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Low intensity MALL in a Japanese context Part 2: Dialogic Teaching

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Abstract

In Part 2 of this ongoing study into low intensity MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) in the context of Japan, we assess the meaning and relevance of “dialogic teaching” in detail and in general. The latter has been spotlighted in elementary first language English teaching development due to the work of Alexander from 2004. However, we argue that using an established concept risks compromising the meaning (if not the concept) of dialogues for teaching, whatever the learning goals may be. This concept started at least three millennia ago, and continues in many recent versions of its process. It is vital to scrutinize terminology, as communication in any context must mean striving for sincere interchange that is open to all ideas. The ideas of Socrates (received via Plato) from thousands of years ago, and the Dogme movement initiated by Thornbury in the last twenty, seem crucial reference points. However, they are not taken into full account in studies of teaching via dialogue, especially if the purpose is proper communication.

As part of confirming Part 1’s findings, we overview recent additions to the research into MALL via both more meta-studies summarizing trends in multiple papers, as well as specific dialogic conversational teaching studies, to determine if there has been any significant developments, such as in methodological innovations. We also refer to the most recent internal and external feedback and data from the immediate environment of the writer, including: conversational analyses to determine fluency by interactional speed; learner feedback over a wide range of students, classes and teaching styles; plus, a recent LINE/MALL survey to assess trends in students’ preferences in cyber communication, compared to results in Part 1. The fundamentally flawed TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) ethos here is also cited as a major stumbling block, so we consider the causes, consequences and remedies, whilst acknowledging reform’s difficulties.

1. Introduction

Dialogic teaching (as coined by Alexander, 2004) has become a central pillar of first language UK elementary education, almost synchronous with MALL’s rise. Devising disparate ways to define them seems commonplace. Mobile Assisted Language Learning is a recent coinage, but dialogue and teaching have hallmarked humanity for millennia, often in combination with each other. While Alexander makes one interpretation of dialogic teaching, along with resultant

reformulations, he skews the original term. There are various uses of dialogic, some of which cannot help but redirect this original sense to whatever variation suits its author's drift, whether it be: philosophy (Stewart, 1978); therapy (Seikkula, 1995); academic education (Sample, 2013); English as a second language (Gordon, 2018); non-English languages (Carver, 2019); or, in this case, Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Ignoring the essential meanings of communication, dialogue, teaching and so on are counter-productive, especially in the TEFL context, which must be the area of broadest international concern, with millions if not billions of learners. Our primary goal should therefore be genuine spoken communication in the form of honest, open interaction, to be true to the original meaning of dialogue. This study seeks to return to the origins of such words to screen their use for such misunderstood EFL elements as listening, speaking and conversation. Japanese fail as grammar translation precedes.

We aim to confirm the previous study (Part 1, 2019) by showing how the response to and results achieved by using MALL with LINE improve spoken ability, which we measure by interactional fluency (including how many syllables we produce per second) to compare with previously detected rates. We stress the importance of dialogic learning development in the context of one basic use of LINE as a convenient communication app students prefer to standard college e-mail communication, within limits and respecting privacy. As indicated in Part 1 (Wood, 2019) there is a valuable role for MALL in TEFL, albeit more supportive than leading. The single most important implication there was found to be that students wanted dialogues that they themselves created with their own English about topics of their own choice.

We believe, and intend to show through this study, that:

"Using MALL in the form of LINE communication for students to re-listen to their original conversations can motivate them to effective acquisition."

The situation in Japan is critical because of scant conversation class time. This prevents real progress in most cases. Students enter college without significant spoken ability, and leave without significant improvement simply because significant time is not allowed. Conversation class time amounts to less than 5% of even English majors' study, but it should be ten times that. Assigned so few credits out of the many needed to graduate (as colleges hire many teachers of unrelated subjects) conversation proficiency is a non-starter. Most classes fail to serve student needs. Students start and finish beginners. Neither MALL nor a miracle can solve this unless MEXT allows reform. Only then can over a half a century of waste begin to be salvaged.

2. The Socratic Method and Dogme

Dialogic teaching has trended in this decade, fragmenting into disparate interpretations, but

still owing a major debt to previous practices, not properly observed in many cases. Among these begetters are those who developed the Socratic Method from 2,500 years ago and, more recently, the Dogme EFL approach (primarily associated with Thornbury, 2000) from 20 years ago. The Socratic Method (Plato 369 BC, *The Theaetetus*) is a dialogic questioning approach using critical thought to expose participants' pre-existing ideas and prejudices. It may be the original reference point for using dialogue to develop communication. Plato's rendition is illustrated in a dialogue between Socrates, a teacher and one student. Having endured 25 centuries, it demands even more understanding and acknowledgment now.

Dogme language teaching (a communicative approach of textless teaching via conversational communication to promote learner needs and objectives) is a recent offshoot targeting Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Resources are ideally provided or generated by the students, or by using whatever items are at hand in the classroom at any given time. The teacher is simply another participant in the interaction process, with the same right to interact and duty to listen as students. Real language and communication should be used at all times. It requires an actual need to communicate something of interest between all members. Grammar explanations may occur if arising naturally out of the lesson, but not as the definitive reason for having it. Dogme has its roots in communicative language teaching as an attempt to ensure the communicative aspect in such approaches is respected.

Dogme may share qualities of task-based language learning, but differs profoundly in terms of material authenticity. Thornbury argued that it leads learners to interact and produce language collaboratively, a key idea in the dialogic school's tenet, too. He maintained that Dogme doesn't preclude technology, but may be antithetical if it doesn't enable teaching that is both learner centered and based on authentic communication. Recent attempts to integrate it with Dogme principles suggest a teaching style in transition evolving to be compatible with some technology. Nonetheless, many Dogme proponents prefer the physical presence of communication 'realia' (that is, items that happen to be around, not being specially prepared for teaching) to cyber alternatives. Dogme has been criticized by some educators for its rejection of textbooks and modern tech in language lessons. A restricted use of Dogme principles might allow teachers greater choice of the resources they feel appropriate to a particular lesson. The practice also meets with opposition in very conservative cultures, like many in Asia, perhaps accounting both for its absence and their lack of progress. Conservative administrations deter Dogme's adoption as their situations compel classes to stick to set curricula and bow to exam pressure above communication.

3. Dialogic Teaching

The term 'dialogic teaching' is now in regular use, but like all such terms, means different things to different people. As developed by Alexander (2004), it attempts to use talk as the principle means of developing elementary students' first language thinking and learning. Dialogic teaching tries to raise talk above traditional teaching via interaction, engagement and developing relationships, amongst other methods. (However, many other approaches may try to claim this, too.) Ultimately, it would seem that more than dialogic teaching, the most important ingredient must be the experience and ability of the individual teacher. Alexander used the term "dialogic teaching" in his model of dialogic pedagogy. However, there are many potential interpretations of dialogic pedagogy, and it would be erroneous to suggest that it did not exist for a long time in other forms before Alexander's version gained popularity. For the purposes of this paper, we must first ask: "Can dialogic communication apply to learning a foreign language?" and "How would its essential meaning change if so in the context of Japan?"

4. Examples of Dialogic Communication

Teaching is only one rendering of dialogic communication. For example, dialogic practice existed in Finland in 1984 for therapeutic purposes to develop mutual respect via communication (Seikkula, 1995). It can be applied to many domains such as politics, philosophy, the media, and so on. A noticeable absence in many of its applications is recognition of gender effects on collaboration, but that requires a separate study to discuss. There is also a propensity for prioritizing or defaulting to writing, the main aim of most TEFL research, especially involving MALL. From a TEFL viewpoint, that is putting the cart in front of the horse, because spoken communication most often precedes literacy. Subordinating it to literacy creates whole populations of tongue-tied learners who see words on a page, but hear no sounds. Perhaps the dominant use of the term in recent years is Alexander's, but as his focus is developing children's L1, for the purposes of this study, it is necessary to concentrate on a broader interpretation, and simply explore how dialogue can best be developed for English as a Foreign Language, incorporating aspects of MALL to make spoken acquisition more effective. Most English classes in Japan, if not in many TEFL situations worldwide, are dictated by grammar and literacy over communication (Wood, Aug 2019). Too few classes and qualified teachers make significant foreign language acquisition impossible. The dialogic approach has potential but is usually limited, directly or indirectly, by an arbitrary curriculum which only defies communication. Class talk tends to be reactive in the teacher's favor, being inevitably channeled to what he, she (or their handlers) decide should comprise the subject matter, which is seldom genuine communication.

5. MALL Evolution Literature Review

While the previous study (Part 1, 2019) discussed MALL and tech in some detail, the most recent studies need referring to before discussing dialogic teaching's integration. As suggested in Part 1, MALL often defaults to regular class-style learning, namely, non-communicative prosody. At the same time, it creates the illusion of being able to teach with less effort. To be successful, MALL requires not less but more effort than conventional classes.

Like Skype use for talking, MALL risks being reduced to marketable opportunism with unqualified "teachers". Only the middlemen and app purveyors profit. The best people for students to talk to will always be each other, in collaboration with teachers, to negotiate not just how to communicate, but also what to communicate. Their common interests are key to effective communication. Skype "teachers" may know little about teaching or students' needs. Students' peers are better. Substituting them for exorbitant irrelevance makes no sense, except to advance those less interested in the students' development than exploiting tech for their profit.

While the former consideration's central reference (Part 1, 2019) was a meta-study summarizing 20 years of tech related EFL (Chang et al., 2015), more recent research attempting to update the overview of technology (Cho, July 2018, McClung and Yang both 2019) may provide potential perspectives for this present study. As we commented previously, based on a study of some thousand TEFL tech papers in the two decades up to 2013, Chang found no evidence of methodological innovation keeping pace with Mobile Assisted Language Learning applications. It was also suggested that many administrations favoured the appearance of technology over man or woman power for teaching foreign languages, without any significant improvement or deeper understanding in such education in general. Technology was seen as more a barrier to than a facilitator of face-to-face communication, with budgets often squandered for image over substance.

Cho (July 2018), perhaps coincidentally, also accessed 1,000 plus tech studies, this time in the 12 year period from 2005 to 2017, thus overlapping Chang's substantial overview by 10 years, though interestingly, the latter is never mentioned. An earlier meta-analysis (Wu et al., 2012) is one reference point, despite its cursory treatment. Wu's study concludes that overall MALL has a positive effect on language acquisition, although it is evaluated on in-house criteria, not external proficiency tests, making findings hard to verify. One other meta-study of tech, in a similar vein to Cho (2018) is Yang (2019). Reviewing tech related literature between 2014 and 2018 updates Wu's study by one year while overlapping it by three. While referring to Wu, again it ignores Chang's seminal study, and is far more perfunctory with just 50 studies shortlisted. Its emphasis is on only the newest tech (thus excluding even personal computers) and this again diverts the main focus of the research away from methodological development, the more vital area.

One general tech study more than any other mentioned above or below warrants closer

consideration (McClung, 2019) as it is illuminatingly situated in the Japanese context, but also with wider implications. Though set in a large university, it paints the standard picture of feudal academicism as a backdrop. McClung throws himself into this with gusto, achieving much more faculty collaboration in his project than is usually possible. While the limitations are unavoidable, he achieves considerable in-house professional development and discovery. Faculty are required to use set texts and the concept, let alone the practice of peer involvement and evaluation, is rarely evident among Japanese tertiary teachers. McClung had to overcome significant barriers to undergo any research into TEFL tech at any significant level. But still, the stock in trade imposed listening and vocabulary activities used circumvented students' own input, which this current writer asserts is one essential prerequisite for initiating English proficiency development.

Other specific studies on technology since Part 1 include research on conversational elements of Teaching English as a Foreign Language, but sadly, the prior limitations still persist in most cases. Baek and Lee (Dec 2018) for example, tackle speaking classes, but via Kakaotalk, an established app, rather than attempting to challenge or innovate any original methodology. Similarly, Rosdiana and Sulistyawati (July 2019) treat MALL speaking indirectly, limiting their concerns to student readiness to use MALL in speaking classes. A more meaningful attempt is Armitage's (2019) which required students to practice basic conversations using smart phones, although there may be more loose ends than innovations as the exercise was limited, and the use of gimmicky technology to compensate for the lack of more effective methodology in regular classes may have diminished findings.

6. MALL, LINE and Smartphones

As was emphasized in Part 1, using MALL requires extra responsibility, something which is taken too lightly in most of the studies and practices presented so far. In fact, the discussion thus far seems to divert the question, and focus more on all of the possible ways of using students' smartphones without really considering how seriously this infringes on their private spaces, as well as taking for granted teachers' and administrations' right to invade personal freedoms. If using MALL means abusing the individual's rights in any way, then it should not be used at all. The preliminary questions about use need discussing fully with students who must not feel any pressure to commit themselves, or lose their natural right to withdraw from sharing their own property which they paid for to use in ways of their own deciding. This is especially so for students under 20 in Japan who are still children by law, and for those over 20, too, who may simply be used to giving in to any implicit pressure from those in authority for fear of academic harassment.

Even with that said, if we as educators are correctly convinced of the value of MALL, we

should also be extremely confident the methods we use with it will work. Without prolonged effort and research, shallow experimentation with students as guinea pigs is irresponsible. The best kind of MALL is dependent on successful integration with qualified teaching, beyond the perennial stranglehold of standard texts and methodologies, neither of which do much for spoken development. That is the true aim of TEFL, but the least addressed of all the skills. The advantages are plentiful: accessibility, sociability, interest, efficiency, immediacy, responsiveness, and so on. As Japan's main social media forum with over 80 million users and a 90% teen usage rate (Part 1, 2019) LINE is the obvious MALL vehicle. As its biggest claim to fame has been photo mailing, the method we describe seems the likeliest to succeed, as it combines students' own extensive store of photographic memories with the confidence they need to express these in English as a superior, authentic means of promoting communication.

7.1 Integrating Dialogic MALL

There are multiple methods for integrating dialogic MALL, the main one used with the classes evaluated is summarized below (Wood, 2015). The aims and methodology are essentially the same for each class, but the conditions specific to individual courses and classes require that the detailed workings for each group be fine-tuned to ensure the best possible results. Some essential components and stages for the approach include:

1. Teacher's example to prepare for students' photos chosen independently by themselves which are the central starting point of every conversation.
2. Ensuring students both understand the aims and methods recommended.
3. Teacher's assurance to students that both the photos and recordings of their use remain confidential to ensure complete personal privacy.
4. Establishing a routine of photo presentation, use, communication event and follow-up.
5. Dividing class time and which students go first and which ask questions.
6. A review at speed via questions from different students to record.
7. The MALL component recording to develop independent study and review.
8. A final evaluation based on everything that preceded.

7.2 Sample Class Conversation

138 seconds; 197 words; 1.43 words per second; (4 prompts)

Q1: How was the conductor in front of them? A1: He was so friendly.

Q2: Do you want to join this? A2: Yes, I do.

Q3: Why did you go there? A3: Because I'm interested in foreign countries.

Q4: (Where do you want to go?) A4: I want to go to UK.

Q5: (Why do you want to go to UK?)

A5: Because I want to learn about British English.
Q6: Do you like British literature? A6: Yes, I do.
Q7: Have you ever been Australia? A7: No, I haven't.
Q8: Would you want to go there?
A8: Yes, I do. How about you?
A8b: Yes.
Q9: What's your favorite singer? A9: Coldplay.
Q10: Who? A10: A British singer.
Q11: What's your best memory in Canada?
A11: I did homestay with Taiwanese?
Q12: (How was it)? A12: It was a wonderful time.
Q13: Have you been to Canada? A13 Yes, I have.
Q14: How long did you stay? A14: I stayed for one week.
Q15: Do you like koala? A15: Yes, I do.
Q16: (Can you sing?) A16: No, I can't.
Q17: Can you talk with them? A17: No, I can't.
Q18: If you could have spoken to them, what would you ask them?
A18: I would ask about Australia.
Q19: Do you have any LGBT friend? A19: Yes, I do.
Q20: Tell me more. A20: I have a friend in Canada.

7.3 Sample Test

54 seconds; 150 words; 2.78 words per second; (0 prompts)

Q1: What's your name? A1: I'm (student's name omitted).
Q2: Tell me about your photo. A2: This is a concert at our university.
Q3: When did it take place? A3: At April.
Q4: What kind of concert was it? A4: It was LGBT concert.
Q5: I see. Was that the first LGBT concert that you've been to? A5: Yes.
Q6: How was it? A6: It was awesome.
Q7: For example? A7: They spoke Australian English.
Q8: Could you understand? A8: A little.
Q9: Did you speak with anyone? A9: No, I don't.
Q10: Have you ever been to Australia? A10: No, I haven't.
Q11: Have you ever been abroad? A11: Yes, I have.
Q12: Where did you go? A12: I went to Canada.
Q13: How was it? A13: It was so wonderful.

Q14: Where do you want to go next? A14: UK.

Q15: What would you do in the UK? A15: Study English.

Q16: Have you got a plan? A16: Yes, I have.

Q17: When will you go? Q17: This summer.

7.4 Sample Test and Conversation Indications

The samples (as in previous years, selected randomly from hundreds) indicate the potential progress between conversations made during the review at speed via questions by different students and the final evaluation based on everything preceding as facilitated by the MALL component to develop independent study and review. The test indicated a significantly improved interactional fluency (IF) rate as shown in the following table.

Class/Test Interactional Fluency Difference 2019

Event	Length	Syllables	IF Speed	Difference
Class	197 secs	248	1.25 p.sec	- 2.23
Test	54 secs	188	3.48 p.sec	+2.23

This compares favorably with a previous assessment of the method (Wood, 2018).

Event	Length	Syllables	IF Speed	Difference
Class	140 secs	173	1.23 p.sec	- 2.17
Test	30 secs	102	3.40 p.sec	+2.17

Most noticeably, the IF speeds shown in the test are very close, suggesting a common limit, and that both students had reached theirs: psycho and sociolinguistic, plus ideolectic and motor skill related. Top speeds can progress towards native speaker speeds of near 6.00 per second.

8. Assessment and Indications of Validity

In addition to some content classes required to be taught for 300 students, the writer uses photos for communication with 300 others in 8 courses for a total of 200 hours a year, courses comprising 15 classes of 90 minutes each. That is the equivalent of 90 minutes per student over 12 months. The figures alone are bleak as it usually takes years of 100% exposure for anyone to acquire their mother tongue, while most Japanese students are lucky to get a couple of hours total of actual individual spoken experience until they graduate at 22 years old. Yet despite the absurd timeframe, using photos has helped students achieve 100% scores on TOEIC listening

multiple times.

In addition, regular objective and anonymous student feedback indicates consistently high levels of satisfaction, both quantitatively and qualitatively, after classes use the method. Classes using the method have the highest response, evaluation and comment rate of all, schoolwide, out of 2,000 such classes, many of which are smaller and less demanding than learning the most difficult foreign language for Japanese speakers in the world. The writer's classes average 30~40 students per class, while many of the 2,000 have only 1~10 for subjects many could learn by a text alone unlike English.

It would be inconceivable for Japanese students to acquire the most difficult foreign language without hearing and speaking it for themselves. Exorbitant Internet alternatives with non-qualified speakers are the anathema of TEFL, but still convince many Japanese students and administrators, who don't know any better or prefer to ignore the right solution of employing enough qualified teachers and allowing them to devise and operate a successful spoken English curriculum. This has long been spurned in Japan (Wood, Jul 2019). In 2,000 school wide evaluations, the average number of respondents, even in larger classes, is about 10%, while the writer's was around 70%. Written comments are even scarcer, with the vast majority of classes at zero. Those with more are often mostly negative criticism. The writer's classes regularly receive over a third of students commenting, with scarcely a single complaint. Below is a random sampling of comments most recently received in 2019, from beginner through advanced:

I could speak English every week with a big smile!

I'm poor at English, but I'm really happy that I took the course.

Using photos increased my English ability.

My English production increased thanks to this course.

We had so many chances to use English!

Using simple English at increasing speeds helped me improve.

I could learn how to express myself in English more than before.

My English ability definitely improved.

I learnt the importance of interacting quickly in English.

9. Follow-up LINE vs E-mail Survey Comparison

Additionally, a survey of one class using the method of recording students talking about photos they chose to present themselves was repeated after an initial questionnaire last year (Part 1, 2019). The results of both are in the **Appendix**. The second survey confirms the highly positive response of the former. The effectiveness of LINE's communication value was also reconfirmed by checking how quickly students read the same message sent by school e-mail. 90% read it the

same day on LINE compared to only 20% via e-mail. The 10 students in the researched class used the approach for over the half a year, answering question items categorized in the same 5 sections:

1. *Previous/regular use*
2. *Using LINE for class*
3. *MP3 audio file use*
4. *LINE vs. E-mail messaging*
5. *LINE and e-mail use in general*

The results of both surveys can be compared as follows:

1. *Previous/regular use*: again, the students almost unanimously used LINE as their main social media and communication application, as opposed to the school E-mail system. Slightly fewer had previously used LINE to study English, and nobody had used it significantly for that purpose (compared to 1 out of 10 previously) reflecting exactly their minimal use of LINE in other classes.
2. *Using LINE for class*: again, students unanimously approved of its use in the photo method class, its usefulness and convenience for English study was again being stressed. As before, in response to being asked if they thought LINE use for English study was bad, none of the respondents indicated they felt using LINE was bad.
3. *MP3 audio file use*: in response to being asked about the use of MP3 audio files to listen to the previous class conversation recordings each week, this time all approved, one more student than previously. Asked why they thought MP3 file use was good, this time they listed a wider range of reasons (convenient; easy to remember; helps if absent; easy to check; to learn). Again to confirm these findings, when asked if they thought MP3 file use was bad, no respondents indicated that using MP3 files was bad.
4. *LINE vs. E-mail messaging*: 100% compared to the previous year's 80% of students indicated that they checked LINE messages more often than e-mail messages. Again, to confirm this, when asked which they checked more often, they all indicated that they checked LINE messages more than they checked e-mail messages.
5. *LINE and E-mail use in general*: only 1 out of 10 students preferred e-mail for communication, reinforcing the findings above.

10. Conclusion

Terminological clarity in language teaching and research is a basic precondition. Unclear definitions defy spoken communication's meaning and send the wrong message, or none at all. Language teachers - first, second, foreign or any other kind - shouldn't waylay words with a

crucial history. The spirit of communication is honest, open and equal interaction, whose outcome cannot be controlled by authority or hierarchy, only circumvented. A dialogue is spoken and communication is not pre-determinable. Combining these terms imposes mutual parameters which demand respect.

With so many tenuous uses of the term dialogic communication, we have to return to the origins of the words to judge objectively if our own use of them is valid or not. Tech trends come and go, but dialogue remains the most important yet elusive priority for Japan. Helpful new methods should be considered and accurate terms ascribed. Student response and internal and external assessment again indicate that the MALL and the photo communication approach can help promote dialogue in a TEFL context. As indicated in the first part of this study on MALL (Part 1, 2019) there is a valuable role for MALL in TEFL, albeit more a secondary than primary one.

The most important conclusion was found to be that students wanted dialogues that they themselves created using their own ideas, interests and English, about topics entirely of their own choosing. In both the previous (Part 1, Wood) and present studies, using MALL in the form of LINE collaboration for students to re-listen to their conversations has proven to be highly effective for motivating communicative listening proficiency.

This is not to limit MALL to this application alone, but as the viable alternatives have been too few and ineffective so far, this current option must be further considered, tested and verified. The second part of this study would seem to confirm the central area of enquiry of Part 1, namely that: “The photo method, plus the MALL methodology discussed, can succeed in developing English oral proficiency significantly” (Part 1, 2019).

McClung (2019) rightly pointed to the cultural speaking limits of English classes in Japan. Full-time English college students enter university with little or no spoken study background, so they start on the very bottom rung of proficiency. In their 4 years of college, they can expect less than 100 classes of less than 100 minutes each with 30 unmotivated others. Class size, textbook time and various other factors would mean any actual face-to-face conversation time is more like a paltry 10 hours in their 22 years.

According to Cambridge University Language Assessment (Sandoval, 2019) to go up even a single level of proficiency on the 6 level common European Framework of References (CEFR) takes over **200 hours’ expert guidance for a properly motivated student**. The odds of a Japanese student moving even one baby step above the rock bottom rung are thus 20:1 against! The method we describe ensures a text-free talk experience of 100 hours a year and is clearly making a discernible impact on acquiring what for Japanese is the most difficult foreign language of all (Wood, Sept 2019).

Everything ultimately depends on the constraints of the reality that we find ourselves

situated in. While the sad limitations on Japanese students' opportunities to acquire English have not dropped for decades since post-war education permitted its study, researchers and teachers alike owe it to students to make noise and object loudly and often to the obvious contradictions in English education here. Undoubtedly, many if not most other countries where English is taught but not learnt face similar problems.

