

The Present Conditions and Problems of English Language Teaching in the Junior College

Summary

Current Situations Surrounding English Education in Japan

— An Action Plan to Cultivate “Japanese with English Abilities” —

Yasuyuki SHIMIZU

In 2003, The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology created an action plan to cultivate “Japanese with English Abilities”, and it is now undertaking an overall reform of English education at the primary school to university level. The main objective of the plan is that junior and senior high school graduates have English skills required of all Japanese, and that college graduates be able to use English in their work. The plan also specifies English skills required of English teachers of junior and senior high schools. The ministry places emphasis on English education in the primary school and is considering the feasibility of teaching English as a required subject in the future. The ministry is also trying to encourage schools across the country to learn from the experiences of pilot schools such as Super English Language High School (SELHi). In addition, the ministry is considering other plans including an increase of ALT and the training of English teachers.

The ministry set the national goal of encouraging Japanese to have a practical command of English partly because many people believe that it is necessary to do so in a globalized social environment. However, there are some problems with the action plan. First, the plan was made because of external pressures from business and other circles rather than pedagogical necessities. Secondly, the government sees some of their policies as established facts without first having sufficient discussion on their validity. Thirdly, the plan is now being forcibly put into practice without national consensus as to the way it is implemented.

In order to make the reform successful, the government needs to assure that all Japanese be able to make a choice based on their will to learn. The reform will not succeed if what the government thinks is important does not reflect what the Japanese public think is important. The government should have sufficient discussion to reach a national consensus. It is incumbent on the Japanese government to show convincing reasons for the reform ; otherwise, the reform might not only fail but also create serious concerns.

The Status of English and English Teaching in Japan

Yoshiaki TAKANO

This paper aims to consider in great detail how English is best taught and learned in Japan. Many critics have criticized the teaching of English in Japan without giving enough thought to the status and role of English there or to the critical period for language acquisition. However, as English in Japan is not a native or second language but a foreign language, which is usually taught only in a classroom, the amount of time spent on teaching the language is very limited, and student motivation tends to be low. Moreover, since Japanese students generally begin to study English after they enter a junior high school when the critical period for language acquisition is almost over, it requires great conscious effort for them to learn the international language. Under these circumstances, the best way of teaching English in Japan is to make students acquire adequate reading ability, first of all, by teaching them as large a vocabulary and as much grammatical knowledge as possible while exposing them to as many reading materials as possible. The language thus acquired can then be directed to writing, listening to, and speaking English, when necessary, by a short period of intensive training.

English Education Revisited

— From the Perspective of 1H5W —

Yutaka KUROIWA

English education is a controversial issue in Japan. Many argue that English education in Japan is not effective since it has failed again and again in developing a practical command of English. In order to identify the nature of the problem, it may be insufficient to analyze English education in Japan merely from the viewpoint of TESOL. It seems that we also need to see it in a wider social perspective. In this paper, I discuss English education in Japan from the perspectives of How, Why, Who, and What as part of an attempt to analyze it in the framework of 1H5W. First, I address the issues related to “How”, reviewing teaching methods that have been employed in Japan. I also discuss how we might effectively use different kinds of methods. Secondly, I address the issues of “Why”, to consider the various kinds of reasons Japanese learners study English. Thirdly, I review two major controversies on English education from the perspectives of “Who” and “How”. Finally, from the viewpoint of “What”, I discuss the importance of content in English education, referring to the case of a junior college in Osaka.

Between Curriculum and Evaluation

— Theories and a Case Study —

Shinichi MATSUMURA

Curriculum and evaluation are familiar words for teachers, but, when it comes to what they mean, there are always discrepancies. That is mainly because they are multifaceted concepts, the formation of which is deeply affected by the changes of pedagogic trends and educational policies.

Researchers have developed elaborate theories and methodologies about language teaching and testing, but if those theories are not accessible to ordinary language teachers, we should regard them esoteric, impracticable and useless. The main purpose of this paper is to trace the changes and varieties of those theories of language teaching and testing and, by doing so, to provide a very quick overview and make them accessible to non-specialist language teachers.

Another purpose is to consider how we can evaluate our own evaluation: as an attempt at assessing assessment, a brief analysis is offered of the test questions that were actually given to students in English language courses of Aoyama Gakuin Women's Junior College. Interestingly, the style of test questions seems to reflect the teaching style of each teacher/test-maker. A suggestion is made to organize a board to evaluate actual examinations given at school. It may also lead to the improvement of curriculum, correspondent with students' needs.

English Language Education Methods of Using a Computer Environment and Network Technology

Yutaka MIYAJI

This paper proposes English language education methods of using using a computer environment and network technology in higher education institutes. Cases of on-site computer environment and network technology usage in English language education were surveyed first. We selected one of those cases based on its practicality.

Christianity and Culture IV

Summary

Cosmic Order in the Educational Thought of M. Montessori

Koichiro MAENOSONO

“Cosmic order” is one of the most important concepts in the education theory of M. Montessori. The principles of Montessori’s method are established on the fundamental concept of “Cosmic order”, upon which her “cosmic education” is developed.

This paper focuses on M. Montessori’s thought on “Cosmic order”.

