a significant number of universities have implemented English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses, for example, English for Economics, English for Science and Technology, and English for International Studies to better meet the needs of their own students. More recently, an increasing number of university departments have also began to offer content courses using English as an instructional language with the aim of teaching both English and knowledge of the discipline. Called Content-Based Instruction (CBI), this approach is endorsed by MEXT as a way of attracting foreign students to internationalize Japan's higher education. On the other hand, however, some universities continue to assign EFL courses to the general education unit which, often offers instruction focusing on English communication in order

to meet the basic needs of students coming from different departments, though the content of these courses too appears to be quite different across universities. Some universities are even outsourcing their English programs to language conversation schools, giving an impression that English education is not an integral part of university education or that it is too specialized and difficult to implement in-house.

Such diversity would not be an issue if there are indications that English programs are turning out students whose English proficiency measures up to international standards. However, it warrants a closer examination when there is evidence to suggest that Japan's English language education is lagging behind many countries as indicated by Educational Testing Service (ETS) (2008) which reports that in 2007, Japan was placed the 29th among the 30 nations in Asia in TOEFL scores. It is also a fact that multinational companies in Japan find it necessary to provide English training programs to their new recruits who are from top tier Japanese universities.[4] Given the status quo of English language education in Japanese universities then, a search for new direction is critical. Hence, this paper endeavors to identify major issues in English language education which calls for modification. Then it examines the new middle and high school English curriculum (Shin Shidou Youryou), notes the discrepancy between the articulated curriculum and what is actually taught in the classroom that arises in part from the university entrance exam system, and discusses this as a source of difficulty for the university and another major issue which needs to be addressed. Finally, this paper explores the fundamental issues of communicative language teaching (CLT) which is becoming a standard for English language teaching in Japan and outlines topics for consideration for English language program enhancement.

Issues for the university English programs

An important issue for university English programs today is the articulation of learning objectives and establishment of a guideline to achieve the objectives. Two decades ago, in 1992, at the request of University Council (Daigaku Shingikai), JACET published a guideline for English teaching in the university, and according to this document, the objective of foreign language education in the university is the development of character (jinkakuteki na touya) at its foundation and communication skills at the practical level. Since then, the environment that surrounds the university and affects the students has changed drastically due to social and economic developments accompanying globalization. Therefore, reconsidering the fundamental question of what Japan's university English

language education should uphold as its ultimate objective is particularly vital.   This need for further discussion is in fact suggested by Morozumi et al. (2010) as an agenda for JACET.   At the same time, in order to minimize the gap between the articulated curriculum and the implemented curriculum that tends to occur in the absence of effective curriculum implementation strategies,[5] there is also an exigent need to discuss and arrive at a guideline for materials development and instructional practices, and to define the type of teacher training necessary for teaching to the curriculum and facilitating student learning. This discussion should involve the clarification of the meaning of communicative competence and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) since there exists a tendency to consider communication skills in a limited scope and define it as basic conversation skills.

Another important agenda for university English programs is to set clear proficiency standards and expectations that are connected to the curriculum and establish a system of learning outcomes assessment that does not have a negative washback effect on English teaching and learning.   Actually, in 2003, MEXT facilitated a wide variety of reform projects across the schools from elementary to university under the initiative, "Action Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities" which resulted in an articulation of English proficiency standards (for example, Society for Testing English Proficiency (STEP) English Proficiency Exam Level 3 upon completion of Middle School, and English Proficiency Level 2 upon completion of High School).   However, no specific proficiency standard was set for university English programs.   This is perhaps a blessing since standardized test scores sometimes do not measure actual English proficiency (Choi, 2008). Also, it has been pointed out that STEP exams do not reflect the secondary school curriculum, and that proficiency standards designated by MEXT using the STEP exams are too be ambitious for the time allotted to English language education in the secondary schools (Hato, 2005).   Additionally, standardized tests cannot assess the students' learning outcomes in full (Tanaka, 2010b).   Indeed, there are other standards such as the Common European Framework that may be more appropriate.   On the other hand, it is also true that without internationally comparable assessment tools, it is difficult to judge the effectiveness of Japan's English language education and explore the direction toward which it should strive.

