More English, Please

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Teachers of English in Japan typically lament one common problem: It is difficult to get students to speak. More specifically, Japanese students are not likely to initiate discussion, bring up new topics, challenge the instructor, ask questions for clarification, or volunteer answers. Furthermore, they tend to talk only when specifically called on and, even then, only if there is a clear-cut answer (Anderson, 1993). Indeed, in research by Zimbardo, a psychologist specializing in shyness, Japan emerges from the cultures researched as one of two cultures in which shyness is most prevalent (1977, p. 212, as cited in Doyon, 2000). This article briefly describes the sources of this reticence as portrayed in the literature and then offers ways of dealing with it at several levels.

SOURCES OF SILENCE

Everything from Confucianism to the Grammar-Translation method has been cited in the literature pertaining to foreign language learning as a cause of Japanese students' reluctance to speak English.

Many English teachers have intuitively suspected that, within the interval between a teacher's question and the student's answer (when one is produced), the student is translating. Thus, students' excessive reliance on translating is often blamed for some of the silence in the classroom, and, in a chain reaction effect, translating is blamed on teaching methods and teaching methods blamed on the Japanese education

system (Weschler, 1997). A study by Smith (2000) confirms that students are, indeed, translating. His study also reveals that the process of translating may be much more complex than teachers have imagined. Smith shows, via a series of earnest quotations from his students, how the majority of students progress through a complicated system of translating the teacher's question from English into standard Japanese and finally into their own dialect before reversing the process in order to produce an answer. About an utterance thus produced, Smith asks, "Isn't this a big linguistic and emotional step away from the original thought in their beloved wild and woolly dialect?" (p. 42). This emotional distance may be one reason that students are hesitant to speak in class.

Another oft-cited reason for students' reticence, mentioned above, is the Japanese education system. The Japanese education system has typically been lecture-based, with the teacher imparting knowledge to students, while students are expected to passively listen and learn but not speak (Williams, 1994, as cited in Doyon, 2000). English language education within that system has focused on translating, academic reading, and grammar (Torikai, 2000). While these conditions alone might result in a reluctance to speak, Lucas (1984) argues that the causes run deeper than that, from the depths of cultural beliefs and values.

In the same vein, Doyon defines the reticence to speak as shyness, the causes of which he traces to certain aspects of Japanese culture. A characteristic that is said to extend to all vertical relationships in Japanese culture is *amae*, or dependence. Simply put: "the more you foster dependence...the more you foster shyness" (Zimbardo, 1981, p. 59, as cited in Doyon, 2000). The well-known *sempai-kohai* relationship, that of

deference to one's elders and to authorities, also produces shyness in the presence of anyone with higher status, since "one should 'know one's place' and speak, or not speak, accordingly" (Miller, 1995, p. 36). Another aspect of Japanese relationships, *uchi-soto*, or in-group and out-group, elicits reluctance to speak, shyness, formality, and subsequent malaise in the presence of anyone in the out-group. Even classmates and teachers may be perceived as out-group members, according to Miller's (1995) statement that Japanese people tend to interact with a relatively small number of people on a personal level. The importance of avoiding shame and the mandate to never bring shame on the family is a further cause of shyness. Since "any act violating the expectations of... 'important' others might bring on this sense of shame" (Doyon, 2000, p. 14) and since "shame" "can mean anything from not playing well in a little league baseball game to performing poorly in school" (Lucas, 1984, p. 595), the potential for causing shame inhibits the taking of initiative. Furthermore, the Japanese high regard for what is known as "the way" tends to result in shyness in any situation where "the way" is unknown. Doyon explains,

> In many aspects of Japanese culture, especially those having to do with learning or accomplishment, more emphasis is placed on the proper way of doing rather than on attaining a useful or practical result...one must be taught "the way" by a master....and when faced with an unfamiliar situation, many [people] will become immobilized, and experience feelings of shyness, or even panic, having not been shown "the way" (2000, p. 14).

In addition, Doyon joins many other researchers in pointing to "an intense fear of making mistakes" (Doyon, 2000, p. 14) as yet another contributor to Japanese shyness. Finally, Doyon suggests another source of shyness may be the busy pace of Japanese

life, beginning at childhood. Children are so busy that they do not have much time to develop social skills and thus feel shy in interacting with others.