Earlier we stated that no quantity or quality of MALL can help without the right quantity and quality of capable teaching. Basic needs can't be overstated either, but are often ignored. It's unlikely that administrators forcing decisions affecting students studying English are familiar even with traditional thinking on students' needs, like the "hungers" that Piaget (1964, etc.) listed as fundamental to facilitate learning. Such needs are simple common sense, but every subject has its own additional special requirements. Minimal conversation gains, for example, need at least the elements below:

1. A conducive physical and psychological environment.
2. Goal clarity, including what communication means.
3. Meaningful progress assessment from various perspectives.

To teach dialogue, room size and function seem obvious, but teachers are often assigned poor arrangements, denying sound communication. Administrations fail to see that lecture rooms with awkward furniture layouts make spoken development difficult, on top of the dearth of actual class hours making progress impossible. Students are nervous and conversation is impossible with 30 students in a room bigger than many Japanese houses. Conversation should be face to face and within reasonable proximity, so why would anyone think tongue-tied students can become fluent if all they can see is the back of each other's heads and have to shout to be heard? Rooms allowing students to talk in normal voices with chairs facing in a circle are a priority. If communication isn't respected, it can't begin. Administrations believe English is just another subject. It is the most difficult of all in Japan.

The final word should be given to the students themselves to understand their true feelings. One student candidly said: "I wanted to ask questions by myself, but the teacher prompted me so I couldn't." Students may know better than their teachers that they need to speak more than at present. Another student pointed out: "I enjoyed talking every time and the teacher's explanations, but the room was the wrong size."

Students should immerse themselves in their own dialogues, not teacher talk, so as to become independent speakers. They know instinctively the time allotted in the curriculum is not enough, so want to use every moment to speak. We must respond to students' hopes of having their voices heard in apt environments. This means Japanese teachers should also use English. Yet English majors get only a fraction of their curriculum for their actual major.

To counter this, the first step must be to overhaul the central educational authority, and

fundamentally change an educational ethos of TEFL failure. Only appointing teacher trainers who know what communication really means and can implement better methodologies with qualified motivated teachers, both native and Japanese, can salvage the wreckage of 50 years of irresponsibility. After a 54 year absence, Japan's second Olympics in 2020 can't communicate its international responsibility without immediate action.

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Appendix LINE/E-Mail Survey (Aug 2019; previous results in parentheses)

1. Previous/regular use

1.1 How often do you most use LINE?

(i) a lot 9 (10) (ii) now and then 1 (0) (iii) rarely or never 0 (0)

1.2 Have you ever tried learning English using LINE before?

(i) a lot 1 (1) (ii) now and then 1 (2) (iii) rarely or never 8 (7)

1.3 Have you ever used LINE in any other classes besides English?

(i) a lot 0 (1) (ii) now and then 1 (2) (iii) rarely or never 9 (7)

2. Using LINE for class

2.1 What do you think about using LINE in our class?

(i) good 10 (10) (ii) bad 0 (0) (iii) not good or bad 0 (0)

2.2 If you think it is good, please say why?

convenient 7; useful 2 (4); easy to contact 1. (often use 3)

2. If you think it is bad, please say why? 0 (0)

3. MP3 audio file use

3.1 What do you think of the weekly MP3 audio files?

(i) good 10 (9) (ii) bad 0 (0) (iii) not good or bad 0 (1)

3.2 If you think it is good, please say why?

convenient; easy to remember; helps if absent; easy to check; to learn.

(to listen by oneself 4; easy to listen 4)

3.3 If you think it is not good please say why? 0 (0)

4. LINE vs E-mail messaging

4.1 How often do you check your LINE messages from the teacher?

(i) a lot 10 (8) (ii) now and then 0 (2) (iii) rarely or never 0 (0)

4.2 How often do you check school E-mail messages from the teacher?

(i) a lot 0 (0) (ii) now and then 5 (2) (iii) rarely or never 5 (8)

4.3 Which do you use to check messages from the teacher more?

(i) LINE 8 (10) (ii) the teacher's school e-mail 2 (0) (iii) both the same 0 (0)

5. LINE and E-mail use in general

5.1 How else do you like to use LINE?

to study English for seminar 0 (1)

5.2 Would you prefer to use E-mail to study English?

(i) Yes 1 (0) (ii) No 8 (0) (iii) Don't know 1 (0)

5.3 How else would you like to message the teacher if not LINE?

LINE best because often check. (0)

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