In addition to dealing with the above-mentioned curriculum issues, English programs need to exercise accountability toward the educational stakeholders including the students.   Actually, The Central Council for Education convened by MEXT released a report in 2005 indicating that assuring the quality of education to safeguard the learners and maintain international standards are important goals.   Furthermore, in a report titled

Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education in Japan, MEXT (2009) notes that there needs to be a system to assess the learning outcomes of university education. However, while there exists a mechanism for universities to conduct self-studies to maintain their educational quality, and National Quality Assurance Framework includes standards for establishing, approving, and accrediting universities, it is not clear how these mandates can actually "safeguard the students" and ensure quality teaching in the classroom that enables students to fulfill the learning objectives.

In general, universities have been more concerned about graduating the students within four years than about ensuring the quality education that produces appropriate learning outcomes for students enrolling in their programs. Similarly, while there exists ample research which points out that the quality of instruction affects language learning (see for example, Noels, Clement, and Pelletier, 1999; Berlin, 2005; Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008, Tanaka, 2010b) many English programs do not have an effective mechanism in place to maintain the quality of English language teaching and guarantee appropriate learning outcomes for the students. Indeed, some university educators respond to calls for accountability by suggesting that it is up to the students to learn what is taught. Perhaps this is an understandable response in the context of Japanese universities. Amano and Poole (2005), for example, state that by international standards, Japanese university faculty have been known for being apathetic about teaching and enthusiastic about research citing a survey which indicated that approximately 70 percent of Japanese professors answered that research is more important than teaching while only 30 percent of American professors responded in the same way. However, it is the responsibility of the teaching staff to enhance the curriculum, select appropriate materials, and engage in faculty development to facilitate student learning. Educators also often respond to calls for accountability by stating that much of what is taught in a university is not quantifiable or measurable by tests. While this is true, learning outcomes are describable in terms of qualitative and behavioral descriptors. For example, one educational institution uses the following descriptors for one of their learning objectives which is to become a *collaborative worker*:

- recognizes and respects individual differences and similarities
- demonstrates flexibility and responsibility through active involvement in support of group needs and goals
- fulfills a variety of roles, including delegating, coordinating and synthesizing tasks and products
- communicates interactively, displaying empathy and consideration for differing ideas
  (http://www.nishimachi.ac.jp/welcome/sle.html)

In summation, it is suggested that articulating learning objectives and establishing guidelines to achieve the objectives, instituting proficiency standards and methods for assessing student learning outcomes, and building a system of accountability that focuses on ensuring the quality of teaching are three issues that are critical in enhancing English language education in Japan's universities.

Middle and high school English curriculum and university English education

The objectives of university English education should be determined by considering the needs of the students after they graduate from the university. From this perspective that puts the students in the center of curriculum consideration, positioning the university English education within the framework of the entire educational system in which the learner moves through—from elementary education to university education is necessary and critical. An ideal system then, will be a seamless one in which students will be able to develop the new language along the proficiency continuum throughout their education. However, in reality, there is an uncomfortable disconnect between articulated middle and high school English language curriculum and what is really taught in the schools that actually stymies progress in MEXT's goal of *cultivating Japanese people with English abilities*.

The following is a brief synopsis of the new English curriculum, called New Course of Study (Shin Shidou Youryou) for middle and high school, introduced by MEXT in 2009 and are currently being phased—in with full implementation slated for 2013.

Overall Objective for Middle School

To develop students' basic communication abilities such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, deepening their understanding of language and culture and fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages.

Specifically, the curriculum goals for the four-skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing are as follows:
1. To enable students to understand the speaker's intentions when listening to English.
2. To enable students to express their own thoughts using English.
3. To familiarize students with reading in English and to enable them to understand the writer's intentions when reading.
4. To familiarize students with writing in English and to enable them to write about their own thoughts.