Four further insights into the origins of Japanese students' reluctance to speak in English classes may be gained from Miller's (1995) comparison of Japanese and American cultural communication styles. First, Japanese prefer to disclose less about the "private self" and tend to characterize their communication as reserved, formal, silent, cautious, and evasive – all traits that are instilled by both family and teachers. Americans, on the other hand, prefer moderate to high self-disclosure and self-assertive, informal, talkative, spontaneous, and frank communication. Japanese group-consciousness and consensus also account for an unwillingness to speak up in the classroom. While American students want their opinions to be heard, Japanese students value "holding back ... personal views while sensing and submitting to an emerging group view" (Miller, 1995, p. 35). The two communication styles also differ in their patterns of conversational turn-taking. This explains why Japanese students experience difficulty in discussions in the English classroom. Whereas Americans take turns rapidly, hitting the topic of conversation around quickly, as the ball in a volleyball match, Japanese turn-taking tends to be more orderly and pre-meditated, like the long and predictable turns in a bowling game (Sakamoto & Naotsuka, 1982). Miller additionally indicates that the role of the listener is different in Japanese and Western communication styles. Western verbal interaction assigns the responsibility of communication mainly to the speaker while the listener's job is to let the speaker know whether the message was understandable via feedback that consists of re-stating,

expanding on, and asking questions about the content of the message. In Japanese interaction, however, the listeners are allocated more responsibility: They must "interpret a message for themselves" and "fill in the relationships between ideas when they are not explicitly stated" (Miller, p. 36). This results in less overall verbal response from the listener. Specifically, there tends to be less repetition or re-stating for fear of being impolite, less expansion by the listener on the content of the speaker's message, and more reluctance to ask questions for clarification for fear of revealing one's inability to understand.

Lucas discusses some additional cultural dimensions that contribute to what she refers to as "communication apprehension" among Japanese. In quoting the Japanese sayings "Talkers are not good doers," and "Even a pheasant will not be shot if it keeps quiet," Lucas points out that Japanese people seem to "distrust and dislike...people skilled in oral communication" (1984, p. 595) and seem to traditionally mistrust words. Lucas reports that in communication, Japanese people are inclined to minimize verbal messages and maximize non-verbal signals, to look down on the use of speech to persuade or establish understanding, to seek to completely understand another emotionally rather than to participate in spoken interaction, and to speak indirectly rather than directly. These tendencies all promote quietness rather than verbal expression.

In essence, rooted deeply within Japanese culture is the typically Asian value that "speech is silver; silence is golden" (Lucas, 1984; Torikai, 2000; Nimmannit, 1998). The prized ability to extract messages from a minimum number of verbal cues (Miller,

1995) results in less spoken communication, and, in fact, "the silent Japanese pupil is considered the virtuous one" (Miller, 1995, p. 37). Is it any wonder that students are reluctant to speak up in English class?

SOLUTIONS TO SILENCE

Even when we understand possible reasons for our students' quietness, we are still not happy to let them be silent. We are, after all, language teachers. It is our goal to have the students use the target language in real communication (Day, 1984; Doyon, 2000). Furthermore, the majority of Japanese people themselves consider their shyness to be a problem (Zimbardo, 1977, as cited in Doyon 2000), and, according to Miller (1995), Japanese students prefer communicative classes, where they are expected to talk and actively participate, to classes conducted in the traditional Japanese manner.

Given the complex origins of students' quietness in class, it is hardly surprising to find that a simple cure-all does not exist. While the literature is full of various ideas for trying to get students to talk, no one claims to have found the solution. Based on the research surveyed for this paper, and presented below, it seems that the best tactic would be to create a classroom environment of community and intimacy and therein to engage in activities that stress meaningful communication and elicit personal information. In lessons where more rote practice is necessary, personalization of those exercises is the key. With these guidelines in mind, the following principles, practices, and activities (included in the Appendix) may help to encourage students to use more English in the classroom.

