

English Communication Seminar II

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1. Overview of this Class

The class was fundamentally open to the freshmen who belong to the English Language Education Department and finished taking the credits of English Conversation I and English Colloquial Expressions in the first semester. All the activities of the class were held by small groups and given a time limitation, and each student was instructed extremely individually and courteously. On the last day, they had to take a final examination so as to promote the students' reviews and confirm their degree of achievements. The evaluations were done by the performances of daily activities and the scores of final examination.

1.1 Self-Introduction

All the students were required to introduce themselves, standing in front of the other students and using the blackboard. This is a primary exercise of public speaking, so they have to pay attention to not only pronunciation, intonation, stress, accent, vocabulary, grammar, but also, gestures, facial expressions, eye contacts, voice controls so as to attract and persuade the audience as much as they could. This activity made it possible for the freshmen to know each classmate very well and for the following various kinds of activities to advance smoothly.

1.2 Placement Test

A placement test was given to the students in order to grasp each person's English language level and it was the past examination of STEP which consisted of vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing and listening. According to the performances of this test, the students were divided into three groups whose average scores were almost the same. These fixed groups cooperated with each member and achieved the following many activities so as to win each game and get as much points as possible.

1.3 Filling the Blanks in Listening

The instructor read out the sentences with some blanks, and the students guessed

the words and phrases as the best answers to fill in the blanks and respond them as quickly as they could. When the response of a student was correct, a group to which s/he belonged got some points. Finally the group which got the highest scores was announced to all as a winner.

1.4 Word Definitions

Each student stood in the front of the audience and received a card on which was written one word. S/he considered the meaning of the word and explained it so that the other students could make them understood. They guessed what the word is on the card held in the student's hand and responded it as soon as they thought of it one after another. When the response of a student was correct, a group to which s/he belonged got some points, and the student switched to the next student. If the student didn't know the word or couldn't explain it adequately, the instructor gave another word to him/her. At last the group which got the highest scores won the game.

1.5 Picturesque Quizzes

Two students stood in front of the blackboard, and the other members of each group to which s/he belonged received a picture from the instructor. The members did their best to describe the details of the picture exactly and directed him/her by giving a lot of information on the picture. The representative student made an effort to complete the picture on the blackboard, listening carefully to these hints from the members and repeating his/her quick drawing and erasing. When the time was up, each member of the third group commented by comparing the two pictures, and judged which one was closer to the original picture. The group whose picture was chosen by it won the game finally.

1.6 Debates

Each group decided the role of members of constructive speech, rebuttal speech and summary speech, and debate with the other group as an affirmative side or negative side about a theme which was given by the

instructor, for example, “English language education should start from primary school.”, “Foreign laborers have to be limited.”, “School uniforms are necessary for students.”, and so on. All the speakers were required to make a speech logically utilizing materials on the topic, accurately with attention to grammar and vocabulary, and fluently without reading out papers. The third group played a role of judge of which group’s speeches were more excellent, subjective and persuasive as a result. The group who was chosen by it won the debate finally.

2. Evaluations of the Class

A Questionnaire to the class was given to all the students on the last day by the forms of five-point scales and free descriptions.

2.1 Five-Pont Scales

Each item of the questionnaire was evaluated by five-point scales of 5(Strongly agree), 4(Agree), 3(Neither agree nor disagree), 2(Disagree), and 1(Strongly disagree). The results of the questionnaire are shown below.

- (1) I always attended the classes.
5: 100%, 4: 0%, 3: 0%, 2: 0%, 1: 0%
- (2) The level of the class fitted mine.
5: 20%, 4: 30%, 3:20%, 2: 10%, 1: 0%
- (3) The contents of the class were interesting.
5: 60%, 4: 20%, 3: 20%, 2: 0%, 1: 0%
- (4) The explanations of the class were easy to understand.
5: 40%, 4: 50%, 3: 10%, 2: 0%, 1: 0%
- (5) I communicated with the instructor positively.
5: 20%, 4: 60%, 3: 20%, 2: 0%, 1: 0%
- (6) I always achieved the preparations and reviews of the classes.
5: 40%, 4: 30%, 3: 20%, 2: 10%, 1: 0%
- (7) Opportunity to ask some questions was given enough.
5: 70%, 4: 20%, 3:10%, 2: 0%, 1: 0%
- (8) My motivation to learn English conversation was promoted through the class.
5: 50%, 4: 50%, 3: 0%, 2: 0%, 1: 0%

2.2 Free Descriptions

All the students wrote their impressions and opinions on the class freely. The main descriptions are shown below.

I was so glad that at this early stage the instructor pointed out my mistakes which I didn’t notice by myself. I want to make an effort and catch up with the students who majors in English language education. I realized again that even if I had a definite opinion in my mind, it was so difficult to change its Japanese to English. I was embarrassed by knowing how low the level of my English speaking ability was. It was because I had so far studied only English reading and writing. I want to begin possible self-study in daily life to improve my competence of speaking from now on.

Thank you very much for giving opportunities to reconsider my attitude to English language learning. The activity of word definitions was very significant for me. I had a chance to grasp the real meanings of words. I could understand the subtle differences of word meanings and word usages by investigating the definitions of synonyms of words which were treated in the class. I want to improve the style of my English learning from now on, utilizing what I studied through the class.

It was very helpful to study English language that all the participants used only English during all the classes. It developed my daily conversation skills. Moreover, I could enjoy learning many terms in the quizzes and debates, though we don’t use such words in daily conversation. It was the differences between American English and British English that I was most interested in. In the beginning, I couldn’t understand that though they have the same meanings, different words are used, however, I came to want to learn about these kinds of words more and more.