

EDUC 5308M

MA TESOL Studies: Critical Study

**Portfolio: an evidence of  
my development and reflective process  
on the TESOL course**

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## 1. Introduction

Through this year, MA TESOL Studies has provided many opportunities to deepen my knowledge on English teaching. While the course is offered for the students who have hardly had teaching experience, the assigned tasks are also well designed for such students, including me, to gain essential knowledge base for starting our career as a teaching professional. This final assignment, portfolio, is also a challenging but highly rewarding one contributing to my professional development. Composing this portfolio is not just the collection of the documents about what I learned in the course. Davis and Osborn (2003) describe language teacher's portfolios as:

...A carefully selected collection of documents related to one's teaching practice, used in conjunction with applicable theory and purposeful reflection on classroom experiences as a catalyst for conversations about both the details of and the improvement of one's teaching.  
(p.4)

One important point here is that producing portfolio itself can also promote my learning through reflection (Retallick, 2000, cited in Dinham and Scott, 2003; Richards and Farrell, 2005). This focus on the development through reflection meets the needs of the students who have hardly experienced actual teaching and wish to construct the foundation of teaching proficiency.

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Reflection can help to deepen my current knowledge about teaching and enable the sustained progress throughout my teaching career. Lyons (1998) defines reflection as ‘ways in which teachers interrogate their teaching practices, asking questions about their effectiveness and about how they might be refined to meet the needs of students’ (p.115). Through this thinking process, teachers can experience dynamic mental change. For instance, as researchers have described:

- reflection is to relate ‘received knowledge,’ stemming from theories and empirical research findings, with ‘experiential knowledge,’ deriving from actual classroom teaching practice (Wallace, 1991, p.54)
- reflection is a process where the teacher defines their teaching problem for themselves, considers it from other multiple viewpoints and finally ‘establish[es] a renewed perspective’ (Jay and Johnson, 2002, p.77)
- ‘reflective experiences’ is ‘creat[ing] invaluable opportunities for teachers to question their beliefs and assumptions about teachers, students learning, and teaching’ (Johnson, p.53).

Furthermore, reflection can contribute to constructing teacher’s proactive attitude toward their teaching practice. Ross and Bondy (1996) characterize reflection as ‘a way of thinking about educational matters that involves the ability to make rational choices and to assume responsibility for those choices’ (p. 65).

The structure of the portfolio provided is well designed, enabling me to make the most out of the reflection without ignoring the practicality of my knowledge for the future teaching

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context. As one possible limitation, it is pointed out that reflection can be based heavily on a 'retrospective orientation' of thinking process, where the teacher just 'rediscovers what is already known' (Akbari, 2007, p.198); however, the portfolio includes the chapters that effectively involve me in a future-oriented perspective. For example, it requires not just describing my progress which occurred during the course but also linking it to the skills needed in the probable, future teaching context where I am likely to teach. Moreover, the theme dealt with in the research project is supposed to relate to the context, thereby enabling the establishment of knowledge that is really necessary for my future teaching practice.

Farrell (2006) argues:

...development of this type of [anticipatory] reflection is especially important if new teachers want to try out practices they learned in teacher education programs or seek to deviate from the traditional practices and expectations that are firmly in place in the new setting. (p.218)

Thanks to this future-oriented design, it should be highly possible for me to further develop and become more adaptive to the challenging situations I may encounter in the future.

In sum, this portfolio is the evidence showing my progress throughout this year whereas its composition itself is an effective means enabling my further development as a teaching professional. Through the reflective process of completing the following components of this portfolio, it is possible, I believe, to obtain the positive change in the conception and

knowledge I currently possess and achieve new insights into English teaching that can contribute to my future students.

In the following chapters, I will start with describing my probable teaching context and the necessary skills there in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, my development process through this course will be focused on and illustrated based on five themes with relevant evidences, including lecture handouts and book pages. In Chapter 4, focusing on cognitive dimensions associated with speaking, which is one of the five themes in the previous chapter, I will elaborate further on the topic with relevant academic literature, which leads to the theoretical framework for the subsequent small-scale research project in Chapter 5. In the research project, speaking practice of two Japanese learners is focused on and evaluated from the cognitive viewpoints. Finally, in Chapter 6, I will conclude this portfolio referring to the action plan for my continuous professional development after graduating from the course.

## **2. My probable teaching context**

As a first step of my portfolio, I will provide the description about my probable teaching context after going back to Japan. This will be the foundation to discuss the five themes in



Chapter 3, where the themes are discussed as areas where my perception of teaching has particularly changed during the course. In this chapter, firstly, I will focus on contextual information, such as where I teach, who study there, and learning needs. Then, I will identify the teaching skills that are likely to be necessary in the context and for the learners.

My career plan after completing the course is to teach English to Japanese learners who wish to study in an English-speaking country as an undergraduate or postgraduate student. The possible educational institutions for such learners include, for instance, language centers at universities and private language schools providing academic English classes and courses. One main aim these institutions generally set would be to enable the learners to acquire fundamental academic-English ability in reading, writing, listening and speaking. More specifically, for example, the ability may include how to read research articles, how to compose essays and a dissertation, how to take lectures and how to discuss with others.

The students coming to such institutions to learn English, on the other hand, seem to be usually adult learners who have never or hardly studied in foreign higher education, so learning academic English is likely to be the first experience for them. Their needs of

learning the academic skills seem to be strong for the purpose of completing a bachelor or master's degree successfully. Furthermore, besides the English use in academic contexts, since they are going to live in a foreign country where a basic medium of communication is English, it would be also demanded to enhance fundamental English ability that is necessary in daily communications.

In teaching English to this kind of student in Japan, one of the essential points is in particular for teacher to provide the appropriate condition in which they can sufficiently concentrate on language use itself; the reason for this is related to a traditional feature of the English education they have experienced in Japan. In their junior-high and high school days, it appears to be likely that form-focused instructions were mainly, or excessively in some cases, offered in the class. As far as my own learning experience in Japan is concerned, English would often be taught and learned based on the memorization of linguistic forms provided by the teacher, such as grammar rules and vocabulary items. As pointed out in the council held by the Ministry of Education in Japan (2014), this is probably owing to the fact that Japanese English-education is frequently exam-oriented whereas the examinations tend to mainly measure reading ability with the emphasis being put on the linguistic knowledge. Due to this

‘backwash effect’ (Hughes, 2003, p.12), the English class in Japan seems often to be teacher-centered one, where just a teacher is talking in front of sitting students while the students are taking notes for the subsequent memorization. This style of teaching is efficient in the sense that it is possible to offer the same knowledge to a large number of students simultaneously. Yoshida (2002) points out that this kind of situation is one of the prevalent features in Japanese English-class, where many students are frequently deprived of the opportunities to make use of English to achieve real communicative purposes.

However, in contrast to this style of language learning, what is actually required to do during studying abroad is not only to learn English itself but also something other through using English. In my case, for example, I came to the UK in order to learn about TESOL. There, meaning, not only form, should be a vital aspect of communication, and it would be required to engage in interactions based on meaning. That is why I am, as an English teacher, expected to play a significant role in preparing the students to study in such communicative contexts; it would be necessary to provide the teaching in which, while both meaning and form are focused on, they can engage sufficiently in the English-use experience to achieve certain communicative goals. Producing this condition in classroom is essential and seems to be

required particularly in Japan since it is an EFL country, where the chances to use English outside classroom are often highly limited.

In addition, owing to the limited chances, it would be also important for teachers to provide appropriate advice so that they are able to practice English effectively even outside classroom.

Learner training is an important dimension to help learners to ‘self-diagnose their strengths and weaknesses in language learning’ and ‘become more aware of what helps them to learn the language they are studying most efficiently’ (Cohen, 1998, p.66). To give appropriate advice on how to learn efficiently, I feel that I need to possess accurate, deep understandings of what is occurring in learners’ mind during acquisition and language use. As a learner, I, myself, had a hard and long time to improve my English proficiency in Japan because I was not sure about whether my language practice were really reasonable ways in terms of humans’ language learning system, and because no one or book around me offered clear answers about the issue. From this experience, I decided to study the core mechanism associated with language use and learning, such as cognitive dimensions, on the TESOL course. In the future teaching context, I hope to diagnostically examine students’ learning ways from this perspective, thus providing clear solutions for more effective learning.

In sum, what I need to learn for my future teaching context is in relation to the aspect of how to situate meaning together with form effectively in communicative language classroom as well as how to promote learners' development in tune with the nature of learner's mind mechanism during language use and acquisition. These major aspects will be discussed as my development story on the course being divided into more specific themes in the next chapter. The discussed theme of processing mechanism in listening (Section 3.1.), focus on form (Section 3.2.) and speech processing mechanism (Section 3.5.) concerns with the dimension of the cognitive mechanism associated with language use and acquisition, and the relationship between meaning and form is also relevant here. The third theme of teacher's role as the enabler (Section 3.3.) concerns a more pedagogical aspect; there, teacher's role is discussed from the viewpoint of how to make the most out of such a learner's internal mechanism in classroom. The fourth theme of socially constructed meaning in writing (Section 3.4) focuses on the social nature of language use, extending to the dimension of how meaning is constructed in academic field. How my view on each theme has been changed and deepened through the course will be shown in detail next.

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## 3. Five themes

## 3.1. Processing mechanism in listening: lower and higher process

**ACTIVITY 3 - The listening process**

It is my experience that when people start thinking about language processing, they often assume that the process takes place in a definite order, starting with the lowest level of detail and moving up to the highest level. So they often assume that the acoustic input is first decoded into phonemes (the smallest sound segments that can carry meaning), and then this is used to identify individual words. Then processing continues on to the next higher stage, the syntactic level, followed by an analysis of the semantic content to arrive at a literal understanding of the basic linguistic meaning. Finally, the listener interprets that literal meaning in terms of the communicative situation to understand what the speaker means. This is the bottom-up view, which sees language comprehension as a process of passing through a number of consecutive stages, or levels, and the output of each stage becomes the input for the next higher stage. It is, as it were, a one-way street. (Buck, 2001: 2)

Can you draw a diagram to represent the 'common sense' view of listening described by Buck here?

① Processing order

## Evidence 1

The evidence is a part of the handout on listening process given in the module of EDUC5901 (Learning and Teaching in TESOL). It, on the left side, includes the extract from Buck (2001), which describes one prevalent assumption about listening skill and its processing mechanism as 'a one-way street' (p.2), and, on the right, the diagram that I wrote based on the extract and lecturer's comment on it. Through the lecture, my understanding of the listening processing mechanism became more comprehensive one beyond my former narrow understanding.

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Before coming to the UK, I, as a learner, had practiced listening based on the notion similar to the one-way street. My expectation of those days was that listening skill can be achieved through acquiring sub-skills in ascending order, from the skill to accurately recognize English-specific vowels and consonants, syllables and stress, linking sounds, toward vocabulary and grammar. I used to assume that, unless I learn all of these sub-skills as if stacking blocks one by one, comprehension of message during listening cannot be satisfactorily achieved.