In terms of learning activities, the document states that students should engage in activities that enable them to speak about their thoughts and feelings with each other appropriately in a variety of social contexts such as at home, in the school, and in local communities. Language functions such as asking for repetition, expressing gratitude, giving information, and expressing opinions are specifically outlined.

(http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/new-cs/youryou/eiyaku/1298353.htm)

Overall Objectives for High School

Basically, the overall objectives remain the same for high school as they are for the middle school:

> To develop students' communication abilities such as accurately understanding and appropriately conveying information, ideas, etc., to deepen their understanding of language and culture, and to foster a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages.

However, unlike the middle school curriculum, the high school curriculum's overall objectives are sub-categorized into the following subject areas:

1. Basic English Communication (to review content of the middle school curriculum that develops students' basic skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing, while fostering a positive attitude toward communicating in the English language).

2. English Communication I, II, and III[6]
   To develop the students'
   (a) listening skills to understand information, ideas, etc., and grasp the outline and the main points of specified topics, dialogues, etc.
   (b) speaking skills to discuss and exchange opinions on information, ideas, etc., based on what one has heard, read, learned and experienced.
   (c) reading skills to understand information, ideas, etc. and grasp the outline and the main points by reading explanations, stories, etc.
   (d) writing skills to produce brief passages on information, ideas, etc., based on what one has heard, read, learned and experienced.

3. English Expression I and II[7]
   To develop students' English skills so that they can evaluate facts, opinions, etc. from multiple perspectives and communicate through reasoning and a range of expression by teaching them to:
   (a) make impromptu speeches on a given topic.
   (b) speak concisely according to audience and purpose.
   (c) write passages in a style suitable for the audience and purpose.
   (d) summarize and present information, ideas, etc., based on what one has heard, read, learned and experienced.

4. English Conversation

To develop students' English skills to engage in conversations on everyday topics, while fostering a positive attitude toward communicating in the English language by teaching students to:

(a) understand what others are saying, and to respond appropriately according to the situation and purpose.

(b) pose questions on matters of interest and respond to questions from others.

(c) convey information, ideas, etc., in accordance with the situation and purpose, based on what one has heard, read, learned and experienced.

(d) hold conversations using basic expressions needed when living overseas.

The curriculum gives examples of a variety of social contexts for communication—at home, in the school, and in local communities which are also articulated in the middle school curriculum, and adds specific situations such as shopping, traveling, and exchanging letters and emails.   It also states that students should obtain information through a variety of media including books, newspapers, and the Internet.   In addition to language functions stated in the middle school curriculum, the high school curriculum adds functions that (a) facilitate communication such as paraphrasing and changing topics, (b) communicate emotions such as surprise and concern, (c) transmit information such as giving a report and describing something, and (e) instigate action such as inviting and advising.[8]

(http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/new-cs/youryou/eiyaku/)

What can be noted from the above is that the English language curriculum in both middle and high school in Japan is communicatively oriented.   If this curriculum could be fully implemented, at the end of the high school education, the students will be more or less communicatively competent in English.   However, what is actually taught in high school is often different.   Research (Gorsuch, 2000, Nishio, 2008, Taguchi 2005, Tanaka 2009, 2010a, 2010b) shows that English language education in the high school to date has emphasized getting students to pass the university entrance exams many of which do not appear to be connected to the middle and high school English curriculum.   Here is a testimony of one student:

In high school, a native English teacher came once a week and we learned English communication.   But after the first year, we had to focus on the university entrance exam English.   Learning English for communication and becoming a proficient speaker of English are goals that we had to put aside and forget for a while.

Indeed, as Yoshida (2003) states, the university entrance examination system has a powerful influence on the way English is taught in Japanese schools.   Therefore, unless universities themselves begin implementing entrance exams that reflect the high school curriculum and

actually assess communicative competence in English, the gap between objectives of MEXT's English language education and the reality of Japanese students' English proficiency will not be narrowed.   What are the chances of this happening?   Individual universities are not likely to have the resources to design entrance exams that actually assess important components of communicative competence such as listening and speaking. While adopting tests like the TOEIC or TOEFL or the English section of the Sentâ Shiken[9] has been suggested, since universities are financially dependent on the income generated by administering their own unique entrance exams, the odds for seeing a major change in the university entrance exam system are slim.