L’Affaire de Moléry et les Eglises Réformées de la France

Masashi ISHIBIKI

En 1562, tandis que les Eglises réformées se familialisent avec le système presbytéro-synodal qu’elles ont adopté trois ans plus tôt, Morély publie son “Traité de la discipline et police chrétienne” qui déclenche une importante controverse ecclésiologique: c’est sur la question de savoir qui était censé exercer le pouvoir spirituel que les vues de Morély différaient le plus de celle des dirigeants des Eglises réformées. Pour Morély, ces fonctions étaient de la compétence de l’assemblée des fidèles, et non du seul Consistoire. Le Consistoire était seulement chargé de préparer le travail de l’assemblée et d’en exécuter les décisions. Morély pense soumettre ses théories au synode national d’Orléans. Mais la conjoncture politique néfaste ainsi que la présence de Chandieu et Bèze vont amener la condamnation du “Traité”. Condamné lui-même comme schismatique à Genève, Morély se retire en France et continue à prôner ses idées. Malgré ses condamnations répétés à plusieurs synods suivants, il a toujours trouvé des supporters fervents, surtout parmi les personnages de haut rang. Nous analyserons pourquoi ses idées ont obtenu du succès chez certains et pourquoi elles ont suscité autant de colère chez les dirigeants des Eglises réformées.

Encounter with Transcendence

— On “Entendimento” (Superior Intellect) —

Noriko HASHIMOTO

The author focuses on the term “Entendimento” (Superior Intellect) in the “Japanese Catechism” which the Jesuit Alessandro Valignano lectured on regarding Christianity to young Japanese religious students who were to be leaders in the Seminario in the year 1581. This document was discovered accidentally under a folding screen in the Biblioteca Pública de Evora. Under a traditional Japanese screen someone put pages of notes for supporting the screen. Fortunately the document was kept. The interest of the author is how to discuss the matter of human ability such as Superior Intellect among those beginning in Christianity. By interpreting the text, the author makes clear the terms such as reason, concepts and intellect. These terms are evidence of the introduction of occidental philosophical thought to Japan. As a result, Superior Intellect is suggested as a light over the level of reason and as the topos of Encounter with a Transcendence—God.

Contemporary Thomists such as Jacques Maritain, stress the importance of Superior Intellect for making such an encounter by grasping the substance and essence of the Truth.

Notes on the *Conférences* of 1667 in the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture

Yoshiki ONO

It was on the 7th of May 1667 that Charles Le Brun, one of the most important pilots of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, gave the first memorable *Conférence* in the *cabinet des tableaux du Roy*. The other six were continued on the first Saturday of each month of the year, and the whole of them were published in 1668 with the title of *Conférences de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture pendant l'année 1667* by André Félibien, the royal historiographer of the time. We can appreciate through them what the leaders of that institution thought and aimed at. They made concrete an ideal representation by taking notice of the exemplary parts of the works chosen, and most importantly, they had no idea of doctrinism at the beginning of the

establishment of the Academy. For example, the choice artists brought up for discussion permits us to realize clearly enough how liberal ideals spread among the members. The sixth *Conférence*, taken by Le Brun on Poussin's the *Israelites Gathering the Manna*, seems to me the most important and interesting of the seven *Conférences* by his shrewd remark on the distinction of the characteristics of visual and literary art. The doctrine of classicism of French painting was given shape little by little in the course of *Conférences*.

Religious Education of an Infant

Hitoshi ASAMI

This article presents the results of a questionnaire conducted in a Christian Kindergarten.

The questionnaire surveyed 37 Kindertgartens, and the main results are as follows;

- 1) There are comparatively few child minders in Christian Kindertgartens who are Christians.
- 2) Non-Christian teachers have poor understanding of the educational content presented in Christian Kindertgartens.
- 3) Future trends suggest that workshops designed to assist teachers with curriculum content will be necessary.
- 4) The length of church service is unsuitably long given the age of children.
- 5) Few Kindertgarteners in Christian Kindertgartens come from Christian homes.

The above results suggest that Christian Kindertgartens face a number of issues in conveying the benefits of Christian education to children at this age.

Lecture

Child Studies and the History of Adult-Child Relationship

Yasuto MIYAZAWA

Report

New Trend of Women's Colleges in the United States

— Importance of Core Program —

Makoto KAWAMI

This is the report of a visit to two women's colleges in the summer of 2004. First, we visited Spelman College, a college for black women in Atlanta. "African Diaspora and the World" is the central core requirement in its curriculum. This is a two-semester course for eight credits. Its purpose is to construct students' identities as black women and to build them into leaders for social reform who can bring about a cultural transformation for alternative peacemaking. Second, we visited Pine Manor College in Boston. "Portfolio Program" is the core of the curriculum throughout four years. It is unique in crossing boundaries among professors, staff, students and community. Students create their own "artifacts" addressing the "Outcomes." Goals which are settled as outcomes by the program are multiple, but all of them connect with "Inclusive Leadership and Social Responsibility," which is the ethos of alternative human relationships and the basis of an alternative intellectual system. In a word, the new trend of women's colleges in the United States is the "core program" by which curriculum is united organically. The core programs we researched represent an ambitious attempt to educate students to become persons with alternative wisdom and ability to construct the world of the 21st century. If we are to give contemporary liberal arts education, that is, humanistic education in the 21st century, we should seriously study women's colleges in the United States.