However, through the lecture, I realized that this view on the listening process is simplistic, and listening actually involves more than the one-way process. As the diagram shows, besides the word, phrase and sentence level processing, or decoding, there is the higher-level process at a text level which involves listener's background knowledge and continual efforts to understand what the text means as a whole. Also, these higher- and lower-level processes are not exclusive but 'help' each other during listening, that is, meaning building at a text level helps decoding at a word and sentence level vice versa.

In my understanding before the lecture, the higher process had been almost ignored because it

had seemed to me that the higher process is more irrelevant to English skill itself than the lower process, which involves more English-specific-linguistic knowledge. Probably, a reason for this is related to my own learning experience at junior-high and high school in Japan. As it was mentioned in the last chapter, the class I had was largely form-focused, where sentences were usually explained at a grammatical, lexical, phonological level while our focus was seldom on the whole text meaning.

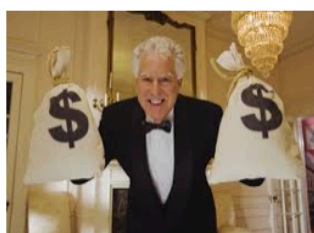
However, through the lecture, I realized the necessity of the higher process, involving the focus on meaning, and this also led me to better understanding of the utility of communicative language teaching (CLT), where meaning is ‘at the center of all communicative exchanges’ (Hendrickson, 1991, p.197). I started feeling the potential of CLT in the sense that it can encourage learners to engage not just in the lower-level processing (form-focused), but also on the higher-level processing (meaning-focused).

However, at this time, another question that newly occurred to me was how I can deal with and effectively combine both meaning and form dimensions to teach in classroom. I wondered in what ways I should have learners encounter both dimensions, and whether or not



there is certain important principles when I do so. It is by these questions that I was made interested in the conception of focus on form.

### 3.2. Focus on form



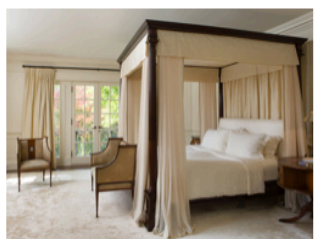
1 'The man is rich now.'

#### Lecture's descriptions about the man in the storytelling

'But, he *used to* be poor.'



2



3 'Now he sleeps on the bed.'

'But, he *used to* sleep outside.'



4

#### Evidence 2.1

The first occasion when I saw how meaning and form were effectively interfaced was in EDUC5301 (Developing your Personal Practice Knowledge of ELT). The lecture topic of that day was 'Introducing new language.' Evidence 2.1 includes the slides used by the lecturer and the transcription of her talk to demonstrate the introduction of 'used to+Verb' form. In the demonstration, she started with saying that she would tell a story about a man,

and then showed us the slides one after another while giving the description about the man in each slide. During the first telling, seeing the man's pictures, I was able to concentrate on the story itself without being conscious of any particular forms. The lecturer, then, told the story once again, during which she described the man again emphasizing 'used to' to make the form salient.

It was a surprising experience for me. When I finished listening to the second telling, I felt as if I was put into the state that I am well prepared for accepting further information or explanation about the salient linguistic forms. In my learning experience in Japan, my teacher would often just list some target forms on the blackboard without any context while we, students, struggle to memorize them. This was boring and, moreover, needed much effort since it was as if I was memorizing mathematical formulas. However, in the demonstration, I even felt my desire to know what the new form, 'used to+Verb,' is. As the given lecture handout (Evidence 2.2) shows, the lecturer's introduction of the form in the story telling appeared to be very successful in terms of memorability with form, meaning and use effectively combined.

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**TASK 2: How to present**

Johnson (2008) argues that the presentation of new language should have two essential qualities: CLARITY and MEMORABILITY.

- List some of the things a teacher could do to make a presentation clear
- List some of the things a teacher could do to make a presentation memorable

② Why do you think Johnson argues that there is often a tension between the two qualities?

↳ when teaching complex one → difficult to remember without context but clarity is also important  
eg) have pp.

**TASK 3: What to present**

Most writers agree that a good presentation will include information on:

**FORM**  
Form refers to the 'pieces' of language. For example, the present perfect is made up of auxiliary *have* + the past participle (e.g. *She has worked*). Or a common phrase in colloquial English is 'Can you bear with me a moment?'

**MEANING**  
But what do the above examples actually *mean*? It is possible to imagine someone recognising and even repeating these forms without actually knowing what they mean. Meaning refers to the concept(s) a form denotes, for example

*She has worked* means that she worked at some time in the past but within a time frame that includes the present.

**USE** → about in what situations the language used?  
But learners often need to know when a structure is actually used; in other words, they need to know the functional meaning as well as the semantic meaning. For example we might say that the present perfect is often used when we talk about what people have or haven't done in their lives, or when referring to things that have 'just' or 'already' happened.

- Now reflect on your own presentations – do you think they were clear and memorable? Did you manage to present the form, meaning and use of the new language?

## Evidence 2.2

After this experience, I got more interested in and further explored the conception of focus on form (FonF) on form by reading relevant literature to understand it from more theoretical views. Firstly, I understood, from Doughty's (2001) *Cognitive underpinnings of focus on form*, the fundamental notion that FonF can help learners to process meaning and form simultaneously through incidentally attracting learner's attention to form during

meaning-focused activity; thereby, it ‘facilitate[s] the cognitive **mapping** among forms, meaning and use that is fundamental to language learning’ (p.211). Compared to the demonstration, this condition was hardly met in my learning experience in Japan, where specific forms were taught almost separated from meaning. Furthermore, I encountered VanPatten’s (2007) conception regarding input processing; he argues that, due to limited mental capacity, learners basically tend to prioritize meaning over form particularly at an initial stage of comprehension. The demonstration was excellently representing this point. During the first storytelling, I was able to concentrate mainly on its meaning thanks to the visual aids of the slides whereas the lecturer did not draw our attention to the forms.

From these explorations, I have finally discovered one fundamental principle that it is essential to focus learners firstly on meaning sufficiently and then form through certain teacher’s interventions. Considering the listening process in the first theme, it can be said that the higher-level process is not just necessary for comprehension during listening but also vital to establishing form-meaning links. Through reflecting on the first and second theme, I feel that I have succeeded in extending my former partial perspective, where linguistic form is exclusively centered at learning. I have understood that meaning and form should be more

harmoniously integrated.

### 3.3. Teacher's role as the enabler

The themes discussed so far were so informative that they, I believed, would improve my teaching in classroom. Nevertheless, I encountered the difficulty leading to spoiling their effectiveness in the micro-teaching I experienced in EDUC5301 (Developing your Personal Practice Knowledge of ELT). This experience provided me with the opportunity to rethink of the role of language teacher.

Teaching plan

Lesson aim: to learn how to give and understand directions

Teaching sequence	Aim	What teacher does	What students do
1. Storytelling (1st)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attract students to the topic</li> <li>• Activate their background knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start with telling teacher's personal story: he gets to a sports center, the Edge, by asking a stranger how to get there from The Parkinson Building</li> <li>• Demonstrate the route to the Edge with Google map using the target expressions</li> </ul> <p>&lt;Target expressions&gt;  <i>go straight/right/left</i>  <i>go past A</i>  <i>cross the road</i>  <i>and then/next</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to his story looking at Google map</li> </ul>
2. Storytelling (2nd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiarize students with the topic further</li> <li>• Have students notice the target expressions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell students to pay attention to the key expressions used in the story</li> <li>• Tell the story again</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen again paying attention to the expressions</li> </ul>
3. Presenting new language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students understand the target expressions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain their meaning explicitly using a white board, Power Point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to the explanation taking notes</li> </ul>

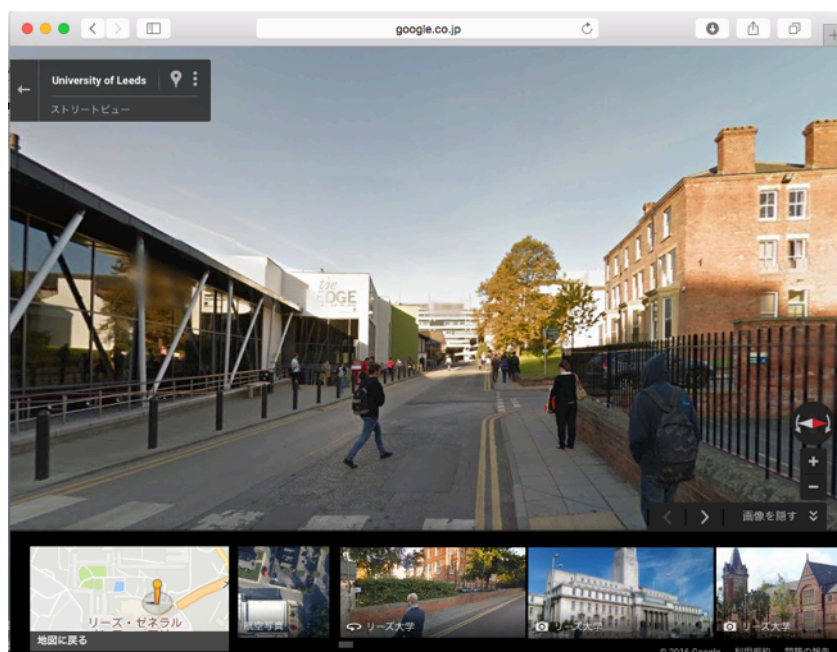
Evidence 3.1

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Evidence 3.1 is the teaching plan of my part. The class' lesson aim was to learn how to understand and give directions to get somewhere correctly, and my part was the initial part of the whole class, including attracting students' attention to the topic and introducing the target expressions. The teaching sequence of my part was what I deliberately planned making the most out of the knowledge learned in other modules. For instance, based on the knowledge on FonF and information processing, I initially told the story twice, as the lecturer demonstrated, to focus the students primarily on meaning before forms. Additionally, I utilized Google map as a visual aid (see Evidence 3.2) to show the way to the destination more understandably, which was expected to help them to focus on meaning.





Evidence 3.2

A problem, though, lied in the second storytelling, whose aim was to move the students' attention on to the target forms. I said to the students just before the telling, '...I'll tell you my story more briefly again, so please listen more carefully and remember some key phrases....' However, about this instruction, one feedback comment from an observer (Evidence 3.3) indicated that my instruction was not clear sufficiently to enable the students to detect the key phrases during the storytelling.

**Teaching methodology** (e.g. clear? effective? appropriate for the language/level? monitoring progress?)  
 ① Listening - your story - did you give them a reason to listen? Really amusing story. Length of story. 2nd listening - identify key words - how are they to know?  
 ② ... L-work You rehearse language - good. Could you have removed written

Evidence 3.3

Reading this comment, I noticed the absence of my imaging from students' viewpoints.

Providing sufficient, appropriate information on what to focus on is essential to encourage learners' discovery process in language activities (Scrivener, 2011); nevertheless, my instruction did not meet this requirement.

In relation to this issue, I gained a hint from Scrivener's (2005) classification of teacher's role (see Evidence 3.4).