The Principle of Community

Much of the research consulted recommends that the language classroom possess a warm, friendly, relaxed atmosphere, and none would argue against that type of environment. Black (1995) recognizes the need to quickly establish a classroom where students feel comfortable with each other and with the teacher (p. 86). Wing (1982) devotes eight pages of her paper to describing "a classroom atmosphere in which students feel reasonably comfortable about themselves, their relationships with each other and with the teacher" (p. 10). Gahala (1986) advocates a learning environment low in stress, high in sense of belonging, characterized by encouragement and positive reinforcement. Lucas (1984) asserts that "if ESL teachers want their Japanese...students to talk, it is essential to create the acceptable environment and to develop the rapport needed to help students not to be afraid to speak" (p. 595). Doyon proposes that the key to helping Japanese students overcome their shyness is to create a classroom atmosphere of community. Little and Sanders (1987) say it most succinctly in their title, *Community: Prerequisite for communication in language classes.*

In order to help teachers create this type of atmosphere, the researchers offer many suggestions, including the following:

- call on all students, move about in the classroom, give attention to each individual, adjust the pace or level of difficulty to suit students' needs, provide adequate feedback on progress, give interesting presentations, participate in activities with the students (Gahala, 1986)

- display colorful posters, pictures, drawings, and student work in the classroom; bring in realia and props; introduce music and songs (Nimmannit, 1998)

- use relaxation exercises, play background music, use "Find Someone Who" activities (Lucas, 1984)

- explain expectations to the students; send students positive signals that tell them that you care, that you are genuinely interested in what they are saying, and that you truly want them to succeed; arrange the desks in a circle or open horseshoe (Wing, 1982)
- focus on communication rather than on language exercises; use a seating arrangement, such as a circle, that allows eye-contact; use students' names; ask meaningful questions; reduce individual competition among students; use non-graded exercises (Little & Sanders, 1987)

Although the above suggestions definitely contribute to a feeling of classroom community, the bulk of the preceding advice does not seem sufficient to overcome the pervasive silence in the classroom given the deep cultural origins of Japanese students' reluctance to speak. Doyon's (2000) work offers some depth of insight into the creation of such an atmosphere in the classroom. He describes two main domains of interaction in Japanese society: the ritual domain and the intimate domain. Conventional classrooms belong to the ritual domain. Typically, the students desire the approval of their peers and teacher, so they seek to avoid disapproval by practicing formalities, conventional rules, manners, etiquette, highly guarded behavior, and, overall, reticence. Relationships with family, friends, and co-workers belong to the intimate domain. The emotional bond of unity shared among these people allows each person to be relaxed and spontaneous. Doyon asserts that "one of the most powerful things we can do to help our students is to create a classroom atmosphere which is conducive to the intimate domain" (p. 15). This is because "in an intimate situation, a Japanese person is released from cultural or institutional restraints and free to explore the use of the target language" (Williams, 1994, p. 11, as cited in Doyon, 2000, p. 15).

Doyon outlines three approaches to moving the classroom into the intimate domain: encouraging intimacy between the students, removing the "Teacher's Mask," and moving away from the "Evaluational Paradigm." First, in order to foster intimacy between students, Doyon gives the following advice: 1) choose topics that allow students to share their personal experiences such as childhood memories, vacations, and dreams; 2) have students change partners; use pair work, ice-breakers, and first names; and 3) have the students keep and share with classmates journals in which they record their feelings about learning the language. Secondly, Doyon advocates coming out from behind the "Teacher's Mask" as often as possible, both in the classroom and outside. Leaving the "Teacher's Mask" behind involves communicating unity (as opposed to emphasizing the teacher's higher, vertical position) and spontaneity to the students through such signals as change in tone of voice, body language, and conversational style. It involves being friendly with the students, the use of small talk and jokes, engaging students in conversation, and talking with students individually. Doyon's third approach to moving the classroom into the intimate domain has to do with what he calls the "Evaluational Paradigm." Of course, the "Evaluational Paradigm" is firmly in place in the classroom since teachers must usually grade the students. Unfortunately, the knowledge that they are being evaluated tends to exacerbate students' feelings of shyness. The more the teacher can move out of the position of evaluator and moderate the evaluative climate of the classroom, the more intimacy may grow. Rather than either positive or negative evaluation, shy students need the teacher's real interest in them as people. Related to the avoidance of the "Evaluational Paradigm" is the matter

of correcting mistakes. Since correcting mistakes is a form of evaluation, this practice tends to discourage students' communication. Doyon suggests telling the students not to worry about mistakes.

