A Case Study of an Independent Professional Development Project in a Japanese Private Secondary School

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Abstract

This qualitative case study involved helping four Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) at a private secondary school in Kumamoto, Japan to meet the recent teaching English through English (TETE) curriculum policy reform guidelines which require them to, in principle, conduct their lessons entirely in English. This study outlines how an independent professional development project involving in-service teachers aided in implementing the TETE policy changes and increased the amount of English used in the classroom. Using Template Analysis, the author identified an implicit stress that was holding these teachers back from TETE and keeping them in a teacher-centered mindset. Informed by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978), the author, assuming the role of more knowledgeable other (MKO), guided the JTEs through a praxis cycle that aided in bringing professional teacher knowledge into practice through a reflective process. Using stimulated recall and collaborative planning sessions, interventions were implemented considering the immediate needs of the students at the classroom level and the Course of Study guidelines which were drafted by the Ministry of Education (MEXT) at the institutional level.

Key Words: Independent Professional Development Project, Teaching English Through English,
Template Analysis

1.0 Introduction

Educational policy reform is not something new in Japan. Japan has been adjusting its general education system since the Meiji era. Guided by an increasing desire to produce English communicators rather than English learners, the most recent policy reforms have called for a major shift towards communicative-based learning and more student-centered lessons as the demands for communicative abilities on the global scale have become more prominent. In these times of global change professional development programs for teachers are not just important, they are necessary.

   This study was conducted for the purpose of researching the pedagogical practices of four in-service Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) in order to better understand them and to better inform and promote professional learning of in-service teachers in this time of English teaching policy reform in Japan. It follows a tradition of classroom-based research which claims more studies need to depict the challenges faced by teachers in their daily instruction and as they naturally occur (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Borg, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013; and Johnson, 2015), so as to find remedies through professional development. Although the study did not involve formal measurement, experimentation, or explicit hypothesis testing, it was empirical in the sense of

qualitative research where inferences are based on attached rather than detached observation. The study attempted, by these now increasingly familiar qualitative methods, to explore, in-depth, the perceptions and practices of the participants. Observations of practices were documented and analyzed to suggest changes, implement those changes, and report on the outcomes.

Observations and inquires of four in-service JTEs at a secondary school in Kumamoto, Japan were conducted to help them deal with their problems implementing the Course of Study guidelines, specifically the teaching of English through English (TETE) policy reforms by undertaking a professional development project over the course of one academic year. One of the major aims of this study was to affect positive changes in the JTE's classrooms through effective professional development. Therefore, the approach to this research was built on the premise that effective professional development, especially when asking teachers to advance or make changes in their teaching praxis, occurs when: (1) it is conducted onsite, i.e. at the schools where they work; (2) each teacher's particular needs are addressed depending on the context-specific educational environment; (3) the teachers themselves take ownership of their development and are reflective in and on their practice; (4) it is done in collaboration with other teachers; and (5) the process empowers the participants.

Due to the context-specific nature of qualitative research it is very important the five components listed above are considered when conceptualizing classroom-based research projects. To clarify the third component listed above regarding teachers' reflective practice (Farrell, 2007), 'reflection in' refers to consciously directing one's focus on the actions performed in the classroom. 'Reflections on' means reflections conducted before or after the lesson outside of the classroom (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). Regarding the fourth and fifth components, words such as ownership and empowerment strongly imply the development of teacher agency. This will be addressed in the literature review.

Four concepts that were generated in this study were applicable to the focus of this paper: (1) the use of assisted questions among the teachers to connect the textbook content to students' lived context; (2) focusing on student action through increasing retelling and story-telling activities to increase the amount of communicative English used among students as well as assisting them with content comprehension of the textbook; (3) the use of more task-based and active learning in the classroom in the form of information-gap activities; (4) continued professional development by extending the professional development project over the following year.

2.0 Literature Review

The study draws from five areas in the literature to inform and frame the research and analysis. The literature review begins with a brief description of classroom-based research. This is followed by a discussion on how institutional influences affect teacher behavior in very context-specific ways. Then, professional development is presented as necessary to accommodate successful implementation of policy reforms. Professional development programs and projects can be developed on site and conducted in collaboration with teachers working in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). These approaches to professional development, in this study, are designed to foster teacher agency and are supported by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978).

2.1 Classroom-based Research

Classroom-based research deals with observing and documenting teacher and student behavior to better understand the context specific actions taken and with the aim of facilitating better learning conditions (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). Many complex internal and external forces influence and shape teacher behavior. Regarding internal influences, teachers' conceptions of practice are shaped by their previous experiences (Larsen-Freeman, 1993; Larsen-Freeman, 2016). This is based on the long-standing assumption that has "come to characterize teacher learning as normative and lifelong" (Johnson, 2015). This is exemplified by teachers' learning experiences as students and pre-service teachers influencing teacher identity. That is, the kind of teacher they become or at least their perceptions of what they think a teacher should be (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Lortie, 1975). This assumption was later supported by JTE comments in subsequent interviews when they stated explicitly that they were teaching a specific way because that is how they were taught when they were students. Classroom-based research aims at making these implicit perceptions of teachers' lived experience more explicit. The next section looks at some of the major external influences in the form of institutional influences within the context of this study.

2.2 Institutional Influences

One of the major institutional influences on JTEs is the Course of Study drafted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (hereinafter referred to as MEXT), of which the foreign language education policies have been revised on multiple occasions since the Meiji era (see Fujita, 2000; MEXT, 2014; and Takegami, 2016).

Policy reform in Japan has traditionally come in the form of a top-down approach, and with this approach being associated with difficulties at the ground level in terms of actual implementation of new policies. This approach to reform is in contrast to what researchers such as Guskey (2002) and Fullan (2007) suggest. They state, in order for policy reforms to be successful they must be seen as feasible by the teachers, and for this feasibility to be known there must be some form of bottom-up mechanism in the formulation of policy.

The JTEs took part in this professional development project to aid them in more clearly conceptualizing their teacher identities and to develop their teaching approaches. In interviews they stated that their teaching approaches were based on their past experiences as students and on what they had learned as pre-service teachers. Furthermore, they commented that they were having difficulty conceptualizing lessons that would provide students with a balanced syllabus accommodating both teaching to the test, which focuses heavily on grammar and structure, and the TETE policy, which focuses on cultivating communicative abilities in their students. In short, the JTEs were having difficulty conceptualizing what they could call their ideal lesson. They stated that the pressure placed on them to get results from their students in the form of high scores on standardized tests was always present. The demand for high test scores is a reality in high schools in Japan (Gorsuch, 2000; Hamada, 2011; and Nishino, 2011). Professional development projects, like the ones discussed next, provide the platform for teachers to discuss these and other issues in a constructive way.