4 Different kinds of teacher

**Three kinds of teacher**

There are obviously many ways of teaching, and part of the enjoyment of being a student in a good classroom is in sharing the unique personal identity, style, skills and techniques that a teacher brings to a lesson.

Having said that, it sometimes gives things a clearer perspective if we simplify rather than complicate. Adrian Underhill has suggested that there may be three broad categories of teaching styles (summarised in Figure 1.4).

**I The explainer**

Many teachers know their subject matter very well, but have limited knowledge of teaching methodology. This kind of teacher relies mainly on 'explaining' or 'lecturing' as a way of conveying information to the students. Done with style or enthusiasm or wit or imagination, this teacher's lessons can be very entertaining, interesting and informative. The students are listening, perhaps occasionally answering questions and perhaps making notes, but are mostly not being personally involved or challenged. The learners often get practice by doing individual exercises after one phase of the lecture has finished.

**II The involver**

This teacher also knows the subject matter that is being dealt with. (In our case, this is essentially the English language and how it works.) However, she is also familiar with teaching methodology; she is able to use appropriate teaching and organisational procedures and techniques to help her students learn about the subject matter. 'Teacher explanations' may be one of these techniques, but in her case, it is only one option among many that she has at her disposal. This teacher is trying to involve the students actively and puts a great deal of effort into finding appropriate and interesting activities that will do this, while still retaining clear control over the classroom and what happens in it.

**III The enabler**

The third kind of teacher is confident enough to share control with the learners, or perhaps to hand it over to them entirely. Decisions made in her classroom may often be shared or negotiated. In many cases, she takes her lead from the students, seeing herself as someone whose job is to create the conditions that enable the students to learn for themselves. Sometimes this will involve her in less traditional 'teaching'; she may become a 'guide' or a 'counsellor' or a 'resource of information when needed'. Sometimes, when the class is working well under its own steam, when a lot of autonomous learning is going on, she may be hardly visible.

This teacher knows about the subject matter and about methodology, but also has an awareness of how individuals and groups are thinking and feeling within her class. She actively responds to this in her planning and methods and in building effective working relationships and a good classroom atmosphere. Her own personality and attitude are an active encouragement to this learning.

	Subject matter	Methodology	People
Explainer	✓		
Involver	✓	✓	
Enabler	✓	✓	✓

Figure 1.4 Three kinds of teacher

Evidence 3.4 from Scrivener, 2005, pp.25-26

In this classification, it is possible to say that my teaching style in the micro-teaching belongs

to the *involver*, who are familiar with teaching methodologies but insufficient in respect of one of the *enabler's* features of being aware of 'how individuals and groups are thinking and feeling within her class' (p.25). Before the class, I was confident that my teaching plan would function well because it was made based on the teaching methodologies I had learned in other sessions and modules; also, I assumed that if only I provided the teaching based on such methodologies as FonF (although I believe that this is significantly beneficial for effective language teaching/learning), the learners could successfully acquire English. However, I was missing the viewpoint of how they specifically react to my instructions and how effectively their attention can be turned to the forms in real classroom.

As Thornbury (2006) claims, learners are 'the object of the verb to teach, but the subject of the verb to learn' (p.79). It would be self-complacent for the teacher to simply impose his or her teaching plan and methodologies on students without considering from their viewpoints. From this experience, I have learned the importance of providing sufficiently supportive condition where the students can really benefit from my planned teaching and methodologies.

### **3.4. Socially constructed meaning in writing**

Portfolio

Genre <sup>← does not include general texts to general people</sup>  
 J. R. Martin defines genre as:

'A staged, goal-directed purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture.'  
 1989: 25

(register & genre are sometimes changeable) → it is a different approach!

Genre is sometimes contrasted with register as emerging from the context of culture (register relates language to the context of situation, above). You may read books and articles that describe genre and register as if they were interchangeable terms; don't worry about this, in non-specialised literature, they are often used in a more general sense. We are using the framework described by Nunan (2008), and which I have developed in a book called 'Figurative Language, Genre and Register' (Deignan, Littlemore and Semino, 2013, Cambridge University Press). The relevant pages are pp 40-54 (on VLE under Teaching Materials). This is based on Halliday's work.

4) recipes  
 • children recipe  
 • TV recipe to kids/adults

A key writer on genre is John Swales, who analysed academic writing in particular. His work has applications for all genres. There are some important features that all examples of genres possess to some extent (Swales 1990):

1. The purpose of the text can easily be identified.
2. We often have a specific name for genres (e.g. recipe, apology.)
3. We can identify typical and atypical examples of a genre.
4. We can identify good and bad examples by their success in achieving the purpose. → good/bad examples
5. Genres are often organised into stages which follow on from each other. These stages match the stages of the associated action. (e.g. a menu begins with appetisers and ends with desserts)
6. The genre is associated with a specific discourse community; a group of people who share common interests and goals (e.g. medical doctors, EFL teachers, politicians, sports fans....) → ex) pancake recipe

not clear-cut

Evidence 4

The first time to learn the social aspect of language use was in EDUC5902 (Investigating Language for TESOL). Evidence 4 is a part of a given handout on genre. The lecture provided the opportunity for me to realized the significant role of language that socially functions in particular community. As its was mentioned above, my view on English learning before studying on the postgraduate was narrowly limited particularly to linguistic aspects, and I used to simplistically presume that, since such linguistic knowledge is a kind of universal knowledge for using English, I would be able to express myself freely if completely

learning the knowledge.

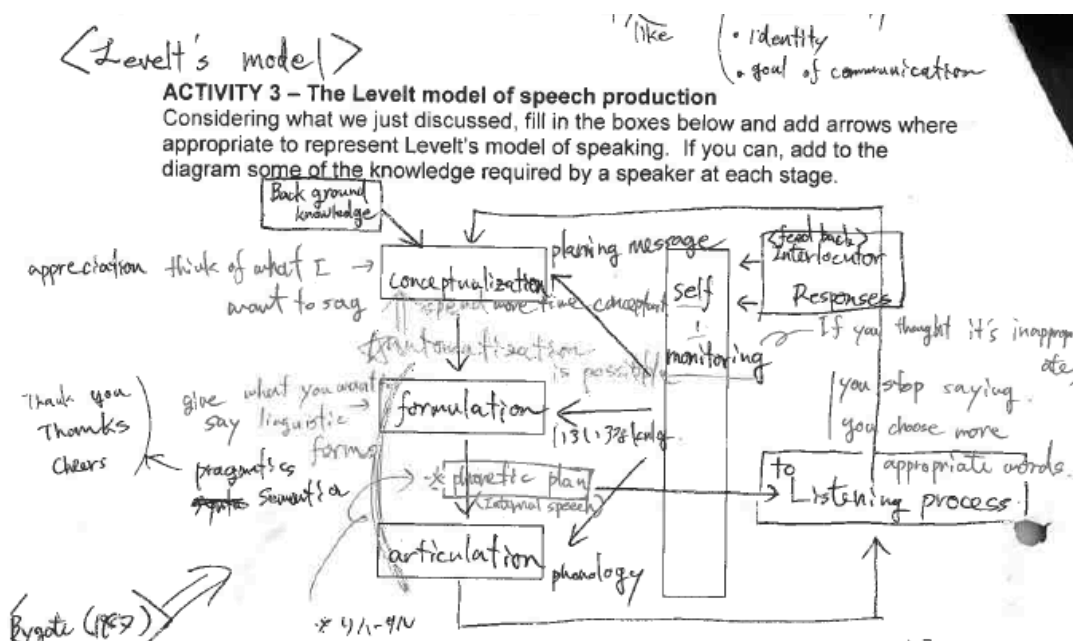
However, through the module, I realized that language use actually involves not only such linguistic but also the social dimension of whether the language use is appropriate in a certain group and occasion. Until the module, I had not been explicitly conscious of the conception of genre and discourse community in Evidence 4 (a hand out given in the class), but when learning them, I noticed that they had been essential aspects even in communication with Japanese people. For instance, when I was a sales representative in Japan before studying TESOL, I would often send my clients emails written in particular fashions to make some requests. From the top, the emails usually included client's name, greeting, background information on the request, requesting sentence, thanking and closing. If I had significantly deviated from this conventional structure, or stages, the client would have failed to understand my intention or even stopped reading on the way because of its time consuming. In terms of 'communicative purpose[...]' (Swales, 1990, p.58), the aim of the emails were to share the information on what the sender wants the receiver to do clearly and quickly.

After obtaining the awareness of such a social dimension, I became curious about how it

functions in academic English, which I am likely to teach in the future. More specifically, my questions were for what purposes such papers as research articles and assignment essays are supposed to be written, and in what ways of writing the purposes can be achieved. In my exploration, I found some hints on these questions in Hyland's (2006, 2009) books. According to him, one aim of academic discourse is to newly construct knowledge and evaluate existing knowledge that someone has already constructed (2009); this can be accomplished not through the 'objective descriptions of what the world is really like' but through the writer and reader's trial to reach the *agreement* about their 'perceptions of the world' (2006, p.39). This suggests that to achieve this agreement, meaning is communicated through certain manners commonly approved. By understanding this fundamental notion underlying academic discourse, I realized the reason why there are kinds of predetermined structure of text required in IELTS academic essay writing. In fact, as Coffin et al. (2007) claim, there are a number of particular types of structure, or set of stages, that examiners frequently give high marks, such as (1) Thesis, (2) Arguments+evidence and (3) Reinforcement of the thesis. Considering the aim of academic discourse, I have understood that this kind of stages is one of the approved ways that has been established by the people in academic field to *persuade* readers effectively.

In short, the theme has raised my awareness of the existence of interlocutors during communication. Beyond the simplistic focus on linguistic knowledge alone, I would provide the teaching enhancing learners' sensitivity to readers so that they can appropriately change their ways of writing according to readers and communicative contexts.

### 3.5. Speech processing mechanism



Evidence 5

The final theme is related to the processing mechanism of speech production, which was introduced in EDUC5901 (Teaching and Learning in TESOL). Evidence 5 is a part of a given handout and the diagram I draw while listening to the lecture's explanation about Levelt's

(1989) speech processing model. Speaking is the skill that I had struggled to learn the hardest as a learner in Japan but was the most difficult to improve of the four skills. However, through the lecture, I obtained new insights into learning speaking and became so interested in it that I decided to further explore it as a research project in this portfolio.

In Japan, to practice speaking, I frequently used to rely on the way in which I first select some target form and then produce various sentences including the form. For example, in the case of causative verbs, I practiced by producing such sentences as *I made him angry*, *the news made me happy*, and *the result made me disappointed*. My aim of this practice was that through intensively using the same grammar dozens of times, I would be able to get used to exploiting its rule more and more rapidly. Considering this practice a reasonable, efficient way, I spent a large amount of time on it in those days. However, although I surely became able to use some forms rapidly, it was still impossible to feel its significant effect during actual conversations. Almost all I was able to do was to rely largely on the simple grammatical forms that I had already used, such as Subject+Verb+Object and Subject+Verb+Complement structure. This was a question that I had had until I learned about speaking in the module.