One solution may be for the universities to actually assess the English language proficiency of its new first year students and require them to complete remedial English courses that fulfill the learning objectives of high school English before they are actually allowed to take first year English courses.   Requiring students to demonstrate a specific level of proficiency through some assessment instrument before they are able to receive credit for English courses is another approach.   In California, in the United States, for example, students enrolled in its public state universities are required to take the English Placement Test (EPT) which tests academic literacy in English when they matriculate as first year students into the university, and if they do not obtain a certain score on EPT, they are required to take non-credit bearing remedial courses.   Also, these public universities are required by law to administer an exit check to all those who get their baccalaureate degrees.   The problem though, of this type of approach for Japanese universities is that it penalizes the students for the situation that, in the first place, is brought about largely by the universities themselves.   University administration would also be loath to implement such measures fearing that upholding minimum standards will make the university unpopular and therefore decrease enrollment.

It must be mentioned that this disconnect between what is supposed to be taught and what is actually taught in middle school and especially in high school makes it difficult for universities to fulfill their role as the final institution in which students can brush up their English skills in preparation for their life and career.   In the first place, the gap between English proficiency of high school graduates and the proficiency level that ought to be expected at the end of the university is a challenge to fill through typical required general education English courses.   When courses have a large cap of more than 25 students, a small number of instructional hours (an average of 1.5 hours x 30 days which is roughly 45 hours per semester) and are dependent largely on under-paid, part-time instructors, the challenge is near impossible to meet.   However, it is possible for English programs to

make a significantly positive impact on the students if the right set of conditions discussed later in this paper is met.

Communicative Language Teaching

Some 30 odd years ago, Evelyn Hatch made a seminal remark, "one learns how to do conversation, one learns how to interact verbally, and out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed" (Hatch, 1978, p.404). This claim, that second language (L2) learners do not necessarily need to be taught grammar in order to communicate in L2 but instead, need opportunities to interact in the L2 together with Krashen's influential claim that L2 learners need to be exposed to comprehensible L2 input has put Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the forefront of English language teaching in Japan and elsewhere.

According to Spada (2007), CLT has been interpreted and implemented in widely different ways because of its vagueness. In Japan, many language education institutions, including private and public schools, universities, and language schools have adopted a version of CLT that teach listening and speaking rather than reading and writing. Indeed, major vendors of English textbooks (personal communication) claim that the best selling English textbooks in the universities in Japan are conversation textbooks that teach students to (a) interact with English speakers in various social settings such as at a party or on the university campus on topics such as hobbies and interests, families and friends, or personal preferences; (b) engage in transactions such as ordering food at a restaurant or buying supplies at a store; and (c) exchange ideas and information on topics such as the environment, travel destinations, and cultures of different countries. However, while such conversational skills are a part of middle and high school curriculum, should they also be a part of university English curriculum?

It may be important for university students to navigate through immigration at Heathrow Airport or order their preferred sandwich correctly at a New York deli. Not being able to interact with peers from other countries on the topic of favorite vacation spots or types of movies may be a missed opportunity for cultural exchange. Therefore, these conversational skills should perhaps be taught if university students do not come equipped with them. However, these skills should be taught either in remedial English courses as a prerequisite to first year English courses or taught as an elective course.[10] That is because I believe that Japanese university English classes should focus other critical English skills that will impact the students' ability to navigate the future. According to Warschauer

(2000), globalization will bring about a new global economic order called informationalism, which will integrate many countries and regions into the global market. Many of the people living in this world will have to use English as an additional language to engage in complex communication and collaboration with people from across the world. Specifically, students need to be prepared with highly advanced English skills to not just communicate but to argue persuasively, negotiate strategically, and analyze and interpret information critically, and as Warschauer (2000) suggests, such skills cannot be taught through typical university conversation English courses.