2.3 Professional Development

In order to coordinate positive changes at the classroom level with policy reforms made at the institutional level, more support for the professional development of in-service teachers is needed. Voogt, Pieters and Handelzalts (2016) suggest that institutional support for professional development programs for in-service teachers can be seen as a way of encouraging curriculum restructuring. Gurney and Liyanage (2016) present two types of professional development programs. Those which are supported at the institutional level, such as workshops and seminars coordinated and conducted by MEXT, are referred to as sponsored professional development (SPD) projects, while those which are conducted independently by teachers and teacher researchers, like this one, are referred to as independent professional development (IPD) projects. At least one tangential objective of this research reported in this paper is to draw the reader's attention to IPD as a feasible approach to facilitating positive changes among in-service teachers.

One important factor for effective professional development that must be understood is that it is a process that occurs over time as teachers form their teacher identities (see Olsen, 2010; Olsen, 2012). Teacher identity is shaped by the beliefs of the teacher and, in turn, teacher beliefs are shaped by a number of complex factors both intrinsic and extrinsic. Teacher's experiences as students and pre-service teachers, as mentioned earlier, are examples of intrinsic factors while the environment in which the teacher is situated is an example of the extrinsic side. Teachers as practitioners rather than policy makers, currently have little say in policy reforms made at the institutional levels, but with regards to the teaching environment, in-service teachers can focus on developing a "community of practice" (see below) around the policies they inherit. Regardless of whether the professional development projects are sponsored or not, they have the best chance for establishing positive and lasting change when they are done on site and in collaboration with other teachers (Miller & Burden, 2007). Such projects carried out in collaboration often occur in communities of practice, as outlined next.

2.4 Communities of Practice Promote Teacher Agency

The concept of communities of practice is grounded in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory in that learning and indeed teaching, is considered to occur socially (Lave & Wenger, 1991). According to Wenger-Trayner, Fenton-O'Creevy, Hutchinson, Kubiak, and Wenger-Trayner (2014) there are three characteristics which are crucial in order for a community to be considered a community of practice: the *domain* which requires participants to belong to a shared specific area of interest; the *community* which involves building relationships within the domain that enable them to learn from each other; and the *practice* through sharing knowledge as practitioners from experiences and skills learned while reflecting on ways of addressing recurring problems (p. 2).

It may be said that teachers form their identities as they interact with others in their communities of practice. Therefore, we can assess that a key factor in professional development is that it is a process that occurs over time as the teacher forms his/her teacher identity within the environment in which he/she works and by dealing with others in a community of practice. Teachers working together in such a way develop agency as they actively pursue their professional development. Agency, in the context of SPD and IPD, according to the National

Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) is the "capacity of teachers to act purposefully and constructively to direct their professional growth and contribute to the growth of their colleagues" (Calvert, 2016, p. 4).

To conclude therefore, teachers' identities are shaped by their experiences which form their beliefs, and the actions that they take are generally in accordance with these beliefs as mediated by interactions with others in their communities of practice. Therefore, it is reasonable to state that the professional development process is underpinned by aspects of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which posits that learning is socially situated and that the individual mind is socially constructed by the other; though this construction may be more profound in the process of child development than in ongoing adult learning and transformation. The relationship of this key principle to professional development is addressed next.

2.5 Sociocultural Theory in Professional Development

In its most reduced form sociocultural theory is based on the premise that development is socially situated. That is to say, the development of the individual mind, as mediated through the use of language is carried out in social interactions. As Vygotsky (1978) pointed out, these interactions lead to development when they occur in the zone of proximal development (ZPD) which focuses on human potential (i.e. operationalized as tasks which can be completed under mediation but not alone) rather than the current level of competence in the individual. While Vygotsky was presenting a theory of child development and the process by which the parent or teacher mediate the child's learning, ultimately producing development and the autonomous and self-regulated mind, these processes persist to one degree or another in adult learning, and especially in the face of difficult tasks where mediation by a more knowledgeable other (MKO) leverages learning.

As we learn, through our interactions and experiences, we progress and expand our field of competence, with this competence often assisted, or mediated, by the MKO. The MKO's role is similar to that of a mentor in that he/she guides the less experienced agent, sometimes referred to as the novice, through tasks or exercises that are just beyond his/her current competency level. In this study, I assumed the role of MKO, from a formal standpoint, guiding the JTEs through praxis cycles of reflection and refinement. These cycles were meant to be contributive to their professional development and were aimed at improving the conditions in the participants' classrooms.

While, and stated above, Vygotsky's research was primarily related to child development, but his ideas have been extended to the adult learning literature. In one such example, Warford (2011) applies Vygotsky's theory to teacher education in talking about the zone of proximal teacher development (ZPTD) which he describes as "the distance between what teaching candidates can do on their own without assistance and a proximal level they might attain through strategically mediated assistance from more capable others" (p. 253).

The ZPTD construct, essentially an extension or adaptation of Vygotsky's notion of the ZPD provides a basic conceptual foundation for the incorporation of the sociocultural theory into the research reported in this paper. The research is underpinned by the social aspect of teacher development in that it used a praxis cycle which is a collaborative process of reflection and refinement involving the formalized role of an MKO. The process was designed to develop both

the participants' theoretical understanding and professional knowledge. Positive experiences in professional development projects conducted in collaboration with other teachers in communities of practice can also lead to the fostering of teacher agency which can be achieved through conducting instructional conversations (Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1991). Typically, instructional conversations have been used in the classroom by teachers guiding students through a lesson. This study incorporated instructional conversation in the planning and feedback sessions, and it is given more focused discussion in the next section.