When I learned the Levelt's model, the freshest point for me that appeared to lead to the hint was the fact that speech act is an intention-driven behavior. Its processing basically begins with conceptualization, conceptual planning of what and how to say, not with formulator, encoding of linguistic information. In the light of this mechanism, I noticed that my practice used in Japan had not corresponded with the processing sequence. My practice, I suppose, was exclusively form-based, whose initial emphasis was on formulization while little on conceptualization. In relation to this issue, Bygate (2005) argues that, since, in the Levelt's model, conceptualizer is supposed to produce the information that is in turn necessary for formulator, it is essential during practice to involve both processors simultaneously through meaningful practice.

Looking back at my practice in Japan, I feel that I could have improved my speaking ability more effectively with the deep insights associated with the model. However, it is also a fact that there were few people or books providing me with pertinent advice in Japan. From this, I got interested in how Japanese learners try to practice speaking and in evaluating its effectiveness from cognitive perspectives. Now that I have known considerably more about



core aspects of speaking, including the speech processing, it should be possible to analyze their practice from multiple perspectives and indicate some solutions to make it more effective. In the following chapters, I shall further explore this as a research project. I believe that this exploration leads to my new insights into Japanese learners' learning/teaching speaking.

#### **4. Literature review**

Following the last section, I will build up the theoretical framework providing the foundation for the subsequent research project investigating Japanese learners' speaking practice. From a cognitive psychological view, speaking ability and key aspects for developing it are conceptualized based on the relevant literature in this chapter. First, I will describe speaking ability as a complex mechanism involving various sub-skills and information processors based on Levelt's (1989, 1999) speech production model; second, the conception of automaticity, a key aspect for the speech processing to function effectively. Thirdly, I will further conceptualize the ability based on the three language performance dimensions, complexity, accuracy and fluency; finally, how these can be developed through the implementation of language task.

## **4.1. Speaking ability and speech processing**

### **4.1.1. Speaking expertise**

Proficient language use can be conceptualized as a reflection of characteristics that expert language users possess in common, called *expertise*; it is essential to understand what expertise consists of for exploring the effective ways to develop the identified characteristics (Johnson, 2005). In the domain of speaking, Bygate (2005) illustrates speaking expertise as comprised of eight dimensions: ‘Discourse repertoires,’ ‘Adjacency repertoires,’ ‘Syntactic options,’ ‘Ellipsis,’ ‘Personal involvement and register options,’ ‘Deictic options,’ ‘Fluency issues’ and ‘Articulation’ (p.108). These repertoires are stored as highly usable routines and exploited by the expert speaker strategically to achieve communicative goals. During oral communication, meaning is constructed by the speaker’s effective combination, not separate use, of the repertoires according to situations and their needs.

To give a further account for the holistic nature of the speaking expertise, Bygate relates them to Levelt’s (1989) speech processing model (Figure 4.1).

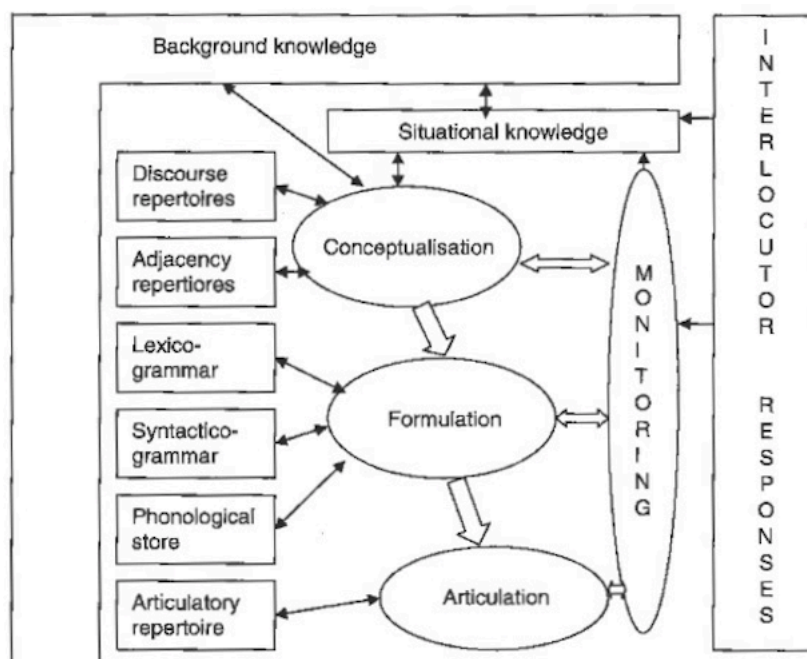


Figure 4.1 Working memory in speech production (from Bygate, 2005, p.110)

As this figure shows, the various kinds of knowledge, including the repertoires, are accessed and utilized in the central processes of speech production: conceptualization, formulation and articulation. This is a ‘steady-state’ model showing competent speakers’ processing, including L1 speakers, and not describing language learning per se (de Bot, 1992, p.3). However, understanding this can be a good starting point for the subsequent discussion on the development of speaking ability. In the next section, I will elaborate on the Levelt’s production model.

#### 4.1.2. Speech processing model

According to Levelt (1989, 1999), speaking is generally an intention-driven activity to

achieve certain immediate goals. In the whole process, where a speaker's intention is converted into articulation, four sub-processors play roles as below:

- Conceptualizer: plans what to say at a conceptual level referring to the information such as the situational and background knowledge
- Formulator: works on the conceptual message from conceptualizer into a more tangible speech plan through grammatical and phonological encoding referring to the speaker's lexicon
- Articulator: executes the linguistically encoded plan from formulator with musculature to produce an overt speech
- Self-monitoring: checks whether the speech that is being planned or articulated is accurate and acceptable, and may induce operations to modify the on-going plan and speech.

During speech production, information passes from conceptualizer, formulator to articulator.

Each processor is able to process only a particular type of output produced by its last processor and, in turn, produce another particular output for the next one. In this sense, each processor is 'a *specialist*' (Levelt, 1989, p.15). Furthermore, production proceeds in incremental manners. The three processors function simultaneously, and once sending off the output, the processor immediately start processing the next part of the speech. Each processor is processing a different part of the speech in parallel, which enables smooth speech production.

An essential factor underpinning the parallel processing and smoothness is automatic processing, or automaticity. Generally, lower level of processors, such as formulator and articulator, are highly automated whereas conceptualizer is mostly required to work according to each specific occasion without relying on automated routines. Thus, to achieve communicative goals effectively and avoid serious communication breakdown, many attentional resources need allocating to conceptualizer so that it can execute its processing appropriately (controlled processing).

For L2 learners, particularly novices, because their production system is not highly automated, it is vitally important to promote automaticity for the parallel processing and spare more attentional resources for such higher processors as the context-dependent conceptualizer (de Bot, 1996). Automaticity and how it can be developed will be discussed further below.

## **4.2. Automaticity and automatization**

### **4.2.1. Routinized plans**

The basic mechanism of automaticity, or automatic processing, concerns mapping between certain input and nodes in long-term memory; this mapping can be established through

repeated trials where the nodes are temporally activated by controlled processing each time the input occurs (Schffrin and Schneider, 1977). This mechanism play a significant role for performing complex tasks, including speaking, which consist of multi-layered processors and sub-skills. Speaking task, Levelt's (1978) describes, has 'hierarchical structure'; to realize smooth speaking, skills at each level need to be routinized and stored in long-term memory as 'plans,' and, thus, the number of controlled processing operations during conducting the whole task has to be reduced (p.57). Furthermore, according to him, an important dimension associated with the hierarchical-skill performing, is that lower level of plans have to be stored in the way that makes it easier to 'be called by higher-level of plans' (p.58).

From these facts, Levelt argues that as many lower-level skills as possible need to be practiced simultaneously with the error rate low, and be integrated into higher ones. This means, in the Levelt's (1989) production model, that the lower-level skills at formulization and articulation have to be executed together with the higher-level skills at conceptualization during practice. In more pedagogical terms, Bygate (2005) emphasizes the importance of meaningful practice, claiming that speaking should be practiced in communicative settings, where the leaner uses language while thinking of what to say and how to say.

#### **4.2.2. Proceduralization**

While it was described above at a relatively broad level, the next account focus on more specific aspects of automaticity: proceduralization. A central theory of this is ACT (Adaptive Control of Thought) in Anderson (1983) and ACT-R in Anderson and Lebiere (1998a; 1998b). In this theory, knowledge is divided into two groups: declarative and procedural knowledge. Declarative knowledge is factual knowledge and a main resource exploited at early stages of skill learning. It can be stored in memory quickly but slow to be retrieved. Procedural knowledge refers to the knowledge which informs one of how to do something. It is represented as IF/THEN pairs, which ‘specify how to retrieve and use such declarative knowledge’ according to certain conditions (Anderson, 1998a, p.6). Also, this knowledge is slow to be produced but quick to be implemented, and requires much less controlled processing, that is, automatic.

To become able to perform skills fluently, an essential aspect is to convert declarative knowledge into the more efficient procedural knowledge through practice; this process is called proceduralization. Through repeating a target behavior, declarative knowledge goes

through restructuring (cf. McLaughlin, 1987, 1990), which helps the declarative knowledge to be embedded in the target procedure itself and thus become procedural knowledge. After this qualitative change in knowledge representation, the procedure can become even more automatic by further practice.

In the Levelt's speech processing model, grammatical encoding process, a process in formulator, involves the procedural knowledge that plays a central role in building syntactic structure (Levelt, 1989). To realize the fluent use of grammar during speech, it is necessary to proceduralize the relevant declarative knowledge of grammatical rules through practice. However, there are two important points to be noted for the successful proceduralization. The first is that the target behavior needs to be repeated with the relevant declarative knowledge being highly activated in working memory and appropriately implemented during the performance (Anderson, 1987). In second language learning, this process, DeKeyser (1998) states, corresponds to 'conveying a message [...] while thinking of the rules' (p.49). To ensure the learner's accessibility to the target rules at the initial stage of practice, he claims the importance of, for instance, the explicit teaching of the rules by a teacher as well as having the learner deal with the rules without time pressure.



Furthermore, the second is to promote the transferability of proceduralized rule. Anderson et al., 1997 argue that in proceduralization, it is essential to acquire ‘abstract rule[s,]’ which are applicable to wider range of problems, not ‘specific example[s,]’ which are highly contextualized and applicable to limited situations; the abstract rule can be achieved by applying the target rule of declarative knowledge to multiple situations (p.932). This dimension relates to one serious issue in language classroom pointed out by DeKeyser (2007a). He suggests that learners are often instructed to learn a rigid rule that are not applicable to many problem cases without providing sufficient numbers of example sentences to process. Based on this, he argues the necessity of ‘transfer-appropriate processing,’ where learners properly utilize the relevant declarative knowledge in ‘sufficiently challenging, that is, sufficiently different and complex example sentences to be processed for practice’ (p.291).