The concept of communicative competence given by Canale and Swain (1980) is useful in considering English skills that are necessary in the highly globalized world of the future. According to these authors, communicative competence includes four basic categories of knowledge and skills: grammatical competence, the mastery of the features and rules of the language at the phonological, lexical, morphological and syntactic level; sociolinguistic competence, the mastery of appropriate use of language for a wide range of sociological contexts; discourse competence, the mastery of cohesive and coherent uses of language for a wider range of discourse; and strategic competence, the mastery of strategies of communication used either to optimize and facilitate communication or to compensate for a lack in one or more of the other areas of communicative competence.

Any English program enhancement and curriculum development work that aims to prepare the students for the future is likely to benefit from using Canale and Swain's concept of communicative competence since it suggests the direction this work must strive toward. For example, it suggests the importance of sociolinguistic competence and the need to sensitize students to the rules of speaking because without it, one cannot hope to realize one's communicative goals effectively or recognize the intent of the speaker when he says, "there is no charge for the service but please make a donation." Likewise, the concept indicates that without discourse competence that requires the knowledge and skills to not only sustain communication beyond a simple conversation routine but also manage it to accomplish one's communicative goal, one cannot hope to engage in negotiation and debate, and meaningful exchange of thoughts and ideas. Canale and Swain's strategic competence is an especially important concept for it points out that deficiency in grammatical and other competence areas can be compensated for by learning to apply communicative strategies including paraphrasing, restructuring, and appealing for assistance. This means language learners can, by learning to apply the communication strategies, communicate effectively even though their knowledge and skills of the new language may be deficient.

In sum, it is suggested that CLT that strives toward communicative competence should focus on much more than on conversational skills. To implement a university English program that has communicative competence as one of its objectives, as in middle and high school curriculum, "fostering a positive attitude toward communicating in English" is critical given that much of the learning will have to take place outside the classroom context by motivated learners who can learn autonomously. Hence the following consideration:

(1) Classroom should become a community where leaners are motivated to form, develop, and strengthen their identity as English-users through activities that engage them in exchanging viewpoints with dissimilar others, and in analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing diverse viewpoints to develop new perspectives.

(2) Learning materials must be meaningful and interesting enough to motivate the learners to have an authentic discussion. Instructors should relinquish control of material selection to the learners at times, direct learners to "imagined L2 communities" by introducing diverse materials some of which can be found on the Internet, and use materials that develop critical literacies in diverse media and genres.

(3) Instruction needs to go beyond the notion that there is an ideal, "native speaker" model of English and help learners understand that English—even beginner level English—can be used as an additional language that empowers them to communicate with dissimilar others and transmits their voices to the world.

(4) Instruction should focus not just on notions and functions but also on language that sustains discourse. Since most textbooks provide topics for discussion and simply state, "discuss the following question with a partner" without showing exactly how the discussion should proceed, the "discussion" tend to become limited to a few turns. Therefore, instruction needs to highlight how discourse is done through direct modeling and use of authentic materials, and give learners ample opportunities to practice using discourse strategies.

(5) Communication in the 21ˢᵗ century will not be limited to oral communication. Hence, instruction in four skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing combined with information literacy skills is necessary. However, since learners will be involved in complex communication that requires critical thinking using English, instruction should engage them in activities such as debate, negotiation, writing argumentatively and persuasively on issues of substance, group projects that also develop their global perspective and cross-cultural competence.

(6) All of the above should be implemented with care with an underlining goal of enabling

the learners to develop an ideal image of themselves as English-users (Ideal L2-self), become motivated to engage in cross-cultural communication, and increasingly have the skills and strategies to engage in active and autonomous learning beyond the classroom context.

Path Forward

Because developing an English language curriculum and making decisions on assessment and testing require considerable expertise, it is not something that can be done on the side by the English language faculty or by "lay" faculty members who have no scholarly expertise in English language education but have strong opinions about it.   In the first place, curriculum development is not something in which university faculty members have technical expertise.   Therefore, in order for a university English program to solve the issues mentioned in this paper and implement classes that meet the above conditions, a significant amount of resources will have to be allocated.   For example, faculty members interested should be given release time and an opportunity to receive appropriate training in curriculum development and be supported by staff with expertise in curriculum development.   The administration will have to work to ascertain that there is university or departmental wide support for allocating such expenditure toward English education.