2.6 Using Instructional Conversations to Facilitate Agency

Instructional conversations provide opportunities for dialogic inquiry, which is associated with Vygotsky's socially mediated view of learning (Wells, 2000). These conversations are depicted as lessons grounded in discussions and geared toward creating opportunities for participants' conceptual and linguistic development. Elaborating on this, Goldenberg (1991) states that they "… focus on an idea or a concept that has educational value as well as meaning and relevance for students" (p. 1). He also states that "the teacher encourages expression of students' own ideas, builds upon students' experiences and ideas, and guides them to increasingly sophisticated levels of understanding" (p.1). Combining this with the above mentioned ZPTD concept, JTEs were provided with opportunities to engage in interactions which promoted their analytical, reflective, and critical thinking skills, in such a way as to help them redress the imbalance of the curriculum guidelines in the Course of Study.

Researchers suggest that instructional conversations assist the participants in thinking critically, exploring ideas, in forming concepts, and in problem solving. They suggest, in keeping with sociocultural theory as presented above, that meaning is constructed through effective instructional conversations (Cazden,1988; Goldenberg, 1991; Tharp & Gallimore, 1991). Therefore, it was deemed appropriate in this IPD project for the participating JTEs to undertake an instructional conversational approach during the interviews and co-generative dialogues. And, as an extension, for use in the classroom through the introduction of assisted questions (see Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Three of Wilen's (1990) guidelines for fostering teacher learning through operational instructional conversations were implemented in this study which aided in reflections on and analysis of the JTEs' actions in the classroom. First, opportunities were provided for me to meet with the participating JTEs to learn how to implement instructional conversations in their classrooms. Meetings focused on their perceived needs as directly related to instructional conversations. Second, sessions which focused on instructional conversations were designed to be intellectually stimulating for the participants in that we acquired deeper conceptual understandings of teaching techniques and theories. Furthermore, various dimensions of the textbook subject matter and content were discussed before introducing them in class so that various scenarios could be contemplated. Third, stimulated recall was used in the form of videotaping the observation lessons which included the JTEs' attempts to implement instructional conversation in class through the introduction of assisted questions. Finally, Reflections on teachers' actions were conducted to review and analyze their performances in the aim of acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills to improve teaching practices. Goldenberg and Gallimore (1991) suggest that this process of self-and-shared-analysis is both intensive and time consuming. That is

to say, change requires both time and effort on the part of the agent making the change. Changes made by the participants of this study was facilitated by using a praxis cycle as outlined in the next section.

2.7 Change in the Classroom Facilitated by the Praxis Cycle

In order to affect lasting change in teacher behavior, Guskey (2002) states that real change in teacher behavior only occurs after teachers see positive changes in student outcomes as a direct result of the changes made. Citing Fullan and Miles (1992), Guskey (2002) points out that teachers generally go into professional development programs with specific aims in mind:

> What attracts teachers to professional development, therefore, is their belief that it will expand their knowledge and skills, contribute to their growth, and enhance their effectiveness with students. But teachers also tend to be quite pragmatic. What they hope to gain through professional development are specific, concrete, and practical ideas that directly relate to the day-to-day operation of their classrooms (p. 382).

Following a praxis cycle can facilitate positive and lasting change in participants at any level of experience from novice to expert. The process is transformative in that it brings the practices and conditions within the classroom to the attention of the teacher, enhancing teacher awareness and allowing them to reflect on and in their practice, as mentioned earlier. Praxis cycles in essence, guide teachers through the rigours process of reflection and refinement.

Similar to lesson study or *jugyokenkyu*, a well- known teacher development process which was developed in Japan, and which is familiar to JTEs, praxis cycles work best when performed in collaboration. The cyclical process focuses on developing shared knowledge. Therefore, collaboration is most critical in the planning stages. However, and anecdotally, it is often the case, at the junior and senior high school levels that the teachers who are assigned to conduct lesson study are usually left on their own to plan the lesson. This results in missed opportunities to share and receive valuable insights from other teachers participating in the process. Only after the lesson has been planned do other teachers watch the research lesson and, later, attend a post-lesson feedback session. It is only at these late stages that the lesson study is somewhat collaborative. When the collaboration is only focused on, or limited to, the feedback sessions, the participants feel less like stake holders in the process. This affects the experience altering both the type of advice given in the feedback sessions and the feelings of the teacher designated to plan the research lesson.

This type of lesson study has been by and large a negative experience for the teachers that I have talked to. Praxis on the other hand, places great importance on collaborative and reflective aspects at every stage of the cycle (see Figure 1 below). Initially, surveys, interviews, and discussions are used to achieve this. Again, similar to lesson study, the cycle may be repeated for more in-depth analysis or to accommodate multiple points of interest in a study.

Furthermore, the praxis cycles place particular focus on developing situational awareness and understanding among the participants through observation, reflection, and documentation (see Jones & Endsley, 2004). Stimulated recall was used in the feedback sessions to help the JTEs better retrieve their practices before conceptualizing them. Moreover, the stimulated recall session allowed us, to become co-constructive in the lesson planning phases. Together such things as ways
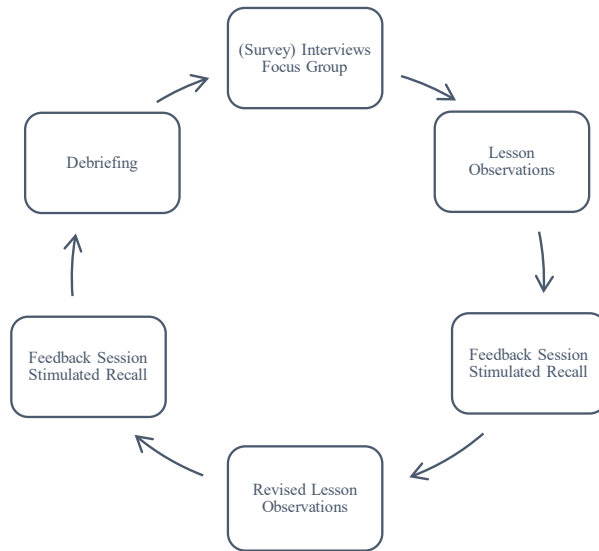
Figure 1 illustrates the collaborative nature of the praxis cycle focusing on developing situational awareness and understanding through observation, reflection, and documentation.

to increase the amount of English used in the classroom and how to make lessons more student-centered in accordance with the TETE policy were considered.