### **4.3. Complexity, accuracy and fluency**

#### **4.3.1. Balanced development**

The three performance dimensions in language use, complexity, accuracy and fluency (CAF), are also useful to consider speaking ability and its development. *Accuracy* is a language performance outcome which appears in emphasizing the conformity to the target language

norms and speakers (Pallotti, 2009) and in relying just heavily on the use of the knowledge which are already well internalized (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005). In contrast, *complexity* is an outcome that surfaces especially when the learner proactively tries to exploit more difficult language (Skehan and Foster, 2001) or more ‘elaborate and varied’ language (Ellis, 2003, p.340) than their current level. *Fluency* is a performance aspect emerging when the learner seeks to speak at natural rate without inappropriate hesitation and stopping (Skehan, 2009; Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005).

In applied linguistics, the research into CAF went beyond just the focus on such measurable surface phenomena, and it has been explored being connected with underlying learner language development. CAF has been regarded as ‘imply[ing] the major stages of change in the underlying L2 system’ (Housen et al., 2012, p.3). In this view, complexity is referred to as incorporating new L2 elements and elaborating the interlanguage; accuracy as modifying the L2 knowledge; fluency as consolidating and proceduralizing the L2 knowledge (Housen et al., 2012).

How to effectively induce and manage these kinds of change has been seen as one essential

aspect in the course of language learning and teaching. Skehan (1998) argues the importance of the 'balanced' way of language development. (p.91, 98) through the combination of the promotion of the change in learner's mental representations and the enhancement of the accessibility to them. The representation change can be encouraged by the language use in reliance on syntactic rules. Syntactically elaborated knowledge through this process (syntacticalization) is relatively slow to operate but enables the generative and precise use of language, that is, more complex and accurate performance. On the other hand, the accessibility can be fostered through the language use based on retrieving lexical items. This kind of language use encourages synthesize separated items into larger lexical chunks (lexicalization), which in turn enables the speaker to avoid relying heavily on the syntactic encoding and quickly implement the lexical items in real time communications, that is, more fluent performance. Skehan suggests the necessity of 'cyclical syllabus,' which encourages learners to revisit both two sides of language use continually (p.92).

#### **4.3.2. CAF and language task**

To realize such cyclical, balanced language development, how particular types of language task can influence the performance dimensions of CAF has been explored, and this is highly

related to how attentional resources are used during task. Task is defined as a language activity designed for having learners engaged in the language use to achieve communicative purposes; during the activity, its focus is primarily on meaning while the task may require the learners to process certain language form (Ellis, 2003). In the task-based pedagogy, the manipulation of learner's attention has been regarded as a critical point for effective language learning.

A significant feature of attention is that it can be selectively oriented or channeled by some pedagogical interventions, which helps the learner to notice the gap between their interlanguage and target language; also, this promotes the further processing of the noticed language aspect, even if it is the subtle, unfamiliar language feature that cannot easily be detected and raised to learner's awareness (Schmidt, 1990, 2001). On this conception, focus on form, where learner's primal focus on meaning is incidentally shifted towards specific target forms as necessary, has been shown to be an effective way promoting language learning through establishing learner's form-meaning mapping (Doughty, 2001).

This methodology has been further developed from the perspective of CAF. Skehan (1998)

points out one weakness of focus on form. He argues that it does not sufficiently cover the perspective on how the language focused on in communication subsequently changes into the knowledge in long-term memory, that is, interlanguage development. He suggests that focus on form ought to be complemented by the viewpoints of the CAF dimensions so as to intentionally promote the language development. To achieve this, he argues that it is important to focus learner's attention on more complex, accurate, fluent performance in precise ways by the implementation of particular types of task, and thus intentionally promote syntacticalization and lexicalization.

However, in considering such task types, another vital issue to consider is the tension between the degree of task difficulty and the limited capacity of learner's attentional resources. According to Skehan (2009), due to the limited amount of the resources, the learner has to prioritize some of the performance dimensions over the others particularly in cognitively demanding task. In other words, the intensive use of the resources for one dimension is likely to cause the attention available for other areas to decrease: a '[t]rade-off' relation between the attention to complexity and accuracy, on the one hand, and fluency, on the other, and, further, between complexity and accuracy (p.511). Moreover, fluency is the

dimension that is likely to emerge in focusing on ‘getting a task done,’ that is, ‘meaning’ while complexity and accuracy are those that tend to surface in ‘using the task for language focus and development’ (see Figure 4.3: Skehan and Foster, 2001, p.190).

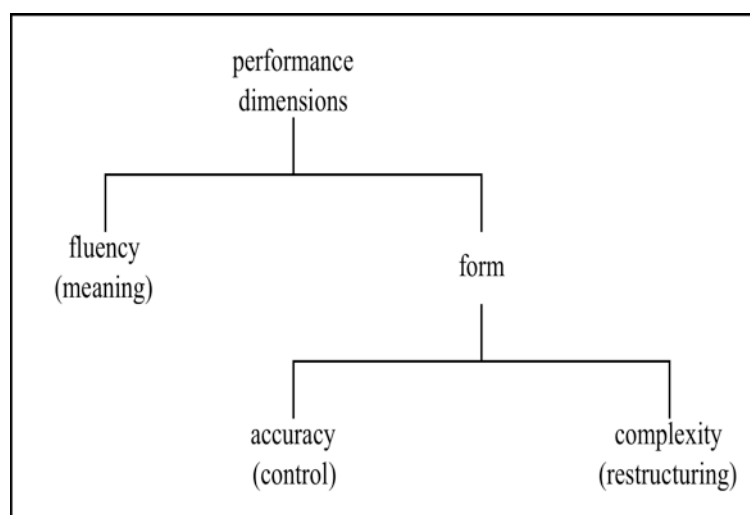


Figure 4.3 Performance dimensions (based on Skehan and Foster, 2001, p.190)

In this way, due to the limited mental capacity, language use and language development can be seen as in ‘some degree of mutual tension’ (Skehan, 1998, p.119). However, one of the strong rationales for exploring the relationship between task and CAF exists here. Skehan (2014a) argues that:

...one can explore methods of mitigating these difficulties, and even trying to nurture improved performance in all dimensions, through effective use of task choice and task conditions which overcome attentional limitations (p.3)

Associated with this, there is a controversial issue that has not fully addressed yet regarding

how attentional resources are allocated to the CAF dimensions. Robinson (2005) stresses the conception of multiple resource pools of attention, arguing that, through increasing task complexity, it is possible to enhance complexity and accuracy simultaneously. This is against the Skehan's perspective, mentioned above, that both dimensions are in the relation of trade-off. However, despite this difference, both Skehan (1998) and Robinson (2003) are in accord in respect of the importance of implementing particular kinds of task and thus the manipulation of learner's attention to promote the noticing of certain specific language aspects. In this sense, it is possible to say that it is worthwhile to identify which kinds of task can influence which CAF dimensions and, thereby, make intentional use of task for more effective language learning.

Skehan (2014a) takes task types and how to implement tasks as major areas that have been widely researched; both involves a number of variables that can influence the attentional resource use and particular performance dimensions of CAF during task. According to his categorization, with regard to task types, the variables, for instance, include type of information (e.g. how concrete or abstract, and familiar or unfamiliar the information is for the learner) and organization of the information (e.g. how clearly the information dealt with

in the task is structured). With respect to task implementation/condition, the valuables include whether to implement pre-task, such as pre-planning and rehearsal, during-task, including on-line planning and time pressure, and post-task.

## **5. Research project**

### **Investigating how Japanese learners who study English for academic purposes have practiced speaking: a case study from the perspective of cognitive psychology**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

In the last section, the theories associated with cognitive psychology were described, which can be a basis for analyzing learners' learning process from multiple viewpoints. Now that I have obtained the informative theoretical framework, this may significantly contribute to the elucidation of more effective speaking practice, which was, as it was mentioned in Section 3.5, one of the most uncertain, mysterious areas for me to learn and need to solve. Furthermore, as it was discussed in Chapter 2, my probable teaching career is to teach English to Japanese learners who wish to study in higher education in an English-speaking county. In the classroom, I would be required to enable the students to acquire communicative skills for academic purposes and have them more effective learners through appropriate advice on learning itself. To offer the teaching and advice that are suitable to individual learners, it would be desired, as a first step, to deeply understand their current



ways of practice and learning challenges.

Seen in these terms, therefore, unveiling the reality of the ways that such Japanese learners utilize to practice speaking is highly useful and informative for my future career. Through analyzing their speaking practice in terms of cognitive psychology, it may be possible to clarify the points that they often overlook during practice and to show some solutions encouraging their practice to be more effective. In this study, I will focus on two specific cases of Japanese learners who are going to study in UK higher education, identify how they have practiced speaking in Japan and, thus, try to evaluate its effectiveness from cognitive perspectives. To achieve this aim, I set two research objectives as below:

- (1) To identify in what ways the two Japanese learners have tried to practice speaking – what intentions they have in the use of the practicing ways
- (2) To identify the strengths and weaknesses of their speaking practice in terms of cognitive psychology

This kind of particular focus is useful to explore the answers to ‘How?’ and ‘Why?’ questions and thus obtain in-depth information on the specific case (Adams et al., 2014). Through this approach, it was aimed to discover specific principles that may be informative insights and hypotheses for other subsequent research, rather than make generalization that is directly

applicable to other learners.

## **5.2. Research design**

### **5.2.1. Data collection**

To achieve the research objectives, interview was adopted because of its usefulness to collect the data associated with human behaviors and the ‘in-depth motivations’ or ‘feelings’ underlying them (Adams et al., 2014, p.97). Furthermore, in this research, semi-structured interview was employed. Wahyuni (2012) describes the advantages of this type of interview as below:

...it offers the merit of using a list of predetermined themes and questions as in a structured interview, while keeping enough flexibility to enable the interviewee to talk freely about any topic raised during the interview. (p.74)

Through this kind of interview, on the one hand, it is easier to collect the data which is highly relevant to the theoretical framework. For instance, through identifying themes to focus on, such as proceduralization, in ahead of interview, it is possible to ask the specific question of how many times the participant usually repeats using a new grammatical rule to learn it. This kind of question should enhance the possibility to obtain the specific answers highly associated with the research aim. On the other hand, at the stage of making the interview questions, it was also easily anticipated that participants’ speaking practice and aim to use it

would widely vary from person to person. Therefore, to collect the data that sufficiently reflects specific, personal behaviors and intentions, it was more or less prioritized to change the questions so flexibly according to their answers that the participants can give deeper information about the area.

The prepared questions prior to the interview are approximately 20 and sorted by three groups: the questions focusing on (1) the general aspects of the participants' practice, (2) the practice done by oneself and (3) the practice with some others (see Appendix 1). A large part of the questions were created based on the themes presented in the literature review. Since there was the possibility that the participants would be not familiar with some specific terms, these were paraphrased in the interview to help their understanding of the questions. For example, one performance dimension of *complexity* was mentioned as 'being willing to try to use new grammar and vocabulary that you have not frequently used before.'