What is also important to recognize is that curriculum development work must be followed by well-planned curriculum implementation that includes not just dissemination of information about the new curriculum but also training of instructors to understand the curriculum goals and know how to teach effectively to the curriculum.   While some may believe that a couple of faculty development workshops should be enough to prepare instructors to do this, teacher and staff development research shows that what is introduced in such workshops is often not well-implemented in the classroom setting without workshop follow-up and support from staff development specialists.   Also, because teaching to the type of curriculum suggested here cannot be implemented by merely using commercial textbooks but instead requires considerable instructor time to plan lessons, prepare materials, and respond to student-generated products including essays, a compensation scheme that pays for this type of work for the English instructors most of whom are part-time instructors is in order.   Moreover, because sometimes, learning is better facilitated by schedules that do not necessarily fit nicely into 15 week academic calendar and orderly 1.5 hour increments, a more flexible approach to class scheduling may also be in order.   Though some universities do have a flexible system that accommodates change, most universities

have bureaucratic and unaccommodating administrative systems that stand in the way of curriculum innovation and reform.

Some of the issues such as those related to the university entrance exams require solutions that must be carefully considered and implemented at inter-university level if not at the national level.　It is often claimed that major changes in Japanese universities have always been ushered in when the pressure demanding reform from both inside and outside the university becomes intense (Amano and Poole, 2005).　If so, it may be a matter of time for English language education in the Japanese universities to change.

Notes

1　The survey allowed multiple responses.

2　In many universities in Japan, students are required to take two English courses that meet twice a week during their first year.

3　Information regarding the syllabi was accessed through the Internet Webpages of various universities and through a network of instructors who teach in the universities in Japan.

4　Nichibei Kaiwa Gakuin in Tokyo Japan, for example, provides language training to university students who have been accepted to work at premier multinational companies in Japan. It also provides intensive training career path employees from both the government and companies.

5　Other issues include "top-down approach" to curriculum design that fails to get support from the stakeholders, lack of materials and teacher training that enables teachers to implement the curriculum.

6　English Communication II further develops skills articulated in English Communication I by using more challenging listening and reading materials and requiring more challenging goals such as speaking and drawing conclusions, and writing passages that are coherent and cohesive. English Communication III is an extension of the earlier English Communication II although the objective, to enable students to *use English in their social lives* is mentioned for the first time.

7　English Expression II further develops skills in English Expression I.

8　There is not a huge difference between the new curriculum being implemented and the existing curriculum that is being phased out. The major difference is that the new curriculum endorses a more balanced teaching of 4 skills in the middle school, an increase in vocabulary taught by 25 percent in middle school and 28 percent in high school.

9　We are not asserting here that TOEFL, TOEIC or the Sentâ Shiken actually measures communicative competence in English. It is well known that some of those who can score high on these tests are actually not communicatively competent in English.

10　University of Tokyo, for example, administers a program called Special English Lessons in which TOEFL and conversational English courses are offered to its students for a fee. These courses are offered outside the curriculum and are outsourced to several language schools though the university uses student feedback to give the schools a great deal of input in how the courses should be taught and enhanced.

References

Amano, I. and Poole, G. (2005). The Japanese University in Crisis. *Higher Education*, Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 685-711.

Berlin, L. N. (2005). *Contextualizing college ESL classroom praxis*. Mahawah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Canale, M. and Swain, M. (1980) Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. Applied Linguistics, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1-46.

Choi, I. (2008). The impact of EFL testing of EFL education in Korea. *Language Testing.* Language Testing, Vol. 25, No. 1, 39-62.

Educational Testing Service (2008). TOEFL test and score data summary for the years 2006-2007. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

大学英語教育学―その方向性と諸分野（英語教育学大系 第1巻）

森住 衞（編） 大修館書店（2010）

Gorsuch, G. J. (2000). EFL educational policies and educational cultures: Influences on teachers' approval of communicative activities EFL educational policies and educational cultures: Influences on teachers' approval of communicative activities. *TESOL Quarterly, 34*(4), 675-710.