Doyon's advice does seem to include more depth than most. However, it is largely lacking practicality, especially in the points that call for leaving the "Teacher's Mask" behind and moving out of the "Evaluational Paradigm". Doyon introduces these two points and cites a few examples of their application, but offers only a few specific techniques for achieving them. Although beyond the scope of this paper, perhaps Doyon's principles, along with specific techniques described in sources that focus on community building (such as *Quicksilver*, *Silver Bullet*, and *Funn Stuff*) could help a teacher create the desired atmosphere.

Other Principles

Another key and controversial principle involves the use of the target language versus the native language in the classroom. Opinions are sharply divided and disputed in the literature. Naturally, all English teachers agree that English should be used in the classroom to the greatest extent possible (Harbord, 1992; Duff & Polio, 1990), but just what that extent is is a matter of debate. Target-language-only proponents (Bromidge & Burch, 1993; Gahala, 1986; Ishiwata, 1990; Bronner, 2000) argue that if students are to come to recognize the foreign language as a real, legitimate system of communication, they must see it used as such in the classroom. On the other hand, supporters of the use of the native language in the classroom (Weschler, 1997; Smith, 2000; Burden, 2000) point out the various advantages of native language use in

the classroom. These advantages include building rapport with students, saving time, communicating important administrative information, facilitating the learning of the target language, and allowing students to communicate freely. To make an informed decision on which side of the issue to adopt, one would do well to read Harbord's (1992) evaluations of the two arguments. In great detail, Harbord explores the possibilities and results of native language versus target language use in the classroom. He concludes that where the native language is used for the purposes of saving time, making life easier for students or teachers, or building rapport (the most common reasons cited by teachers), its use is suspect because it results in four phenomena that undermine the teaching of a language: 1) teachers and students feel that no real understanding can occur without translation into the native language, 2) differences in form, semantics, and pragmatics are minimized, resulting in "crude and inaccurate translation" (p. 351), 3) students use the native language to communicate even messages that they are well able to communicate in the target language, and 4) students fail to perceive the importance of using English for classroom activities. On the other hand, Harbord finds the use of the native language justifiable when the native language is used to

> provoke discussion and speculation, to develop clarity and flexibility of thinking, and to help us increase our own and our students' awareness of the inevitable interaction between the mother tongue and the target language that occurs during any type of language acquisition (p. 355).

The position that individual teachers take on the issue of native language use in the classroom will, of course, influence their choices of the further principles, practices, and activities discussed below.

A further principle is put forth by several researchers (Chase, 1984; Gahala, 1982; Duff & Polio, 1990; Bromidge & Burch, 1993) who emphasize the necessity of introducing, on the very first day of class, the policy of the exclusive use of the target language in class. According to Duff and Polio's study, reducing the classroom use of the native language at a later time proves to be very difficult. From the opposite point of view, Weschler (1997) argues that insisting on the use of only English alienates the students from the teacher and from the target language by being perceived by students as a rejection of their language and of themselves.

Practices

Throughout the literature are many suggestions of classroom practices to adopt in order to encourage students to use English more. A discussion of some of these practices follows.

Meaningful Communication

One suggestion is that teachers give students as many opportunities as possible for real communication. Wing (1982) raises two significant questions regarding the type of communication happening in classrooms: Are students only speaking, or are they really talking? Are students merely hearing, or are they actually listening? The ultimate goal of language teaching, says Wing, "is to teach students to talk. To talk means to listen and say in a communicative interaction with other people" (p. 6). However, she goes on to observe that "while a great deal of *speaking* practice generally occurs in the foreign language classroom, considerably less *talking* practice occurs" (p. 7). Students "speak" when they produce target language sounds, forms, patterns, oral

drills, sentences, exercise, and dialogs. Students "talk" when they send and receive meaningful messages. Wing urges teachers to

> increase talk in the sense of listening and saying: talk in the sense of sending and receiving messages that have real significance for the students. Talk that is meaningful and appropriate to specific situations. Talk that is initiated and maintained by the students themselves with progressively less assistance and less interference by the teacher. Talk in which the students take the responsibility for asking questions, providing answer, and reacting to what other students have said (p. 7).

Polio and Duff (1994) reiterate Wing's concern, stating that the tendency in foreign language classrooms is that the native language is used for meaningful communication, while the target language is relegated to use in mechanical exercises and drills. They believe that a large part of the reason that many foreign language students do not become fluent is because they are not involved in meaningful communication in the classroom.

Several practices may work to promote meaningful communication in the target language within the classroom. Personalizing activities seems to be the key here. When students can "request or share facts about themselves or their friends, request or express personal concerns, share or elicit knowledge, opinions, judgments, or feelings and remember or restate the personal remarks of other members of the class" (Chase, 1984, p. 7, 8), then the activities become meaningful. Helgesen (2000) recommends that not only speaking activities, but also bookwork and listening be personalized so that students can include their own ideas and experiences. Polio and Duff (1994) suggest that teachers ask students "real questions" as opposed to "display questions." A display question is one to which the teacher already knows the answer but asks for purposes of

checking the correctness of the students' answers. For example, "What is the main idea of this paragraph?" serves only the purpose of checking the students' accurate comprehension. Real questions, on the other hand, request information of the students, which the teacher does not yet know. A question such as, "What's your opinion on this point?" elicits information previously unknown by the teacher. Similarly, Little and Sanders (1987) encourage teachers to ask "meaningful questions," the answers to which will reveal some personal information about the speaker, which, in turn, will allow classmates to find more common ground, providing more fuel for meaningful communication. According to Lucas (1984), students who are reluctant to participate are more likely to speak up in order to communicate their own beliefs or opinions or in order to talk about something that is important to them. Therefore, Lucas recommends that teachers "find the controversial issues in whatever subject is being taught" (p. 597) in order to give students opportunities to voice their beliefs and opinions. Other practices that may encourage meaningful communication are spending time talking one-on-one with students (Doyon, 2000; Bronner, 2000), engaging students in real conversation (Doyon, 2000), and sharing information about yourself with the students.

Adapting to the Culture

Many researchers encourage EFL teachers to be open and able to adapt somewhat to the culture of the students. Adapting to the culture can take many forms. Bronner (2000) contends that while adapting to Japanese culture may entail giving up a Western-style communicative approach, it does not necessarily mean embracing the grammar-translation that has been traditionally used in Japanese English classes.

Instead, he suggests the TIE (Think in English) approach, one that features a structured system that still offers choices to the students. This approach does away with the silence in the classroom by conducting its communication time one-on-one and focuses on encouraging the learner through many small successes—a system that seems to suit the Japanese context wonderfully. However, due to curriculum restraints and the fact that they do have classes—not individuals—to teach, most teachers cannot so completely adapt to the students' culture in the way that Bronner suggests. Even so, there are still various ways of adapting available to classroom teachers.

Weschler (1997) writes in detail about how to design a course that uses, as a starting point, the grammar-translation method that Japanese students are so accustomed to, but with a significant and fundamental change. His approach, the "Functional-Translation" method, focuses on helping students understand and communicate meaning, making "unashamed use of the student's first language in accomplishing that goal" (p. 98). Instead of using a word-for-word grammar-translation technique applied to written texts, though, in the Functional-Translation approach, students translate their own thoughts function-by-function into idiomatic utterances used in a communicative setting.

Short of an all-encompassing course design, there are other, simpler, ways to adapt to the culture of the students. For example, rather than asking a question of the whole class and waiting to see if anyone will answer, both Miller (1995) and Nimmannit (1998) recommend that the teacher tap into the group-consciousness of Japanese students by establishing a system for calling on each student in turn to answer

questions throughout the class period. Although each student will have to answer individually, there is still a sense of "group" because everyone in the class must eventually answer. In a similar appeal to group-consciousness, teachers may ask a question to the whole class, instruct the students to "tell your answer to a neighbor," and then ask the class again. The students are likely to answer because they have had a chance to confirm the "group answer" (M. Bess, personal communication, 2000).

Since Japanese students often elect not to speak up even when they have something to say, Miller (1995) suggests that teachers become aware of students' non-verbal facial expressions and invite them to share their thoughts when their body language suggests that they may wish to speak. Anderson (1993, p. 106) concurs.

Strategize

One way of building students' strategies for more active communication is by regularly discussing and demonstrating in class the differences between Japanese and Western communication styles. For example, discussing their differing feelings about silence may be beneficial (Miller, 1995).

Providing students with and frequently drilling them in the use of standard "fillers" in conversation is another strategy for increased communication. Miller (1995) suggests phrases as "I don't know," "I couldn't catch that," and "I don't know the answer." Lucas (1984) recommends gambits such as, "Really?" "No kidding," "That's fantastic," "In other words...," and "You mean...."

Teaching students how to use circumlocution for unknown words will help prevent relapses into the native language (Chase, 1984). Related to this is the Think in

English technique (Ishiwata, 1990) of "speaking beyond the patterns." Given one sentence, students should practice expressing the same thought with different words. For example, if the sentence is "I am too busy to go out with you today," students may be instructed to communicate the same message with four different sentences, beginning with the words "you," "there," "today," and "tomorrow." This may yield sentences such as

> "You had better go alone because I am busy today."; "There are too many things I must do today. Please go out without me"; "Today is not a very good day for me to go out..."; "Tomorrow I can, but not today" (Ishiwata, 1990, p. 33).

Evaluation

It may not be possible to avoid evaluating students as Doyon (2000) would like, since tests are usually expected and even required in university classes. However, modifying the testing procedures may permit the teacher to be regarded more as a non-evaluative acceptor. Lore-Lawson (1993) suggests reading through test directions with students, giving students two cards with which to cover other sections of the test to aid in concentration, and not stapling tests together before they are given so that students can easily use spelling or information in one part to help them with another part. She regularly includes an extra-credit question that asks students to list things they have learned that did not appear on the test. She also allows any student to retake a test and then grades it as the average of both scores. Likewise, Diaz (1999) advocates giving students10minutes on the day after a test to change or add to any of their test answers.

She also recommends discussing test results with students and allowing them to retake the test for 80 percent if they are not satisfied with their scores.

Mistakes

Miller (1995) and Doyon (2000) urge teachers to insist that students not worry about mistakes when speaking, and other researchers advise teachers to refrain from correcting those errors themselves (Chase, 1984, p. 12; Bradley, 1986; Wing, 1982, p. 14).

Pair work

A basic and easily-implemented practice for encouraging more English is to structure classroom activities so that work done in pairs predominates. The importance of focusing on pair work is reiterated by many researchers (Doyon, 2000; Anderson, 1993; Gahala, 1986; Helgesen, 2000). Nimmannit (1998), in particular, points out the benefit of having Asian students work in pairs: "students feel more secure working in pairs or in groups, since they will not be the only ones to shoulder the blame or to lose face if they answer incorrectly" (p. 38).

"Tricks" for More English

Helgesen (1993) offers several techniques to encourage students to stay in English. He suggests that when playing games, students use small objects such as toothpicks or poker chips as counters for each English utterance. Students who use Japanese forfeit a counter and the associated point. Another idea is to establish a "Japanese Corner" as a physical place in the classroom where students can go when

they need to speak Japanese. A similar technique is to have students stand up any time they use Japanese. Helgesen also suggests that students set a goal for the percentage of English they will use in a given activity and then estimate their actual percentage after the activity is finished. Still another technique offered by Helgesen (2000) is to assign one student in each group to be the monitor. The monitor draws a line down the middle of a paper, designating one side the "English" side and the other the "Japanese" side. Every time any group member says anything, the utterance is tallied on the appropriate side of the paper. Helgesen cautions teachers not to collect the papers at the end of the activity but to encourage the groups to compare their results.

CONCLUSION

Although the silence of students that stymies many non-Japanese teachers teaching English in Japan seems to be rooted in sub-conscious and deep values of the Japanese culture, there are ways to work around and with those cultural phenomena in order to achieve a classroom in which Japanese students will participate in the target language. Researchers indicate that when an "intimate" community is established in the classroom and is accompanied by certain classroom practices on the part of the teacher, students will feel free to communicate in English, especially when cooperating in meaningful exchanges. This paper has presented various principles and practices to consider in the attempt to create participation among students, and, in the Appendix, offers various activities that may encourage active participation in the target language.

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Appendix

Activities to Encourage More English

Within the description of activities listed here, reference has been made back to the source of silence or to the principle governing the solution whenever possible. Activities are listed in no particular order.

Circumlocution

To teach students the strategy of circumlocution, Chase (1984) suggests an activity called "Describe the Object and Discover the Secret Word." Divide the students into small groups. Give each a labeled picture of an object that must be described to the group without saying its name. Once all the pictures have been guessed, students use the first letter from the name of each object to spell out the secret word.

Bilingual Dialogs

Weschler (1997) uses this activity as part of his Function-Translation approach. In pairs, one student receives a dialog in English while the other student receives an equivalent dialog in Japanese. Students have five minutes to translate their individual dialogs into the other language. Students then compare their translations with the original dialogs in each language, circle discrepancies, write the original above their own translation, and finally, act out the dialog in English. This exercise shows that a single function may be expressed through many forms.

Lost in Translation

For another Functional-Translation activity described by Weschler (1997), have students sit in a circle and count off. Give even-numbered students a paper with an English sentence written across the top; give odd-numbered students a paper with an unrelated Japanese sentence. Have students read their sentences, write the translation on the next line, fold down the top of the paper so that only the translation shows, and pass it to the student on the right. The student on the right then attempts to translate it back into its original language, folds the top down, and passes it to the right to a third student. The translations continue until the sentence has been translated alternately between English and Japanese six or seven times. The last student to translate unfolds the paper and reads it out loud to the class, from the top down. The fact that the original meaning of the sentence has gotten lost in the translation is a revelation to students.

The Dumb Interpreter

Four students sit facing each other in a square. Give Student A (the Japanese Person) the Japanese half of a dialog, Student B (the Native English Speaker) the English half, Student C (the Dumb Interpreter) nothing at all, and Student D (the Know-it-all) both halves. The Japanese Person then tries to communicate his lines, in English, to the Native English Speaker, while the Dumb Interpreter tries to correct him. The Know-it-all's role is to provide everyone with definitive corrections (Weschler, 1997).

(Note: In view of other recommendations from the literature, it might be more constructive to leave the word "Dumb" out of this activity.)

Wearing Masks

Mayer describes an activity designed to help shy students:

> For homework, students make a mask that will cover their face. In class, students put on the masks and move about the room talking with several partners. After10minutes they return to their places and write a reflection on how they felt wearing the mask and how this exercise is connected with the speaking of English. Next, groups of four share experiences. Finally, the teacher explains the differences between cultural modesty, real shyness, and natural hesitation. Most of the students come to realize that they can speak English if they feel they are unknown and are not being judged (1999, p. 45).

Conversation Chain

Train students in using "5 W's and an H" (who, what, where, when, why, and how), in asking follow-up questions, in offering extra information, and in the tendency of conversation to naturally change topics. Create a series of lists of 10 questions each, either unrelated or theme-based, and give one list to half the students in the class. Have students sit, facing a partner, with all the Partners A in one line and all the Partners B in a second line. Partners greet each other and then begin talking about the questions, using the strategies in which they have been trained. As the first pair finishes talking about the list of questions, have students change partners by sending the first student in the Partner A line to the end of the same line, while all the other Partners A move up one place. Students then start over on the same list of questions (Bess, 1998).

QERF(S)

QERF(S) (Question-Echo-Response-Follow-up-Summarize) is similar to Conversation Chain in that it trains students in conversation strategies. Specifically, QERF(S) strategies are Questions used to open conversation topics; Echoing, that is, one speaker repeating the last part of the previous speaker's utterance in order to show interest and to encourage the latter to say more; Reacting according to whether the previous utterance was good news ("Really? That's great / wonderful / exciting") or bad news ("Oh no," "That's too bad," and "I'm sorry."); Follow-up questions, which are always about the same topic as the first question; and Summarizing, where the students confirm their understanding of their partner's message with phrases such as "(So) it sounds like...." and "Do you mean....?" Have students use these strategies in groups of three, with two of them conversing and the other serving as a helper. Either of the speakers may turn to the third member to get help in Japanese, but the two speakers must speak only English between themselves (Hansford, 2000).

Student Presentations

Lore-Lawson (1993) states that having students give presentations and speeches in the target language builds their self-confidence. In her context, that of teaching a foreign language to American students, this seems plausible. Although it may seem unlikely to work in an English language classroom in Japan, Miller (1995) makes the same suggestion, in a Japanese context. He recommends that students give short

presentations on a rotating and scheduled basis so that students know when their turn is and can prepare for the speech.

Tell and Show

Both members in a pair of partners have identical sets of "equipment"—toy soldiers, houses, trees, etc., or slips of paper with pictures or designs. A partition is placed between the two partners, or they are seated back-to-back so that they cannot see each other's equipment. While one partner arranges his equipment, he explains the arrangement to the second partner who attempts to arrange her equipment in the same pattern. When finished, the partners compare their arrangements (adapted from Wing, 1982).

Dialog Game

Wing (1982) describes an activity that could be used to encourage students to think about the meaning of a textbook dialog rather than just parroting the lines. Give Student A half the dialog and Student B the other half, but along with the lines from the original dialogs, include distracters from which the partners must choose their next lines. For example, Student A's first sentence is "Could I please speak to Harry?" and Student B must choose between "Oh, hi Harry" or "I'm sorry, but Harry's not here" for the response. For beginning students, the alternatives should consist of the exact wording of the dialog lines, while more advanced students could be given either indirect wording or cues.

To Tell the Truth

Vary the Monday morning reports about the weekend by having three students leave the room. They decide which two will tell the truth about their weekend activities and which one will create a fictional story. The three then return to the classroom, tell their stories, and the class must vote on who is telling the truth and who isn't (Lore-Lawson, 1993).

Timed Conversations

Placing a time limit on a conversation often encourages students to stay in English. As an occasional activity, have students stand in two lines, facing a partner. Have partners shake hands and then talk on a specific topic – their weekend, their favorite store, their family – for a set amount of time, depending on the students' level, before changing partners and beginning again. As a variation on this, the amount of time allowed can be reduced by 10 seconds for each new partner, thus encouraging more fluent speech (Personal communication, M. Bess, 2000). Kenny and Woo have built a whole textbook (*Nice Talking with You,* 2000) around the concept of using timed conversations to promote more English in the classroom, with each chapter introducing new conversational strategies, phrases, and topics and culminating in a series of timed conversations with different partners.

Self-conversations

Although this activity may be more suitably used as homework rather than as class work, Ishiwata (1990) recommends that students talk to themselves in the target language. Starting with any object within sight, the student can create a monologue:

"This is a ball-point pen. I bought it for a hundred yen. It writes well. I have a fountain pen. It's a very special pen because a friend gave it to me..." (p. 32). Or, beginning with any topic of interest, students can have imaginary conversations in their heads:

I:	Do you see the girl over there?
Friend:	Yes.
I:	Isn't she pretty?
Friend:	Yes, do you know her?
I:	No, I don't. But I wish I did... (p. 32).

Problem-solving

Although without much detail, some researchers posit that activities involving problem solving will promote target language communication in the classroom. Lucas (1984) suggests problems such as this: "You are lost in the jungle. If you could have any ten things in the world, what would you pick and why?" (p. 597). Nimmannit (1998) proposes adapting a self-introduction activity into one in which the listeners in the group use the information given in the introduction to imagine what kind of products or services a company could offer to especially suit the speaker. Ishiwata (1990) offers the following problem to be solved:

I am interested in the girl at the next desk. I think she likes me, too. But they have a silly rule at our company that an employee must not marry another employee.

1. Should I turn my interest elsewhere?
2. Should I propose to her anyway, and if she accepts, she could quit?
3. Should I ask her to work at some other company after we get married? (p. 31).