### **5.2.2. Participants**

The two participants are Japanese learners who study English for academic purposes in Japan. They have already passed the exam and are going to study in the UK as a pre-sessional and

postgraduate student respectively. The basic information on them are shown below:

Pseudonymous name	Age	Sex	Information
Takuya	20s	M	He is going to enter a pre-sessional course in October, 2016; in addition to studying by oneself, currently attends a weekly discussion class by a native speaker teacher.
Aki	30s	F	She is going to enter a postgraduate course in September, 2016; currently, attends a full-time language school to learn academic English, which includes discussion. Before starting attending the school, she used to work as an English teacher for kids.

The interview was conducted through Skype for approximately one hour per person. Since their and the author's mother tongue is Japanese, the interviews were conducted in Japanese to communicate with each other accurately and precisely. The quotations from their comments shown in the following sections are the ones translated into English by the author after the interview.

### 5.3. Results

Based on the interview comments, this result section addresses the question of what and how the participants practice speaking and why they utilized it, which are associated with the first research objective. Figure 5.1 shows the repertoires that the participants often/would often exploit to improve their speaking ability.

## Portfolio

	1. Takuya	2. Aki
Practice by oneself	1.1 Making a few sentences using the target grammar to check if his knowledge is correct 1.2 Shadowing	2.1 Making many sentences using a particular target grammatical structure 2.2 Memorizing formulaic phrases by recitation
Practice with someone	1.3 Discussion class (including preparation for the discussion)	2.3 Discussion class (including preparation for the discussion)

Figure 5.1 The participants' repertoires for speaking practice

As the table shows, participating in discussion class was a common repertoire for both of them (1.3 and 2.3). They go to a different language school, but both hold a discussion class for academic purposes as a main component of speaking practice. Also, prior to the class, both participants usually prepare for the discussion at home. This preparation can be included in the practice-by-oneself group; however, since highly related to the actual discussion practice, it was included in the practice-with-someone category. The learning behaviors of each participant are profiled in more detail below.

### 5.3.1. Takuya

When he is alone, Takuya frequently spends his time for form-focused practice to learn grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. For grammar practice, he makes two or three

sentences including the target grammar in mind or write on paper (1.1). He stated that he often does this especially after noticing some grammatical errors during the discussion class, where his teacher often lets him know them through feedback comments. About the aim of this practice, he commented:

‘...to check whether I understand and can use the grammar. Without this, I’m not sure I can use it correctly next time.’

When dealing with relatively complex grammar, such as ‘the + Comparative degree..., the + Comparative degree’ structure, he sometimes make a few sentences and check the used grammar in writing.

Another way by himself is *shadowing* (1.2), which is one of the popular methods in Japan. In this practice, a learner listens to model English sentences and immediately repeats them aloud word for word, as below:

Model: Boston is in America, in the north-east part of America.

Learner: Boston is in America, in the north-east part of America.

(from Murphey, 2001, p.129)

This type of practice is taken as a technique developing learner’s listening skills such as phoneme perception (Hamada, 2016) while it has been shown to help to improve pronunciation, intonation and fluency in production (e.g. Hsieh et al., 2013; Rojczyk, 2013).

This point is reflected in Takuya’s perception of shadowing:

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Portfolio

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‘By mimicking the same sentences dozens of times, I can get used to the pronunciation. This seems lead to my smooth speaking in real conversations’

Also, he considers this repetitive training to help to memorizing the vocabulary used in the material.

In the discussion class (1.3), Takuya has a one-to-one discussion with a native English teacher. Every week, one discussion topic and several questions associated with it are provided. For instance, when the topic is about tourism, the given questions are ‘Which part of Japan do you recommend visiting to foreign tourists? Why?’ and ‘Do you think it is important for more tourists to come to Japan? Why?’ By preparing the answers to these questions, he decides the ideas to present in the next discussion. More specifically, what he usually does for the preparation includes to:

- search for the information on the topic on the Internet
- identify what to say
- decide in what order he gives the information
- collects useful expressions
- write down sentences to present the ideas
- finally read them two or three times

He claims about the importance of this pre-work:

‘Without the preparation, it is so hard to express what I want to say and use the relevant vocabulary in real time.’

In terms of CAF, it was perceptible during the interview that his emphasis was put particularly on more complex and accurate use during practice. Asked about which aspects he prioritizes or does not during the practice, Takuya said that the grammar practice (1.1) is mainly for the accurate use of grammar and he seldom focuses on fluency. Even about the discussion practice (1.3), which is meaning-based, he answered:

‘...I want to concentrate *all* of myself on performing accurately.’

However, at the same time, he stressed the difficulty during the discussion:

‘...I have to think of lots of things simultaneously, for example, what to say, whether my grammar and vocabulary is correct, and so on. But I have to speak quickly as well.’

This comment implies his attention resource issue during the real time interaction of the discussion.

### **5.3.2. Aki**

When practicing alone, Aki’s focus is also mainly on language form, grammar and vocabulary. Grammar practice by making many example sentences (2.1) is the way which she introduced when she had hardly practiced speaking and her proficiency was not high. For this practice, she used a text book (see Figure 5.2).



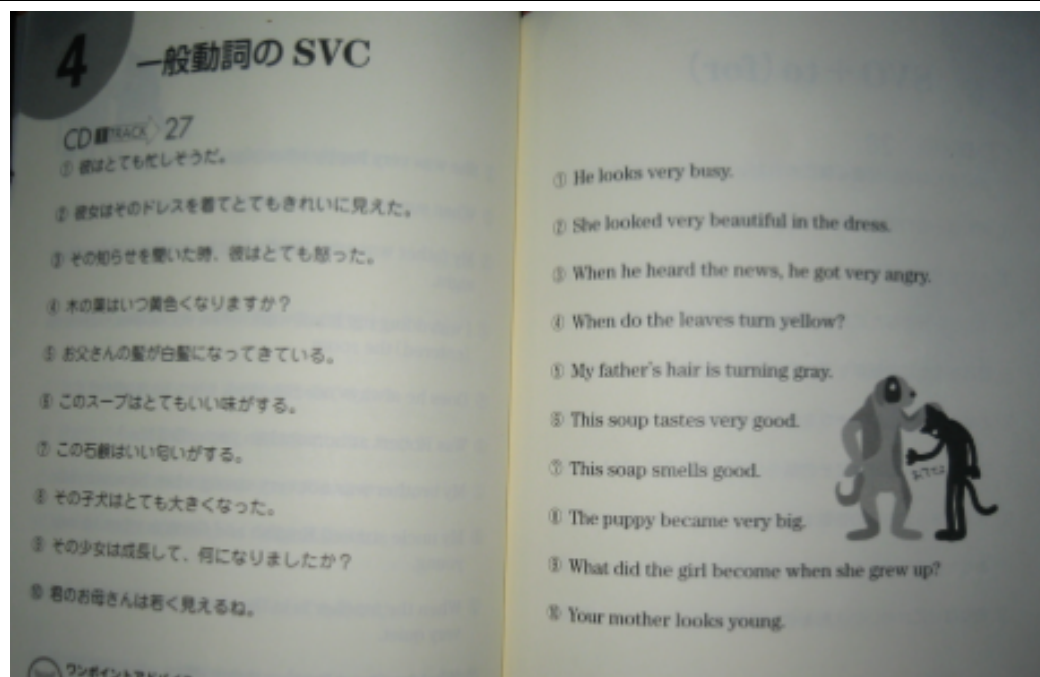


Figure 5.2 A textbook used for grammar practice (from Morisawa, 2006)

As it is shown on the top of this page, the target structure of this page is ‘Subject+Verb+Complement (SVC).’ Besides this structure, there are other target structures to practice in this book such as interrogative sentence, relative pronoun, and comparative degree. On the right page in Figure 5.2, 10 English sentences each of which involves the structure are written whereas, on the left, the Japanese version of the sentences are presented. While reading the Japanese sentences, the learner is required to make the English sentences using the target structure as quickly as possible. The sentences are short and simple, and thus relatively easy to produce. Through the repetition, she aimed at acquiring the ability to use the structure and construct sentences quickly.

The second her practice is memorizing formulaic phrases by reciting them many times (2.2).

This would often be used when she was an English teacher for Japanese kids. Figure 5.3 is a textbook she used for this practice.

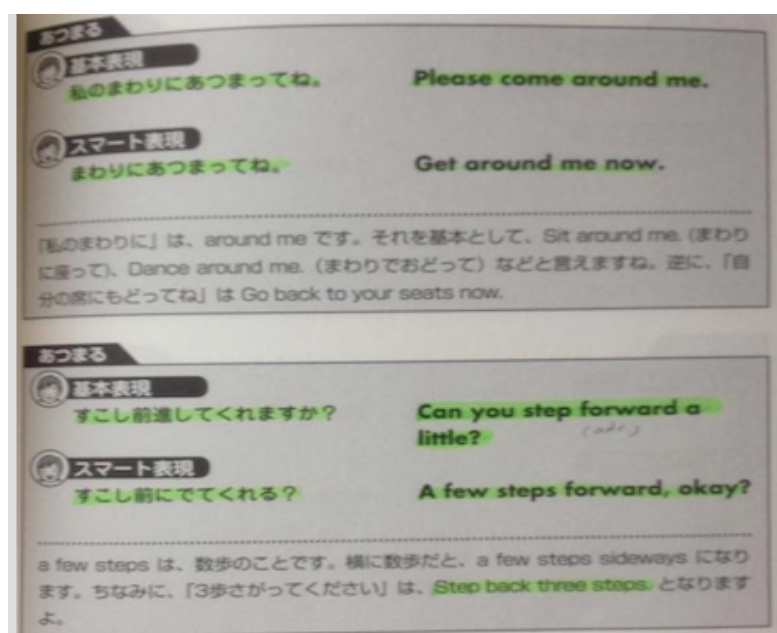


Figure 5.3 A textbook used for memorizing formulaic phrases (from Drennan, 2004)

This book mainly deals with the phrases useful in English classroom. Differing from the grammar training book (Figure 5.2), this book contains language items sorted by language use situations (in Figure 5.3, the phrases to having students move to some positions). From this book, she selected only the phrases that are useful based on her immediate needs at the workplace and recited them many times to memorize.

The final repertoire is the same as Takuya's: discussion practice (2.3). The content is also similar to his to some extent. The class Aki attends provides every week a topic regarding

sociology, such as globalization, immigration, law and education. In the class, students are divided into small groups of three or four people, and have a discussion with them on the topic. Also, as the preparation for the discussion, Aki usually:

- read some articles on the Internet to understand the topic
- decide what to say
- collect relevant vocabulary to present her thought

However, she usually stops the pre-work here and does not do further things, such as organizing her thoughts, writing it down or read it, as Takuya does.

When it comes to CAF, she said that since there is little time pressure in practicing by herself, she can spend enough time on memorizing new vocabulary and checking grammatical correctness. In her perception, complexity and accuracy are particularly focused on during practicing alone. On the other hand, in interacting with others, she said that she usually concentrates on the communication itself and speaking fluently while avoiding long poses and hesitations even if complexity and accuracy are to some extent sacrificed. This point is different from Takuya's approach to the discussion. However, during the discussion class,

Aki also has the difficulty:

‘The discussion topics are often complex and abstract, so my brain has to work busy when discussing. I don't have so much difficulty in saying one or two short utterances in daily life, but it's really hard to speak longer in discussion. Maybe because I don't

have enough vocabulary and background knowledge about the topic.’