Guilloteaux, M. J., & Dörnyei, Z. (2008). Motivating language learners: a classroom-oriented investigation of the effects of motivational strategies on student motivation. *TESOL Quarterly, 42,* 55-77.

Hatch, E. (1978). Discourse analysis and second language acquisition. In E. Hatch (Ed.) *Second language acquisition: A book of reading.* Rowley, Mass. Newbury House.

Hato, Y. (2005). Problems in top-down goal setting secondary language education: A case study of action plan to cultivate Japanese with English Abilities. *Jalt Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 33-52.

Krashen, S. (1984b) *The input hypothesis: Issues and Implications*. London: Longman.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (2003). Developing a strategic plan to cultivate "Japanese with English abilities": Plan to improve English and Japanese abilities. Retrieved August 1, 2011 from http://www.mext.go.jp/english/news/2002/07/020901.htm

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (2003). The course of study for foreign languages. Retrieved August 1, 2011 from http://mext.go.jp/english/shotou/030301.htm

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (2005). The future of higher education in Japan. Retrieved August 1, 2011 from http://www.mext.go.jp/english/highered/1303556.htm

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (2008) Improvement of Academic Abilities – Lower Secondary School Foreign Languages. Retrieved August 1, 2011 from http://www.mext.go.jp/english/elsec/1303755.htm

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (2009) Improvement of Academic Abilities – Upper Secondary School Foreign Languages. Retrieved August 1, 2011 from http://www.mext.go.jp/english/elsec/1303755.htm

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (2009). The quality assurance framework of higher education in Japan. Retrieved August 1, 2011 from http://www.mext.go.jp/english/highered/1307524.htm

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (2011). Interim report by the university council of Japan http://www.mext.go.jp/english/highered/1304955.htm

Morizumi, M. Jimbo, H.,Okada, N. and Terauchi, H. (2010). *A study on university English education-Its perspectives and areas*. Tokyo: Taishukan Publishing Company.

Nishimachi International School. School Wide Student Learning Expectations. Retrieved August 11, 2011 from http://www.nishimachi.ac.jp/welcome/sle.html

Nishio, T. (2008). Japanese Secondary School Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Regarding Communicative Language Teaching: An Exploratory Survey *JALT Journal,* Vol. 30, No. 1, 27-50.

Noels, K. A., Clement, R., & Pelletier, L. G. (1999). Perceptions of teachers' communicative style and students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. *The Modern Language Journal, 83*(1), 23-34.

Spada, N. (2007). Communicative language teaching: Current status and future prospects. In Cummins, J. and Davison, C. (Eds.), *International handbook of English language teaching: Part one*. New York: Springer.

Taguchi, N. (2005). The communicative approach in secondary schools: Teacher's perception and practice. *The Language Teacher*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 3-12.

Tajino, A. (2004). Nihon ni okeru daigakueigo kyouiku no mokuteki to mokuhyou ni tsuite [Regarding the objective and the purpose of university English education in Japan]. *Multi Media News*, No. 7, 11-22.

Tanaka, K. (2009). The learning outcomes of an academic writing course: A study of Japanese university students. *JACET Journal*, 49, 27-41.

Tanaka, K. (2010a). The philosophical, political, and practical dimensions of English for academic purposes education: A focus on critical thinking. *International and regional studies*, No. 37. 67-77.

Tanaka, K. (2010b). Challenges of implementing a university English for academic purposes program in Japan. *International and regional studies*, No. 38, 1-25.

Tsui, A.B.M. and Tollefson, J.M. (2007). Language policy and the construction of national cultural identity. In A.M.B. Tsui and J.M. Tollefson (Eds.), *Language policy, culture, and identity in Asian contexts* (pp.1-19). Mahwah, NJ. Erlbaum.

Yoshida, K. (2003). Language education policy in Japan: The problem of espoused objectives versus practice. *Modern Language Journal,* 87(2), 290-292.

Warschaur, M. (2000). The changing global economy and the future of English teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 511-535.