3.0 Research Methodology

The study assumed a qualitative approach which was appropriate considering its aim was to explore and interpret the perceptions and behaviors of the participants. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggest that, "if you want to understand the way people think about their world and how those definitions are formed you need to get close to them, hear them talk and observe them in their day-to-day lives" (p. 32). Because this study focused on four JTEs in one private secondary school, it followed the procedures commensurate with case study (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018), otherwise known as longitudinal study, by offering an in-depth analysis over time, in this case of four individuals in a single institution.

There are a number of well recognized methods available to facilitate the data analysis of qualitative research. Those methods which fall under the umbrella of thematic analysis are especially helpful in analysing textual data. Template Analysis (see below), as it is applied as part of a qualitative methodology, has been earning recognition among researchers as a flexible method to be used in gathering and analysing textual data (King & Horrocks, 2010; Brooks, McCluskey, Turley & King, 2015; King & Brooks, 2017).

3.1 Template Analysis

Template Analysis, as defined in Brooks et al., (2015), "is a form of thematic analysis which emphasises the use of hierarchical coding but balances a relatively high degree of structure in the

process of analysing textual data with the flexibility to adapt it to the needs of a particular study" (p. 4-5). The flexibility of Template Analysis, as King and Brooks (2017) note, comes from the fact that it is not tied to any specific epistemology. However, having no ties to any one epistemology does not take away from the rigor of the analytical process. Rather, it allows the method to adapt itself to a wide-range of epistemological positions. King and Brooks (2017) provide us with four examples of how Template Analysis positions itself within varying extremes of realist and constructivist epistemologies (p. 17). Accordingly, Template Analysis was chosen for use in this study because it recognizes the importance of insider knowledge and context-specific experience when performing research of the kind undertaken in this study.

One of the defining features of Template Analysis is the development of the 'template' whereby the researcher may begin with a small number of *a priori* themes depending on the epistemological position of the researcher. When *a priori* themes are used they are defined based on the researcher's highly contextual insider knowledge. Themes are then substantiated against the collected data to form 'high-level' and 'low-level' themes of focus. As the study progresses themes may also emerge from the data. In this way, Template Analysis takes both a top-down and bottom-up approach to data collection and analysis. This differs from other forms of thematic analysis such as Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) which, purportedly, works exclusively from the bottom-up and states that the researcher must commence the research project as a *tabula rasa* (or a open slate) resulting in a possible disregard or suppression of the researcher's unique insider knowledge. Such an approach seems unrealistic and counterproductive.

On the one hand, Template Analysis acknowledges the impossibility of making sense of data without some *a priori* conceptions at the outset of the coding process and on the other hand it allows for themes to emerge and change during the analytical process. Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2014) is similar to Template Analysis in its coding approach. However, neither the traditional Grounded Theory nor the more recent Constructivist approaches allow for the use of *a priori* themes. The advantages of acknowledging the in-sider status of the researcher can actually aid in the process because the researcher is free to draw on his/her context specific experiences. This allows the researcher to get close to the data quickly while also remaining attentive to the subjective realities of the participants. By identifying and understanding the perceived realities as they occur in the natural environment, the researcher proceeds with the development of his/her template of themes.

3.2 Participants

Four full-time in-service JTEs, two male and two female teachers, participated in the study. One of the male teachers (JTE 1) and one of the female teachers (JTE 2) were considered to be novice teachers with, at the time the study was conducted, only 1 year and 3 years of full-time teaching experience, respectively. One of the male teachers (JTE 3) and one of the female teachers (JTE 4) were considered to be experienced teachers as they each had more than 10 years of full-time teaching experience when the study was conducted.

Observation lessons were conducted in the JTE's homeroom classes which covered both junior and senior high school classes, from grades 9 through 12. In my capacity as an insider and a full-time teacher with close to 20 years teaching experience in Japan and more than 10 years teaching

experience at the school where the study was conducted, I assumed, from a formal perspective, both the position of MKO as well as researcher. My insider status was crucial in this process as getting close to the participants, earning their trust, and accurate interpretation of their perceptions and feelings toward the research topic are crucial in qualitative studies (Burns, 1999). However, it should be noted that the role of MKO in this research, and as stated above, was a formal one. In other words, it was the assumed start point for the relationships, but all relationships are naturally negotiated in flexible social space, and with participants able to reverse and negotiate roles if the task requirements demand this. Rigorous enforcement of the MKO role for the sake of it would lead to artificial relationships and corrode the authenticity of the process.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The praxis cycle, outlined above (see Figure 1), provided a regime of structured action around which the data collection occurred. The data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and during feedback sessions which also made use of stimulated recall or video recordings, as mentioned earlier. All of the interviews and feedback sessions including stimulated recall recollections were audio recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Word software for further analysis and to substantiate the themes. Field notes were taken during observations and memos were written during the analytic process. Memos were written using the comments function in the Word software as well as hand-written in research journals and in the margins of transcripts (see Appendix 2 for an example of fieldnotes on initial observations). Participants' comments related to the themes were highlighted to compare them, track changes, and to perform member checking. During the course of analysis diagrammatic templates (see Appendices 3 and 4) were created to illustrate the interpretive process and show how the themes relate to each other. As stated in King and Brooks (2017), "it is often especially useful to explore how themes relate to each other in addition to the hierarchical relationships within clusters" (p. 38). All data were analyzed using the procedures of Template Analysis and following the steps outlined below. This study produced two major themes which were supported by multiple underlining themes, three of which are presented in this paper as exemplification.

In my formal role as MKO, I met with each of the members before observation lessons to co-plan and after the observation lessons to assist with reflections on the lessons using stimulated recall. During these sessions instructional conversation techniques were also applied, as outlined above, to help the JTEs better conceptualize their ideal lessons. Revisions of such things as the method of delivery of textbook content to be covered in the observation lesson were made in collaboration. For example, lessons were well organized but included mostly lower-order, comprehension-type assessment questions related strictly to the content of the textbook. Consequently, one of the major revisions was the inclusion of assisted questions, considered to be higher-order in the learners' thought processes (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). This was done to increase the amount of English used in the classroom and to bring the content of the text books closer to the students' lived context. With assisted questioning, students are given opportunities to reflect on and apply the content to their own lives and, therefore, to go beyond simply finding the correct answer from the text. After further discussion, it was also felt revisions could be made to give students more opportunities to use English to communicate with each other. Meetings

continued in this cyclical fashion, involving reflecting and revising over the course of the academic year.

Due to the highly interpretive nature of this kind of research, Creswell's (2007) strategies for ensuring the validity of data were applied to certify the trustworthiness of the findings. The major components implemented in this study were: triangulation of the data, member checking, clarifying teacher bias, peer debriefing, and prolonged engagement. Data were analysed using the five procedural steps of Template Analysis: (1) Becoming familiar with the data through personally transcribing the interview data and conducting an iterative process of comparative analysis; (2) preliminary coding of the data beginning with an *a priori* theme based on my insider knowledge of the teaching conditions that were then substantiated from the emerging data; (3) production of the initial template was formed using the data collected in interviews and through observations, then substantiated from further data as they emerged; (4) further development of the template as a continuation of step (3); and finally, (5) finalizing the inter-connectivity of the themes to produce the final template.

There are three recognized styles of presentation in studies which use Template Analysis. The first is to present each participant's experiences as a series of case studies. Due to time and size constraints, this approach was not feasible for this paper. The second involves structuring accounts around the main themes of the study. Accounts, and interpretations of said accounts, are supported using verbatim quotes taken directly from the data. This style is considered by many to be "an efficient way to present [the research] findings" (King & Brooks, 2017, p. 42). However, there is potential for over-generalization and loss of holistic understanding of the individual participant's account. When time and size constraints permit, King and Brooks (2017) recommend a third style which is a combination of the above two styles. For the purpose of this paper, the second style was deemed appropriate. Therefore, the two major themes generated in this study are presented in the fashion outlined above as the second style. Interpretations made in the data analysis are supported with verbatim quotes made by the participants. The detailed description of the context in which this occurred was provided earlier in this paper (see Introduction and Literature Review). A discussion follows the presentation of the two major themes before the paper closes.

4.0 Two Major Themes Emerging from the Data

Two major themes of this study are presented with the intent of describing the teaching realities of the participating JTEs in this school and these findings should not be interpreted as a generalization to all cases. First, the overarching theme of constraints on English use in the classroom is addressed. Based on my experiences teaching at this school, I decided to commence the study by outlining *Constraints on English Use* in the classroom as the *a priori* theme which framed the study and generally guided the analysis. This *a priori* theme was also supported by three lower-level themes that indicated self-imposed restrictions on the JTEs' English use in the classroom (see below). The second theme, presented in section 4.2, emerged from the data through the course of in-depth interviews as the participants proceeded through the praxis cycle (detailed in section 2.8). The theme was labelled *Teachers Assuming Responsibility for Student Performance* and was generated from analysis of the JTEs' comments using of the verb make when discussing

lesson objectives (discussed in section 4.2). This led to the four concepts generated in this study (as presented in the Introduction and Discussion).

4.1 Constraints on English Use

The word *constraint* indicates a restriction or stiffness of manner and can be used to describe self-imposed inhibitions in personal relationships. Therefore, the term is used in this theme to indicate a kind of self-imposed restriction by the JTEs on their English use in the classroom, which I was very much aware of as a teacher at the school site. Three reasons were identified as contributors to such restrictions: (1) lack of confidence; (2) saving time; and (3) inadequate teacher knowledge due to heavy reliance on traditional approach and lack of knowledge of other approaches. Two things were noted in the JTEs' answers to the initial questionnaire at the beginning of the study as an early indicator of support for such a theme (see Appendix 1 for the twelve questions included in the initial questionnaire). Firstly, all of the JTEs were aware that they could use more English in class and secondly, they were especially tentative to comply with the TETE policy when teaching the national curriculum named *English Expression* classes which focus on vocabulary building, grammar, and sentence structure. This drew my attention, in the observation lessons, to the kind of English used and areas where English could be increased. During the observations and subsequent interviews, an intervention was strategized.

I guided the interviews as part of my formal role as the MKO and provided the JTEs with academic vocabulary when discussing educational theory and methods of practice through instructional conversation. Instructional conversation was also included as part of the intervention, to be introduced for use in class, as outlined earlier. The two senior participants were familiar with some of the information, that is to say, they had prior knowledge of some of the theories and teaching methods discussed, but there were also areas that they were not sure of. I provided them with clarification of academic terminology and applicable materials in the form of relevant academic articles (e.g. Tharp & Gallimore, *Rousing Students to Life*, 1988). Although all of the JTEs were proficient enough to conduct the interviews almost exclusively in English, they were initially weaker in their understanding of said academic terminology, as seen in the following examples. During an interview with JTE 1, he was asked to explain what he knew about the concept of 'active learning' his comments were as follows:

"I know that it's not like a lecture, but students are positively participating in the class and talking in class with other students and also of course with the teachers. Yeah. I think that is Active Learning."

JTE 1 seemingly presents an idea of the concept of active learning and student-centered lessons while also reflecting little real-world experience of having applied it. Therefore, I proceeded to outline the theory of active learning. When the term 'self-directed learning' was given as a key word, he was not clear about the response he should give. He asked for clarification saying, "self-directed?" It was noted that, from this response he seemed to understand the concept of student-centered learning involved in active learning, but was not familiar with the technical (academic) vocabulary.

However, through the course of the IPD project in which he was introduced to terms associated within the profession of teaching, noticeable improvements were made. This was especially so

among novice participants, because, they began using the terminology in later interviews. The following excerpt is taken form a co-generative planning session discussing how to make a reading class more communicative:

MKO: ⋯or, if you want to take time reading, you can make the reading more communicative by having them read in groups.
JTE 1: And then by ah, making the, you know, information gap activities or?

MKO: Yeah, yeah, exactly.
JTE 1: Like the blanks, blanks, blanks. Part A and B have, um different blanks.

MKO: Exactly.
JTE 1: Aha, OK.

MKO: Exactly. So, yeah, like, jigsaw activity or information gap activity⋯
JTE 1: Yes, I see. That could work!

The above exchange shows more confidence on the part of the JTE to offer professional conceptualizations of practice as he contributed to the dialogue using the academic vocabulary and proceeded to explain what he meant by the word 'information-gap.'

In another occurrence, participating JTEs were asked if they thought they used enough English in class. They unanimously responded negatively to this question. Through further in-depth interviews, it became evident that two of the JTEs showed a lack of confidence in their own English abilities. The following is one example of an exchange between the MKO and JTE 2 which showed this lack of confidence:

MKO: (noting that she used mostly Japanese during the observation lesson) When you were speaking in class, you used mostly Japanese which surprised me because when we speak, we always speak in English and your English ability is very good⋯

JTE 2: ⋯Really?! I think my English is very poor, I think.

MKO: What can we do to raise your confidence? It seemed to me like conversation English is good, but teaching using English is difficult. So, that's a new problem. Not just English ability, but how do you teach English through English? This is a pedagogical problem regarding teaching techniques and practices.

Even though her responses to interview questions showed a high level of English proficiency she felt that her English was 'very poor.' This had implications for the later point that instructional English use and English for day-to-day communication are different, as noted in the MKO's comment above.

All four JTEs indicated a lack of confidence in their students' comprehensive English abilities.

These were grouped together under reason (1) *Lack of Confidence*. This lack of confidence in the students' language abilities was made explicit when they stated that they did not believe that the students had the ability to understand and keep up with a lesson conducted entirely in English as seen in the following comments made during the first in-depth interview (points of interest in the comments are underlined):

MKO: Do you feel that you use enough English in class?

JTE 1: No. I don't feel like that. So, sometimes I use English, but, you know, I feel they don't understand me and they are not interested in what I'm talking and yeah, so I feel, I don't use enough English in my class. (Note, "they" is referring to students)

JTE 2: If, ah, when I teach my students grammar lessons maybe they don't understand what I said, it is very difficult to use special terms for them. (Note, "special terms" is referring to academic vocabulary e.g., grammatical terms and labels)

JTE 3: No, I don't think so. When I make interactions with students such as like, "what did you do yesterday? And this kind of thing, I often use these kinds of expressions, but when it comes to explaining things like grammar or composition and reading class, in such cases I don't really use English. Instead of that, I explain in Japanese… And, there is an argument that, you know, by interacting with students in English, students may find out the rules of grammar or the contents of the reading, but you know, I cannot be sure whether they understood or not. So, I decided to explain all that in Japanese, and it's kind of like a shortcut, you know, like if I use English it takes more time and so… I know I should use more English even when I teach those grammar (points) and stuff…

JTE 4: …ahha, actually it's not a question, just ahh, I just want, I have been wondering if the ah, reforms will be successful or not. It depends on the levels of the students because if I explain grammatical points in English to my students, maybe half of them will try to understand what I said, but ahh, some of them are… reluctant to study English. So, it's ahh, it's… I'm not sure if the reform is good or not to the students.

The statements above indicate that the reluctance of the JTEs to use English exclusively when teaching grammar lessons was rooted in their fear that the students would not understand them if they did so. With regard to this point, JTE 4, the most senior of the participants expressed her doubt in the validity of the TETE policy being truly beneficial to the students. Although statements like these cannot be generalized, they do show the level of uncertainty and lack of confidence in the TETE policy among these JTEs, especially when it comes to teaching grammar. In both summary and consequence therefore, if these teachers are following a teaching objective that highly emphasizes focusing on grammar and translation, then much of the class time (as was apparent in this study from initial observations) is devoted largely to the use of Japanese.

JTE 3's comments encompass reason (1) and (2). He offers the use of Japanese in his English

lessons as a 'shortcut,' and this falls under the reason previously labeled as a *time saving technique* and was designated as the second reason for constrained English use in the classroom. This controlled use of L1 in the classroom as described by JTE 3 is supported by Swain's (2006) research on the use of L1 in EFL/ESL classes, and is associated with a term which she coined, namely, "Languaging." However, it was noticed in the observations that not all of the JTEs were using Japanese in such controlled ways (See observation comment made in the interview with JTE 2 above).

Although the JTEs understood the Course of Study guidelines and appreciated the value of increasing the amount of English in the classroom, they were still conflicted. The reality of the external pressure placed on them to teach their students in such a way as to prepare them for the standardized tests, which requires a lot of time spent on increasing students' vocabulary base, knowledge of grammatical rules, and proficiency in the four language skills, greatly influenced their teaching approach.

The third reason labelled *inadequate teacher knowledge* due to heavy reliance on traditional approach and lack of knowledge of other approaches. The traditional way of teaching foreign languages in Japan was drastically different from the current suggested approach (see Grammar Translation Method, Richards & Rodgers, 2001 and the *Yakudoku* Method, Hino, 1988). Furthermore, due to Japanese students having been schooled from a young age in a traditional approach which closely resembles teacher-centered learning, Japanese students and teachers are typically seen as not feeling comfortable with and maybe even reticent toward, interacting in the type of student-centered class which places a great deal of responsibility on the student (Cheng, 2000; Littlewood, 2000). Thus, it is important to note that some of the curriculum demands requiring more student-centered interactive tasks are diametrically opposed with an approach to teaching in Japan that has long been teacher-centered.

In the teacher-centered approach, the teacher holds a high level of authority over his/her students who assume a submissive role in the learning process. The critical weight of this notion was supported by the comments of the JTEs during the in-depth interviews. As analysis of the transcripts continued the second major theme emerged. It became evident through the JTEs' comments, regarding their course objectives, that they were assuming responsibility for such things as their students' motivation and English proficiency levels. This, coded as the second major theme, was based on interpretations of JTE comments and was further substantiated in follow-up interviews which are covered next.

4.2 Teachers Assuming Responsibility for Student Performance

The pressures on in-service private school teachers are significant. It was interesting that the participants in this study seemed to deal with this burden by assuming the responsibility for their students' actions in the classroom and, by extension, the responsibility for the students' test scores. In a highly competitive business in which the commodity for sale is education, the scores of the students on standardized tests speaks louder than any method or approach to teaching. The JTEs participating in this study showed the truth of this statement in comments which revealed such to me during analysis.

During the in-depth interviews, course and lesson objectives were discussed to better

understand the goals of the teachers and to help them conceptualize an ideal lesson. During these discussions, the JTEs used the verb "make" in a way which seemed peculiar to me. This peculiarity invited further analysis of its usage across participants. The verb 'make' was used in the context of 'making' students perform specific actions (see dialogue below). A cross analysis of the JTEs' comments showed that three of the four JTEs used 'make' at least once in the same context and some JTEs used it excessively. The JTE who did not use make in the context described above was teaching in the junior high school exclusively at the time of the study. All three senior high school teachers used the verb 'make' as described above. The following examples were taken from the transcripts of the in-depth interviews and illustrate the context in which the verb was used. When asked to describe what they wanted to achieve in the observation lesson, the JTEs responded in the following fashion:

> **JTE 4**: I wanted to ⋯ to make students speak English.
> **JTE 2**: Yeah, ⋯I tried to make them ahhh, make them use new words, new vocabularies.
> **JTE 1**: ⋯um, make them, make the students do the communicative activities⋯

Interpretation of 'make' in this context was based on my insider knowledge and lead to the coding of the second theme. The validity of my interpretation of the JTEs' intentions was supported by substantive interviews in which I performed member checking regarding the intended meaning of the above statements and my interpretations of them.

4.2.1 Interpretations of the JTEs' use of the Word "Make"

The use of the verb 'make' in the context outlined above seemed inappropriate in that it was too forceful and it put the teachers in a position of control over the students' actions that seemed inappropriate. For example, in the comment made by JTE 4 which states that she wanted to "make [her] students speak English," I felt the verb 'have' seemed more appropriate in the context of lesson objectives. Alternatively, the sentence 'provide my students with the opportunities to use English' would feel even more natural in this context. The same could be said for the comments made by JTE 2 and JTE 1, as well.

　At the first stage of analysis a discrepancy in the translation was considered, and this was part of a critical posture adopted in order to assist with validation of inferences. I contemplated whether the JTEs had simply made a mistake in their English expression of their intended meaning. The question arose as to whether they could describe that which they wanted to say more clearly in Japanese. While reflecting upon this question, I decided to contact some outside sources. I asked the opinions of some Japanese university professors of English who were unrelated to the study and discussed their ideas on the matter. In order to maintain fairness in perspective, I contacted both a Japanese and American professor. As we 'languaged' through the problem, I was able to better conceptualize the theme. After these discussions I followed up with substantive interviews of the participants. Together we determined that this was not just simply an error in translation, but something more substantial. My interpretations were based on my insider knowledge and specific experience teaching in this private school, and lead to the following reflection as recorded in an observation note I had made while considering the above:

These JTEs' use of the verb 'make' in this context was a sign of an intrinsic pressure that they were feeling. This pressure was rooted in a deep sense of responsibility to 'make' their students perform well in order to get high scores on the standardized tests and to pass the university entrance examination known as the 'Center Test'. It was this pressure that contributed to their continued reluctance to shift from a teacher-centered approach as well as contributed to their self-inflicted constriction on English use in the classroom.

The substantive interview phase showed that the high grades on standardized tests were perceived by the JTEs to be of the greatest importance causing them to feel that they needed to spend the majority of their class time on traditional activities which involved such things as rote memorization of new vocabulary and idiomatic expressions, true and false questions focusing on content knowledge, and regular mini-tests in these areas. It was at this point that an intervention was coordinated with the aim of conceptualizing more student-centered lessons and that would include a more communicative approach involving task-based learning. The intervention which was implemented as an action plan and designed collaboratively targeted each JTE's specific needs which I was able to group into four concepts. These concepts were mentioned in the introduction and are presented in the discussion next.

5.0 Discussion

The intervention was implemented in the form of an action plan that focused on drawing the participating JTEs' attention to the four concepts generated by this study to increase use of English in the classroom. The JTEs were urged to: (1) use more assisted questions to connect the textbook content to students' lived context; (2) focus on student action through story-telling by increasing the amount of retelling activities as a means to increase the amount of communicative English used among students; (3) use more task-based learning in the classroom in the form of information-gap activities; and (4) continue their professional development by extending the IPD project for another year.

5.1 Action Plan

After the intervention, participants collaborated to form an action plan for implementation of the four concepts discussed above. The action plan was also designed to focus the JTEs' attention on the specific areas they wished to improve in their teaching practice and to facilitate continued professional development. The ideas to cope with the teaching conditions were generated in the collaborative dialogues conducted in the final phase of the praxis cycle. As discussions continued it was determined that the JTEs needed to find ways to become inspired and that through taking ownership of their professional development, this was possible.

Taking this case study as an example of the challenges JTEs face in their daily teaching and implementation of TETE, it would seem that in order to implement positive and lasting changes at the ground level, an infrastructure that continuously supports pre-service and in-service teachers' professional development is needed. This can be accomplished through more IPD projects that focus on the context-specific needs of the teachers involved. Kumaravadivelu (2001) points out that

language teaching and teacher education "must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular socio-cultural milieu" (p. 538). The recognition of the 'particularity of professional development' is of the utmost importance for the successful establishment of the aforementioned infrastructure, because teacher behaviour is affected by very context-specific experiences and circumstances, as discussed in this paper.

The themes discussed illustrate the particular conditions of this group of JTEs and as such, they offer an example of how this group of teachers addressed the weak areas in their teaching praxis. This IPD project helped the JTEs develop their reflective skills and build their teacher knowledge as they attempted to find ways to improve their teaching practices with the aim of making positive changes in their classrooms.

6.0 Conclusion

The intervention which led to the formation and implementation of the action plan was a direct result of the identification of the two major themes presented in this study which lead to the generation of the four concepts presented herein. By applying Template Analysis as the method of data analysis, I was able to begin the study with an *a priori* theme that quickly brought focus to the analytical process and yet did not preclude or 'crowd out' the emergence of the second theme. Both major themes were supported by lower-level themes and lead to the conceptualization and implementation of an action plan designed to address the contextual-specific needs of the participating JTEs.

Observing the JTEs in practice and collaborative reflection on those practices were formally structured by the praxis cycle. The overarching aim of the study, which was grounded in the sociocultural context, was the professional development of the four JTEs, and this was actualized through the IPD project.

Transferability of outcomes could occur if these outcomes resonate with JTEs in Japan teaching in similar contexts. JTEs throughout Japan teach under a standardized curriculum with the aim of having students pass a centralized exam system. These factors impact instruction and have contributed to a traditional approach to teaching, which conflicts with MEXT's current policy to have teachers use more English. Therefore, the themes in this study can enlighten other teachers in similar contexts.

Finally, the goal of classroom-based research is change in the classroom, and this is a process that takes time. Moreover, teacher development research needs to be conducted onsite and be collaborative, involving other teachers sharing similar experiences, working together in their communities of practice. Colleagues have the potential to bring focus to classroom-based research studies quickly due to their insider knowledge of the teaching environment. Simply put, teachers conducting research in their own schools know what to look for.

In order for changes to be made teachers must first be inspired to make efforts in pursuit of their own professional development. Such changes can resonate into the classrooms and inspire students as well. It would also be beneficial for secondary schools in Japan to provide more opportunities to their in-service teachers to participate in professional development projects. This

study acts as a prototype for future IPD projects in Japanese secondary schools.

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Appendix 1
Initial Questionnaire

Survey Questions
1．Are you familiar with the current course of study, especially the overall goal to develop students' communicative abilities and that high school English teachers should basically conduct their classes in English?
2．Do you have any questions or concerns with regards to these policy guidelines of the course of study?
3．Do you feel you use enough English in class?
4．If not, what has prevented you from doing so?
5．In what areas do you want to try to use more English in class?
6．In what areas do you feel you are struggling with your English lessons?
7．In what areas do you feel you could improve upon your teaching within the classroom?
8．Do you have any ideas that you think could help you overcome the difficulties you are facing and improve your lessons? If so, what are they?
9．How do you assess the standard of your class, i.e. whether a lesson is successful or not?
10．Are you involved in her development? Do you read articles/books about teaching? Do you participate in teacher development workshops? Training at school?

Appendix 2
Fieldnotes of Initial Observations which lead to the outline of the Intervention

JTE1: Teacher appears confident in his own English, but the lesson is very teacher-centered, asking questions and answering them before the students… The students are limited to passively raising their hands to answer.

The teacher should provide opportunities for more teacher-student and student-student communication through communicative-based activities. Lesson was Limited to teaching textbook verbatim this teacher could be classified as a 'Passive Technician'.

JTE2: Starts the lesson making good use of Classroom English, but quickly changes to Japanese when asking students questions that could be asked in English. Needs more focus on pedagogical English use. Instructional conversation could help her gain confidence in this area.

JTE 3: Obviously confident in his English asking questions and giving commands in English followed by Japanese translations of what he just said. Japanese was also used to explain content (this use of Japanese different than the other participants) Similar to Swain's concept of 'languaging' as long as the students produce a useable output of English as an end result. Providing him with Swain's articles could help him resolve his concerns with translation and L1 use in his classrooms.

JTE 4: Most experienced of the participants, very energetic and fast paced lessons, but more teacher-centered than student-centered in approach and having trouble implementing assisted questions. Responsibilities for 3rd grade (grade 12) students may be contributing to this.

Appendix 3
Initial Template
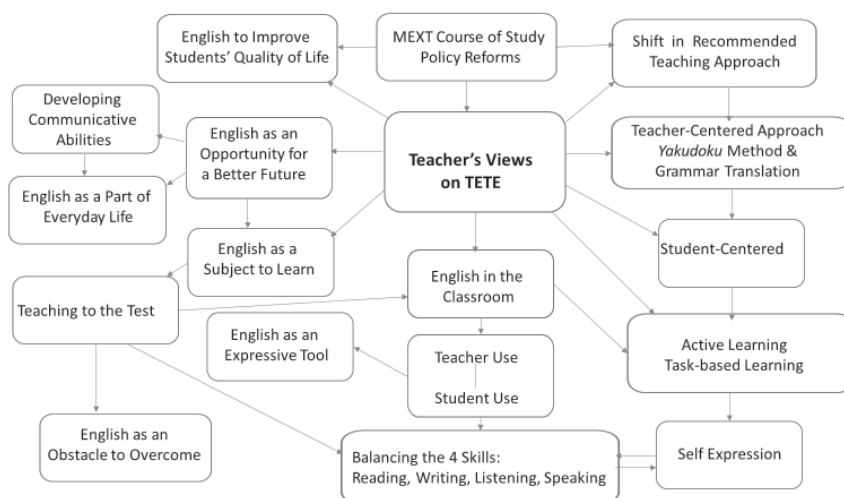
Appendix 4
Revised Template Showing Two Major Themes and Sub-themes
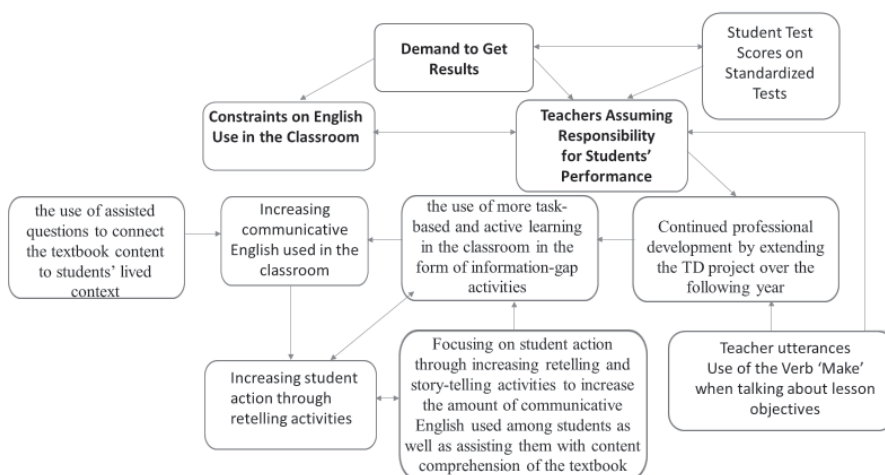
日本の私立中高等学校における独立した専門家養成プロジェクトの事例研究

ウォーターフィールド・マーク

　この質的事例研究は、英語を通して英語を教える（TETE）新しい教育課程改訂指針に対応するために、熊本県の４人の私立高校教師を支援するもので、この指針は彼らに原則としてすべて英語で授業を行うことを求めている。この研究は現職の教師に関する独立した養成プログラムが、TETE という改定された指針を実践する際にどのように支援をしたか、また教室で使用される英語の量をどのように増やしたかについて概要を述べている。Template Analysis を使用しながら、筆者はこれらの教師に TETE を敬遠し、旧来の教師主導の授業観を重視する間接的なストレスを明らかにした。Vygotsky の社会理論（1978）によって、筆者は More knowledgeable other（MKO）を想定し、日本人の英語教師を実習を通して指導した。　この実習は専門的な教師の知識を内省的な過程を通して実践に移す手助けとなった。記憶力を刺激し指導計画発案を共同で行い、生徒の教室内における当面の（学力を伸ばさなければならない）必要性と文部科学省によって起草された学習指導要領の指針を考慮した上で、授業に介入した。