#### **5.4. Discussion**

In this section, the speaking practice of the participants described in the result section will be evaluated from perspectives of cognitive psychology, which is related to the third research objective. In the following sections, firstly, the effectiveness of the by-oneself practice (1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2) is discussed together with the pedagogical solutions to make the ways more effective. Second, the practice of the discussion (1.3 and 2.3) is explored with some solutions illustrated likewise.

##### **5.4.1. Evaluation: practice by oneself**

To evaluate their practicing ways, I would start with focusing on the aspect of balanced development, Skehan (1998) proposes. The comment shown below is Takuya’s comment representing his perception of fluency:

‘Surely shadowing is a practice for fluency but I don’t really focus on fluency in Japan because it is by using English in real communications that I can improve my fluency and because I can’t have such many chances in Japan. I think I can do so only in the UK. On the other hand, in the UK, I would have much less opportunities to improve my accuracy because native speakers usually don’t point out my errors during conversations. So before I go to the UK, I want to improve accuracy as much as possible. I’m not going to do something especially for fluency in Japan.’

His current focus in Japan is heavily on accuracy, and this perception is reflected in his

behavior during the discussion class, where, as the results showed, he focuses *all* of himself on accurate performance. His intention and focus might sound reasonable in respect of making proper use of the strengths of each learning environment, an English-speaking country versus EFL country. As he commented, there are likely to be more opportunities for meaning- and fluency-focused speaking in the UK than Japan. Furthermore, Takuya's view corresponds with DeKeyser's (2007b) claim that learners 'tend to receive little appropriate feedback' from native speakers as long as the error is not a critical one causing a serious communication breakdown (p.214).

However, a probable issue I want to point out here is whether he is able to transfer successfully from the heavily accuracy-focused learning in Japan to the real communications in the UK. DeKeyser (2007b) argues one risk that due to the rapidity of the communications in English-speaking countries, learners, particularly novices, tend to rely heavily on formulaic expressions to catch up with the communication while missing the opportunities to generatively produce English sentences using grammar rules. Otherwise, it may be possible to simply give up speaking due to the rapidity. This suggests that, in the UK, Takuya is likely to fail to communicate with others and miss out on fully exploiting his grammatical

knowledge if there is a huge gap between his fluency level and the level required there. As a result, it may be possible that the proceduralization in his grammatical knowledge does not sufficiently proceed even in the UK, and, thus, he fails to develop the speaking ability for ‘more extensive conversations about more involved topics require[ing] the use of rules in some form’ (DeKeyser, 2007b, p.214). Although, of course, accuracy is a necessary component in the balanced development, it would be essential for him to enhance fluency to a certain extent while studying in Japan.

On this viewpoint, there is room for improvement on the Takuya’s current grammar practice (1.1). An insufficient point seems to be to promote proceduralization, which is one of the critical factors for fluent performance (Towell, 2012). Despite the fact that repeating the target behavior involving the grammar use is a necessary condition for proceduralization (DeKeyser, 1998, 2001, 2007c), what Takuya does is to make just two or three example sentences including the target form. He commented about this reason:

‘By making a few example sentences, I can check how to use the grammar correctly. A few sentences are enough to do so, and I don’t anything other in this practice.’

This implies that he regards the possession of correct declarative knowledge as sufficient in this practice. Also, he further says:

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‘Even if I made many sentences and memorized them, they would be useless because I can’t use the example sentences directly in actual communications.’

In his perception, the production of many sentences means to learn fixed example expressions. However, the actual point to be focused on in the grammar practice is to learn, not such context-specific sentences themselves, but ‘abstract rules’ through applying the target grammar to the production of many example sentences (Anderson et al. 1997, p.932), that is, ‘transfer-appropriate processing’ (DeKeyser, 2007a, p.291). In this way, his learning behavior and perception are at variance with the essential aspect of proceduralization.

If it is aimed at to encourage proceduralization through this practice, another important point is to spend enough time on understanding and using the rule at the initial stage until errors are hardly made; thereby, the accessibility to the relevant declarative knowledge is enhanced, which enables the restructuring of the knowledge and thus facilitates the proceduralization (DeKeyser, 1998). Furthermore, this deliberate approach would be beneficial to avoid acquiring a wrong procedure especially when the target rule is a complex one. If it is difficult to make sentences in mind, using the rule in writing, as Takuya does, is helpful to access and correctly use the declarative knowledge.

Although shadowing (1.2) is the only practice that Takuya adopts for fluency, its effectiveness in real communications appears to be limited. As Hsieh et al. (2013) and Rojczyk (2013) have reported, shadowing can enhance the smooth production in pronunciation; however, basically, what is required during shadowing is just to mimic the model sounds as if a 'parrot' (Lambert, 1992, p.264). In terms of the Levelt's speech processing model, while this practice may enable the activation of articulator sufficiently, conceptualizer and formulator seem to be considerably less activated. This ignores the principle regarding cognitive skill acquisition that lower-level skills should be practiced integrated into higher-level ones (Levelt, 1978). Otherwise, the coordination between the processors does not sufficiently established, and it is likely that the plans at the articulation stage cannot be automatically called by the plans at formulation stage in actual communications. Additionally, although one distinct role of output is to push the speaker to process language syntactically (Ellis, 2003; Swain, 1985; Swain, 1995; Swain and Lapkin, 1995), the shadowing, whose focus is on comprehension and mimicking sounds, does not seem to push learners sufficiently and promote the processing in formulator. Even if English sentences are repeated in this way, the syntactical processing and thus proceduralization will not be encouraged effectively. Consequently, it will not have the great impact on the aspect



of complexity and accuracy, stemming from syntacticalization, or fluency, deriving from proceduralization.

On the other hand, in Aki's case, it is more observable that her focus during practicing by herself is relatively balanced. For learning grammatical structures (2.1), she engages in the practice where she tries to make at least 10 different sentences using each target structure; this seems to more effectively contribute to acquiring the abstract rule, or proceduralization, and thus fluency than in Takuya's case. Also, as the results showed, the practice was introduced when her speaking proficiency was low, and it appears to be that it effectively functioned as a first step of speaking practice. She stated:

‘The sentences I'm required to make in this book are very simple ones. So when trying to learn a new structure, I could practice it without excessively caring about my accuracy.’

This implies that she more or less regards complexity as competing with accuracy, that is, what Skehan (2009) calls trade-off. It seems to be that her grammar practice requiring the production of many simple sentences was suitable to learn grammar while overcoming her attentional difficulty.

However, one possible risk to be noted here is that the target linguistic features may be

processed not by grammatical-rule-based but lexical-item-based system due to the simpleness of the produced example sentences. Aki said:

‘In practicing more complex and confusing structures, such as relative clause and embedded question sentence, I often pay attention to its structure. But in practicing simple ones, like SVC, I make its sentences as *a chunk* rather than construct its sentence from scratch.’

This suggests that the process of lexicalization is proceeding rather than syntactizationalization in practicing simple grammatical structures. Certainly, as her phrase practice (2.2) represents, if the formulaic sentences and phrases are selected based on speaker’s specific needs and acquired as lexical items, they are likely to function in the real-time communications since in what communicative situation the items are used is clear. Such lexica-item-based language use is an essential factor contributing to fluency (Skehan, 1998). However, it would be little useful to acquire the lexicalized items, or sentences from the textbook used in the grammar practice (Figure 5.2) since the example sentences are largely separated from communicative contexts. For example, there are few opportunities to retrieve and use such lexicalized sentence as ‘The puppy became very big.’ (in Figure 5.2) in real communications. In this sense, the grammatical structures that Aki has become able to produce effortlessly should be practiced in more various contexts deviating from the textbook.

**5.4.2. Evaluation: discussion class**

As described in the result section, both participants take the difficulties in their discussion class (1.3 and 2.3) as a major problem in their speaking practice, and these seem to be highly related to the attentional resource issue. Compared to the conversations in daily life, there appears to be many sources of the cognitive overload in discussion. For instance, both participants are usually required to discuss relatively complex, abstract topics such as sociology and economy. Also, as it is observable in Aki's comment, 'It's really hard to speak longer,' dealing with a larger amount of information than daily conversations is likely to be another source of the difficulty in the discussion. Moreover, discussion seems to be more frequently involve complex cognitive operations, such as reasoning.

In relation to the Levelt's model, these abstractness, a large information and complex cognitive operations during the discussion are the factors pressuring the conceptualizer; while this may help more complex, infrequent lexis and syntax to be processed in the formulator, their excessive imposition can lead to serious cognitive difficulties in the conceptualizer (Skehan, 2009). This in turn causes the processors to function not in parallel but in serial ways, resulting in communication breakdown (Kormos, 2006). Furthermore, compared to their by-onese

practice, the discussion would involve much time pressure. While this can focus learner's attention on communicating meaning and thus fluency, linguistic complexity and accuracy are likely to be significantly inhibited because it deprives formulator of necessary attention resources (Skehan, 2009). Otherwise, the serial processing cannot be avoided again.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of the discussion practice, it is essential to focus the participants' attention effectively on the CAF dimensions while mitigating the cognitive difficulties. As one of the solutions to achieve this, I will discuss the effectiveness of *planning* in pre-task phase in Skehan's (2014a) categorization. This type of planning includes *strategic planning*, where learners 'consider[...] the content' and 'how to express this content', and *rehearsal*, where they preliminarily perform the task 'as a preparation for a subsequent performance' (Ellis, 2005, p.3).

Strategic planning functions in two ways: complexifying ideas and organizing ideas (Skehan, 2009). Complexifying ideas, as it was mentioned above, can contribute to more complex language production. However, if the participants' preparation before the discussion class is regarded as a kind of strategic planning, it does not seem to be necessary for them to engage

in the complexification any more because, as the results show, it is more or less observable in their preparation to try to incorporate new ideas and expressions on the given discussion topic.

Avoiding ‘excessive ambition’ at the pre-planning stage is an important point to prevent serious cognitive difficulties in the main task (Skehan, 2014b). However, as for the latter function of strategic planning, organizing ideas, only Takuya does this while Aki usually does not. One advantage of this planning is easing conceptualizer’s processing load and enabling quicker lemma retrieval through identifying the ‘inter-relationships’ of their ideas before the main task (Skehan, 2009, p.527). This planning seems to have effects particularly on Aki’s performance.

On the other hand, rehearsal can have strong positive impacts on all the CAF dimensions because the initial trial ‘(a) enables ideas and language to be made more salient, and (b) triggers ‘deep’ lemma activation which is still available for subsequent performance’ (Skehan, 2014b, p.243). Also, in the subsequent task, ‘the speaker can build on the previous one’ (Bygate and Samuda, 2005, p.45). Although rehearsal may involve such positive effects, what should be noted is learner’s individual differences (Ellis, 2009). Especially Takuya tends to focus a large part of his attention on accuracy during the discussion; therefore, there is the

likelihood for him to focus exclusively on linguistic form and accuracy even in the initial trial with meaning much less focused on. If so, it may be impossible during the first trial to sufficiently increase the content familiarity that assists conceptualizer as ‘the driving force [...] helping the rest of the production process’ (Bygate, 2006, p.169). To enhance the familiarity, for instance, it may be necessary to instruct and make him clearly understand the focus of the rehearsal before the first trial.

### **5.5. Conclusions of the study**

In this study, two Japanese learners’ specific cases were focused on, and their speaking practice was investigated. Their practicing ways were identified, and a number of solutions to make them more effective were discussed. In this study, though, the data about their speaking practice is derived from the interview, and how the participants conduct their practice was not directly observed. To consolidate the validity of the findings, it would be necessary to observe their practice in person and thus more specifically identify what they do to improve their speaking ability. This may in turn lead to more specific discussion on how to make their practice more effective.

Nevertheless, the case study based on the interview has identified a number of important

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aspects. In terms of the balanced development, it was identified that Takuya tends to focus heavily on accuracy even in the meaning-based discussion. He has the assumption that it is hard to improve fluency in Japan but possible in the UK. In this way, he prioritizes a particular dimension to focus on. This implies that learner's focus on CAF is determined by learner's personal perception about language learning. To focus learners effectively on CAF in the balanced way, it appears to be important to consider their perceptions behind their learning behaviors and thus offer deep advice that can correct their misconceptions about language learning.

Furthermore, in the light of information processing, it was revealed that some of their practicing ways are not really effective for training speaking. For instance, as it was mentioned in Section 5.4.1., shadowing does not sufficiently involve formulator's processing. Also, in practice of grammar use, it is not useful to repeat sentences as a chunk that are largely separated from communicative contexts. In this way, learners are likely to take the learning behaviors that do not lead directly to the improvement of speaking skill despite the fact that they consider the practice effective for speaking skill. This implies the importance of deeply asking and identifying how they conduct their practice and closely examining whether

the practice really contributes to speaking ability in terms of speech processing.

Finally, in the discussion practice, how to manage their attentional resources was an essential point to consider for both participants. Since academic discussions particularly tend to involve the factors leading to excessive cognitive difficulties, it is likely to be necessary to implement certain supportive activities, such as planning, in discussion class.

In this study, it has been demonstrated that the two learners' speaking practice are deeply explored. I believe that this kind of inquiry through interview can be a useful way to give advice and language activities suitable to each learner's learning situation.

## **6. Conclusion: action plan for my future teaching and students**

In this portfolio so far, I have illustrated my development through TESOL Studies course as well as further built on it with the research project, both of which have involved my reflection.

I strongly feel that this experience has contributed to the extension of my knowledge on teaching English. However, developing 'professional competence' is a kind of endless process (Wallace, 1991, p.58), and I am going to keep fostering my professionalism even after graduating from the course continuously. In this section, I shall present a number of ideas to



effectively achieve my continuous development as a professional language teacher after going back to Japan.

To enable the continuous development, firstly, I am going to make frequent reference to the theoretical knowledge that I have learned on the course even in real teaching contexts.

Johnson (1996) argues that it is not until theoretical knowledge is situated in an actual teaching context and the teacher makes sense of it in the light of what is specifically occurring within the context that the knowledge achieve real utility. I will, therefore, often revisit a large amount of the knowledge that I accumulated and thus discover its real effectiveness by my recursive sense-making process. Besides this portfolio, the essay assignments that I composed during the two semesters will be great sources of the knowledge to refer to because their essay titles were all highly relevant to my teaching context, which required me to consider specific issues associated with my own teaching or learning experience. The number of pieces of the literature used in the assignments is up to approximately one hundred. I believe that this kind of body of knowledge, along with this portfolio, will provide me with new discoveries and insights each time I revisit them in the future teaching context.

In the future workplace, cooperating with my colleagues is also an important means to help my continuous development. For instance, sharing my perception of teaching with them in the shape of story is one possible way. This type of story telling can help teachers to organize and reorganize their 'PPK [Personal Practical Knowledge]' on their teaching, students and past classroom experience from both retrospective and prospective perspectives (Golombek, 2009, p. 158). Conversely, it would be also significantly helpful to listen to others' personal ideas on teaching to incorporate new insights. Moreover, classroom observation with colleagues is another effective way that I want to exploit in the future. Observation can enables teachers to evaluate each other's teaching from an objective perspective and offer new insights that is often difficult to achieve on ones own (Richards and Farrell, 2005). In fact, as it was illustrated in Section 3.3., the comment from an observer in the micro-teaching encouraged me to notice the necessity of carefully considering how students respond to my instructions, whereby I further deepened my perspective on focus on form and teacher's role in classroom. I would make cooperative relationship with my colleagues and try to overcome the challenges I encounter together with them.

Finally, I would also stress the importance of communicating closely with learners. As the case study in Chapter 5 showed, the interviews about learner's learning behaviors contributed to the identification of both positive and negative sides of their speaking practice, thus presenting a number of possible solutions. I realized that the necessary information for learners' effective improvement is derived from learners themselves. Furthermore, this kind of individual focus and interview is useful to identify their challenges specifically, which appears to in turn enhance my ability associated with 'differentiation,' which refers to appropriately changing the way of teaching according to learner's abilities and needs (Harmer, 2007, p.127). Through this practice, I would deepen my insights into individual learners as well as obtain the skill to provide custom-made teaching depending on their learning situations, difficulties and needs.

I believe these ways I have presented to be significantly helpful in order to sustain my continual development in Japan. In real teaching context, there may be many difficulties that I have never encountered. However, the knowledge and insights that I have obtained on this course as well as the reflection process that I have demonstrated in this portfolio will help me to creatively discover the means for overcoming the difficulties even in any teaching contexts.

I am going to keep evolving my teaching practice and knowledge in Japan, and thus I shall contribute to effective English acquisition of Japanese learners.

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## 8. Appendixes

### Appendix 1: interviews questions

Focus of question	Questions
General	<p>To improve speaking ability, which do you think is important?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. practice with someone</li> <li>2. practice by yourself</li> <li>3. both</li> </ol>
	<p>What speaking practice have you used?</p>
	<p>Have you encountered any difficulties associated with speaking practice?</p>
Practice by oneself	<p>When you practice speaking by yourself, which do you think is important?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. imagine some specific communicative context before starting speaking e.g. introducing yourself to someone, giving a presentation, conversation with your friends, etc.</li> <li>2. without imagining such contexts, make sentences including target grammar and vocabulary</li> <li>3. both</li> </ol>
	<p>When you encounter what you cannot express, how do you deal with it?</p>
	<p>Do you spend sufficient time on understanding new language items?</p> <p>How do you do this?</p> <p>e.g. using a grammar book, dictionary etc.</p>
	<p>After understanding, how do you practice the knowledge so that you can use it in actual conversations?</p> <p>Without time pressure, do you spend sufficient time on practicing the new item until you get used to using it accurately?</p> <p>Do you think it is important to make many sentences using the target linguistic items.</p> <p>If so, how many sentences do you usually make?</p>

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	<p>Which dimensions of speaking do you focus on during the practice, complexity, accuracy or fluency?</p> <p>How do you prioritize or manage these dimensions during the practice?</p>
Practice with someone	<p>During conversation, do you listen and attend to the interlocutor's utterances to learn something?</p> <p>If so, what are you attending to, grammar, vocabulary or others?</p>
	<p>When you encounter something to focus on in her utterance, how do you deal with it?</p> <p>e.g. asking her for its clarification; asking what it means; noting it down; using a dictionary, grammar book or the Internet for some information etc.</p>
	<p>How do you do when you encounter what you cannot express and when your utterance is not understood?</p> <p>e.g. paraphrasing it; try to modify your utterance; noting it down; using a dictionary, grammar book or the Internet for some information etc.</p>
	<p>How do you further practice the new language items after the conversation?</p> <p>e.g. trying to use them in other conversations; practicing them by yourself at home etc.</p>
	<p>Which dimensions of speaking do you focus on during this practice, complexity, accuracy or fluency?</p>
	<p>Do you have any difficulties or problems when you practice speaking?</p>

**Appendix 2: portfolio proposal form****EDUC 5308 Portfolio****Portfolio Proposal Form (extension of learning project)**

Student name	Keiji Matsuda
Student number	200979229
Full time/Part time)	Full time

**Section 1: Scope of the project**

1. Please tick one of the boxes on the right to indicate whether your project will be a **pedagogical project** i.e. a project to enhance or develop teaching and learning in a specific context by e.g. designing a set of materials, an assessment or a course or an **empirical research project** i.e. a project to gather and analyse data to answer specific research questions.

pedagogical project	<input type="checkbox"/>
empirical research project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2. In the box below, give your project an informative title. This will help us in identifying a suitable supervisor.

Investigating Japanese undergraduates' learning methods about speaking practice.

3. In the box below, indicate what you aim is in doing the project i.e. what you hope to achieve. If it is a research project what do you hope to find out? If it is a pedagogic project, what benefit will your work create?



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By understanding which practice ways of speaking are employed and how they are used by Japanese undergraduate learners, I aim to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the ways from psycholinguistic perspectives, such as Anderson's (2000) skill learning model and Levelt's (1989) model, and show some implications of how these methods can be improved.

4. In the box below, describe how you will carry out the project i.e. what procedures, with whom, when. Please give as much detail as you can.

- Participants: about 5 Japanese students studying at Language center
- Data collection method: Semi-structured interview about how they use the methods
- Data analysis method:
- Discussion: based on the obtained results, show implications for more effective ways of speaking training as pedagogical instruction and self-study

### Section 2: Ethical considerations

1. Will the participants be from any of the following groups?

	Yes	No
Children under 16		<input type="radio"/>
Persons in a dependent relationship with you (e.g. your students)		<input type="radio"/>
Persons from other vulnerable groups		<input type="radio"/>

If you have answered 'no' to all questions, continue to Question 3 below. If you have answered 'yes' to any of the questions, please justify the inclusion of these participants, explaining why the research has to be conducted with them.

2. A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be needed for researchers working with children or vulnerable adults in the UK (see: <https://crbdirect.org.uk/>)

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- Do you currently have DBS clearance?    Yes    No
- How recently was it conducted? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How will the potential participants be recruited?

I would like to ask the language center to cooperate about my project.

4. What will the participants be asked to do in this study?

Participate in interview (takes about 30 min)

5. How will you gain 'informed consent' from the participants?

I'm planning to make a contract sheet and ask them to sign if they agree.

6. Will interviews/ questionnaires discuss any topics or issues that might be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting? If so, why is this necessary?

No

7. What are the potential benefits and risks for participants?

There seems nothing in particular.

8. Does the research involve any risk to yourself as a researcher?

There seems nothing in particular.

9. How will you ensure confidentiality and security of personal data?

- I do not show anyone the data.
- I do not use their real names in the dissertation.

**Section 3: Supervisor approval.**

If the Supervisor approves the proposal, he/she should sign the form and forward it to Programme Manager, TESOL Studies.

Name of supervisor:

Mohammad Ahmadian

Signature:

