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CONTRASTIVE AND ERROR ANALYSIS BASED TEACHING STRATEGIES

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Significance of the Problem

“When I learned English in high school, I learned only grammar. Japanese teacher taught me a lot of grammar. I was getting hate English at that time. I thought Japanese student worry about grammar .”

These statements extracted from Japanese learners' writing not only manifest their errors, but they also reflect their attitude toward grammar. However, they do not inform us about the source of errors, neither do they give any explicit indication why the learners form such a common negative opinion.

In dealing with learners' errors, one teacher may suggest correcting them as soon as they appear, another might emphasize ignoring them, and another would say to find ways to help learners on the basis of these errors. The first two suggestions may lead to a debate which appears unlikely to help learners in learning grammar in those countries that pay considerable attention to this problematic aspect of language teaching.

An EFL teacher accustomed to English education in Japan would be fully aware of how essential 'grammar knowledge' is for a Japanese learner and how grammar has been (and is still being) taught and learned in Japanese schools. Thompson (1995) describing the situation pointed out that

The traditional Japanese regard for authority and formality is in tune with teacher-dominated lessons where much heed is paid to the 'correct' answer, learning of grammar rules and item-by-item (rather than contextualised) vocabulary. (223)

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More recent studies have reported that “. . . English language instruction in high schools in Japan has largely been and still is dominated by *yakudouku*, a non-oral approach to foreign language instruction thought to be related to grammar/translation. . .” (Gorsuch 1998: 7); and “. . . rote learning and memorization in Japanese schools.” (Susser 1998: 55).

Despite so much emphasis on grammatical instructions in such classrooms, the learners’ progress seem to be almost negligible if seen at a global level. For instance, Loughheed (1992: 2), from a reliable report on TOEFL scores of speakers of nineteen different first languages, states that grammar was among the areas statistically proved weakest for Japanese learners.

1.2 Objectives of the Paper

In view of the preceding discussion, this paper attempts

- [a] to identify and analyze two error patterns in written texts of upper-basic Japanese learners, in an EFL context. One pattern is believed to have originated in the Japanese language and the other is believed to be derived from general misuse or overgeneralisation of learning strategies; and
 - [b] to devise teaching procedures to help the students deal with these patterns.
- (Willis 1997: 163, #5)

The report will first, provide information on the background of the problem through a literature review; next, identify and analyze the students’ errors; then, describe the steps employed in designing teaching procedures; and last, discuss the outcomes of the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Error analysis

Error analysis, offered as an alternative to *Contrastive Analysis*, has its value in the classroom research. Whereas contrastive analysis, which may be least predictive at the

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syntactic level and at early stages of language learning (Brown 1994: 214), allows for prediction of the difficulties involved in acquiring a second language (Richards 1974: 172); *error analysis* emphasizing “the significance of errors in learners’ interlanguage system” (Brown 1994: 204) may be carried out directly for pedagogic purposes (Ellis 1995: 51; and Richards et al. 1993: 127).

The term *interlanguage*, introduced by Selinker is conceptualized as “a system that has a structurally intermediate status between the native and target languages.” (Brown 1994: 203). Nemser (1974: 55) referred to it as the *Approximate System*, and Corder (1974: 160-162) presented the notion of the *idiosyncratic dialect* (also see Ellis 1995: 47; Brown 1994: 203-204; and Freeman and Long 1994: 60-61).

Brown (1994: 207-211) and Ellis (1995: 51-52) gave a detailed account of and exemplified a model for error analysis offered by Corder (1974). Ellis (1997-b: 15-20) and Hubbard et al. (1996: 135-141) on the other hand, gave practical advice and provided clear examples of how to identify and analyze learners’ errors. The initial step requires the selection of a corpus of language followed by the identification of errors by making a distinction between a *mistake* (i.e. caused by lack of attention, carelessness or some aspect of performance) and an *error*. The errors are, then classified as *overt* and *covert errors* (Brown 1994: 208). The next step after giving a grammatical analysis of each error, demands an explanation of different types of errors that correspond to different processes. Selinker (1974: 35) reported five such processes central to second language learning: “*language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication, and overgeneralization TL [Target Language] linguistic material* .” In the literature, the studies relating to the process of *language* transfer, and *over-generalization* have received considerable attention. For instance, Swan and Smith (1995: ix) gave a detailed account of errors made by speakers of nineteen different L1 backgrounds in relation to their native languages and on their associated difficulties. Work on over-generalization errors, on the other hand, viewed as an excessive application of the generalization strategies within L2 by a learner in producing his/her language, is reported by Richards (1974), Jain (1974) and Taylor (1975).

3. IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF ERRORS

3.1 Data Collection

For the selection of a corpus of language, following the guidelines offered by Ellis (1995: 51-52), a sample of written work was collected from 15 students. The students were provided with the topic ‘My English Language Learning History’ (see Appendix 1 for a sample text.) and were asked to write on it in detail. They were also given sufficient time to write (Ellis 1997-a: 114) and were allowed to consult a dictionary if required.

The students had been attending another required course in Business English once a week for two years, and had had at least 6 years of English learning experience at secondary school in Japan prior to the present college. They had additional experience of English during their first-year study: three months at the present college and subsequently a three-month overseas program with a homestay. The students had obtained an average score of 433 in the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) (see Gilfert 1995: 76) and were relatively motivated, and their speaking and writing ability in general English was upper-basic. All students were Japanese nationals around 19-20 years old.

3.2 Error Identification

At the preliminary stage, written samples from the literature were utilized to become familiar with the process of analyzing the errors through the available suggestions (Willis 1997: 74; Ellis 1997-b:16; and Hubbard et al. 1996: 135-141), followed by focusing on the written sample of this study. In order to make sure that the sample contained mainly errors, each student was asked to review, correct error(s) and subsequently have his/her written work checked by a partner. The sentences were then examined to see whether they were overtly and/or covertly idiosyncratic, the former being identified by comparing the students’ sentences with those of the reconstructed target-language ones.

Two types of errors were selected for analysis based on their relative seriousness (see Ellis 1997-b: 19-20) and frequency of occurrence: count nouns and the simple past

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tense form of verb. To establish validity and reliability in the performance data (Griffiee 1997: 177; and Seliger and Shohamy 1995: 205), the sample was independently coded by two EFL teachers; a female Japanese with a TOEFL score of 623, and a male North American with an M.A. in TESOL. The resulting data was then investigated in detail, resulting in a number of several different categories, as was predicted (Brown 1994: 214). The errors were then explained in grammatical terms, and thoroughly examined to find the sources of errors due to L1 and L2 transfer, paying particular attention to negative transfer.

3.3 Contrastive and Error Analysis

The errors caused by the L1 in the count nouns (shown in Appendix 2) were identified as resulting from negative transfer, positive transfer, and non-existent linguistic items, i.e. items which do not exist in the L1 (see Brown 1994: 194; Freeman and Long 1994: 53; and Nunan 1991: 144), by comparing the student's sentence to an equivalent one translated into the L1.

The effects of negative transfer (Type 1-4: 01-27), were seen in the usage of the count nouns, in particular as loan words. *Loan words* refer to the words that have been borrowed by the Japanese, and are pronounced in ways different than the original ones (see O'Sullivan 1994: 208; and Thompson 1995: 221). The interference of loan words such as 'class', 'song', and 'program' in sentences

I enjoyed listening class [=kurasu] . . . (line 01),

She taught English song [=songu] . . . (line 03), and

I started listening English program [=puroguramu] . . . (line 05)

resulted into errors (of dropping s). The interference, on the other hand, can be seen where the student used the loan word 'news' as a count noun in

Now I'm learning English news [=niususu]. I like them. (line 28)

Furthermore, the attempt to use a loan word after (i) the quantifiers (more, many and a lot of) as in

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I didn't have more word [=wado] and. . . (line 15),

The experience gave me many English word. [=wado] (line 18), and

I read a lot of English book [=bukku] everytime. That book was very interesting for me. (line 19);

(ii) the plural demonstrative (these), such as

These contrys language [=rangegi] is not English. (line 20);

and (iii) the third person plural pronoun (they), like

. . . so they can't be good speaker [=supikka] at that time. (line 21),

produced errors of the singular *be* verb (was, is) and the demonstrative (that). Additionally, the phrase 'class's topic' consisting of two loan words followed the order

class [=kurasu] 's [=no] topic [=topikku] (line 27),

as that in Japanese, and consequently resulted into error (of adding 's) (see other examples in Appendix 2: Type 4).

Positive transfer (Appendix 2), on the other hand, occurred in the usage of nouns following the cardinal numerals (Type 1: 28-37); referring to people (Type 2: 38-45); and following quantifiers (Type 3: 46-57). In the Japanese language, the suffixes *-gata*, *-dachi*, and *-tachi*, (see Willis et al. 1997: 115; and Thompson 1995: 218) as in

I met good host family, teachers [=sensei-gata] and friends. [=tomo-dachi] (line 40),

And

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There were mother and 2 boys [=otoko-tachi] only. (line 43),

serve as plural markers. Other terms such as the quantitative phrases *takusan no* (= many), *ikutsuka no* (= many, a lot of, and some) and *motto* (= more) as in

... I studied many things [=takusan no, ikutsu ka no]. (line 47),

she said for us “I will traveling a lot of [=takusan no] countries”. (line 50),

... I really thought I want to get more [=motto] English abilities. (line 55), and

Now, I use some (=ikutsuka no) books, videos, CDs, tapes, ... (line 57)

also refer to plurality. It seems that the terms assisted the students to pluralize a count noun. Moreover, phrases including cardinal numerals, for example, *toka kan* (= 10 days), *jyu san sai* (= 13 years old) and *san shu kan* (= 3 weeks) as in

It was for about 10 days only [*toka kan*]. (line 30),

When I was 13 years old. . . [*jyu san sai*]. (line 31), and

I stayed there only 3 weeks [*san shu kan*]. (line 33)

may also appear to help the students to pluralize a count noun, since the phrases give a sense of plurality in the Japanese language.

Errors based on the over-generalization of learning strategies were seen in the usage of the simple past tense form of a verb (Appendix 3). Several types of errors were noticed in the broad categories of regular (Type 1), and irregular verbs (Type 2).

Type 1 was categorized into six sub-types. The first (sub-type 1) was the omission of the past marker *-ed*, as in

I think I like English at *that time*. (line 02)

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Sub-type 2 involved the auxiliary *do* in negation, for example,

I don't like school English but I *liked*. . . (line 12)

Sub-type 3 consisted of *be* verb before an adjective, as in

. . . I *met* one English teacher. He is very hard teacher. . . (line 14)

Sub-type 4 seen as *be* verb before a noun, such as

When, I *went* to Australia, my teachers are school teachers. (line 18)

Sub-type 5 involved a verb preceding the to-infinitive, as in

I *began* to risten music of song by English and want to read. . . (line 20)

The last (sub-type 6) consisted of the modal *can*, for instance,

I *enjoyed* listening class, so we can watch (line 31)

These sentences represent a past context through the time orientation (italics) (see Willis et al. 1997: 48); however, the present forms of the verb (underlined) are employed to convey the past context, a very common tendency in this error pattern.

Other sentences such as

I like her oral communication class. (line 03), and

. . . but I don't dislike him. (line 13)

are superficially correct at the sentence level, however, if the context, that is pastness, is taken into account, they are incorrect (see other examples in lines 07-09, 16, 25, 28-29, and 34-35).

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Another type of error was the production of past forms of irregular verbs by merely adding *-ed* (see Type 2) such as *feeled* (line 38, 40), including a rare case of an adjective like *harded* (line 37).

4. TEACHING STRATEGIES

Before attempting to develop or adapt a procedure, it is of crucial importance to look at certain relevant factors at the outset that may affect the output. A brief look at the students' opinions (Appendix 4A) will give the impression that a majority seem dissatisfied with the way the instruction in grammar lessons has been given so far. On the contrary, the students appreciate activities that involve speaking and listening (Appendix 4B). If one believes that classroom teaching should be student-centered, then TBL (Task-Based Learning), recommending activities based on communication (Willis 1996), will suit the preferences of these students.

However, for EFL learners, these activities demand a certain level of language proficiency. Furthermore, if the activities are employed in a classroom of Japanese learners, some special difficulties appear such as deciding the medium for the classroom instruction (Farooq 1993: 87-89), and the silent nature of these learners (Susser 1998: 59; Korst 1997: 280-281; Helgesen 1993: 37; and O'Sullivan 1994: 90, 108), which requires considerable efforts on the part of the teacher to induce the learners to speak out prior to having them interact during a given communicative task.

Due to the stated reasons, TBL seems less appropriate to be employed in an EFL context of Japanese learners, especially less proficient learners. However, it may not be the case if someone takes into account certain factors such as the learners' interests toward verbal communication, the materials and the methodology. It is safe to state that a student-centered approach is more likely to be carried out effectively if the students who are expected to utilize it have some previously gained positive experience relating to the constituents of the approach. If this is the case, then (see the students' comments in Appendix 4B) the above mentioned difficulties can be expected to be minimized to some extent. To this end, adapting the three-stage TBL paradigm (Willis 1996: 56-58), following are phases that may be employed.

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In the pre-task phase, the objective is to introduce the topic and the task to the students in a game-like situation. The topic relates to a true story and the task requires the students to find the answer to a comprehension question which is believed to lead to a grasp of the contents of the story through interaction among the students, and between the students and the teacher. A collection of readings, from a corpus of true stories by Heyer (1993), after several years' classroom testing at various levels of Japanese learners (see Appendix 6) is reported by the writer (Farooq 1997: 65-72), and a part of it is adopted here to exemplify the procedure (See Appendix 5). The students of different levels, as is specifically pointed out by Willis (1996: 59), are grouped together so that the weaker ones can learn from the more able students (also see Farooq 1994: 81-82). The students then, after listening to the story, brainstorm the words they could effortlessly catch, and in groups discuss the possible answers for the assigned question, e.g. 'Who do you think got the first prize or was the worst child in the contest?.'

The next phase, the task-cycle, requires the students to listen to the story again, take notes, clarify or confirm any item in the story with the teacher and make sure that the meaning is correctly grasped. The teacher also confirms that the message is correctly conveyed (Ellis and Hedge 1993: 7). The students then write the story within each group with the help of the teacher, decide the answer to the question, and finally report to the class. They are then assigned to look for patterns of linguistic items in their products which they think differ from that in the original story.

In the last phase, the students in groups analyze the written text of the story. Following is an example that asks them to identify and categorize certain textual items. Example: Underline and then divide the resulting words into 3-4 groups in the following activities:

- A. Words ending in -s or -'s (Willis 1997: 92-93).
- B. Verbs referring to the present and simple past tense.

Literature provides classroom practitioners with several different ways to design activities of the types 'A' and 'B' under the category of the *noun*, its associated

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determiners; and of the *verb* groups based on the Consciousness Raising (CR) (see, for example, Willis et al. 1997: 50-54, 120-132; Willis and Willis 1996: 71-76; Rutherford 1996: 160-168; and Ellis 1997-a: 160-162). Due to space limitation, the varieties and the details of the activities are omitted. The important point, however, is that, from here onwards the students are not required to produce the language. The activities that may include grammatical items other than those in this study are designed to provide the students with input and suggestions rather than to have them master the particular items through practice, on the basis of the writer's personal belief and experience of EFL learning and teaching.

5. DISCUSSION

In the light of existing theories, numerical results, and examples from the performance data (Appendices 1-6), this section will primarily focus on the following questions: 'What strategies did the students employ that accounted for their errors?', and 'How can the designed teaching procedures help the students deal with these errors?'

5.2 Strategies Accounting for the L1 Transfer Errors

The students had considerable difficulties in conveying plurality (Appendix 2: Type 1, 2, 4) which is in agreement with what was pointed by Thompson (1995: 218) "as no element in Japanese sentence regularly shows plurality, . . . , number and countability pose major problems". Mizuno and Harumitsu (1991) provided experimental evidence of these problems. The main cause is likely to be associated with the negative transfer of Japanese language in the form of a translation strategy in producing sentences in English. The strategy was so widely employed that the students neglected even the presence of the quantifiers, the plural demonstratives, and the third person plural pronouns (lines 15-21) which signal a plural noun. The count nouns with the absence of an *s*, heavily employed by the students were the words termed as the *loan words* which are commonly used in everyday speech of Japanese language in singular forms.

Some determiners preceding a noun helped the students (see Appendix 2), generally the more able students, in conveying plurality through the translation strategy. These are the cardinal numerals and the quantifiers, and the nouns referring to people, (lines

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28-57). In their translated forms they apparently prevented the students from making errors. The occurrence of these plural markers are found also in Jain's (1974: Table 1: 4, 6 and 8) performance data, which unlike the present study is based solely on over-generalization errors, indicating that students with a common L1 background make use of this strategy for pluralizing a noun.

As is widely known, the definite article *the* (Appendix 2: lines 58-69) and the indefinite article *a /an* (lines 70-80) pose special difficulties because of the absence of such articles in the Japanese language (Willis et al. 1997: 24, 118). Richards' (1974: 186, Table 5) study suggests that the articles' errors are independent of L1 transfer where as Thompson (1995), and Mizuno and Harumitsu (1991) accounted them by the L1 transfer. In the present study, it appeared that the students used the *strategy of avoidance* (Brown 1994: 207) as the errors were apparently unsystematic, some students showed a good command while others consciously or unconsciously either omitted the articles or used alternatives such as *my, our, and this*.

5.3 Strategies Accounting for the Over-generalization Errors

A careful analysis of the performance data showed that the students made excessive use of the present tense form of a verb, by dropping the regular past tense *-ed* morpheme in situations where the context demands past tense (Appendix 3). In other words, the students cut down the complexity of task involved in sentence production, which resulted in errors (see Richards 1974: 175; and Ellis 1997-a : 114). Similarly, Jain described the situation as follows:

. . .from that of a child learning his native language to that of an adult learning a second language, the learning strategy to reduce speech to a simpler system seems to be employed by every learner . . . (1974: 191).

The students' attitude toward spoken English (Appendix 4B) indicates that they employed the strategies they had developed through spoken English which confirms the prediction made by Richards (1974: 177). According to Ellis (1997-a: 114), on the other hand, such instances may occur when learners make use of their *implicit knowledge*. Most of the students had less difficulties in constructing a first clause or sentence with correct past tense form; however, whenever a student tried to use a

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conjunction, it resulted in an error. The strategy behind it would be that the student first formed a sentence using the simple past tense, then added a conjunction and while writing the next sentence unconsciously ignored the pastness or used his/her verbal communication strategy that forced the use of a present form instead. The students' efforts which produced the most frequent over-generalization errors in this study are evident in the use of the coordinator: *and* (20, 22) and *but* (01, 04); sub-coordinator: *because* (05, 07) and *when* (17, 18); and *so* (06, 09). Thompson (1995: 221), although attributing the source to language transfer, also commented on the difficulties Japanese learners could have in the usage of English conjunctions.

For the errors associated with the irregular past tense forms, a relatively few instances of over-generalization (see Ellis 1997-a : 114, 123) of these forms (Appendix 3: 36-43) and frequent occurrences of the present tense indicate that the students are at a certain level, possibly below the intermediate level, and that the level is not progressing as is evident in the light of the *U-shaped course of development* exemplified by Ellis (1997-b: 23), and Freeman and Long (1994: 105-106).

5.4. Teaching Strategies

The procedures described in section 4, are expected to assist the students to deal with their errors provided one (i) sees the learning of a language as an organic process rather than a linear one in that structures are not learned in isolation, but that they interact with each other (Nunan 1991: 148), and (ii) believes that the students could be benefited in this direction if they are provided mainly with the input to work on it critically, first for the meaning in Krashen's sense (Krashen 1982), and then for understanding the existing grammatical structures (Willis and Willis 1996: 67-68). Ellis (1997-a: 119-123, 162), emphasizing the significance of input (also see Ellis and Hedge 1993: 8), states that the acquisition may be facilitated by teaching *explicit knowledge* through CR tasks assisted by the operations of *noticing* and *comparing*, which are considered necessary for acquisition to take place, and that the input can become *implicit knowledge* when the operation of *integrating* is added. Following is an attempt to see how the first two operations may relate to the procedures.

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In the communicative task the students are required to respond to the question ‘Who do you think got the first prize or was the worst child in the contest? (4.3.1). Here, a desire or an interest, through the question, is created to notice what makes the child ‘the world’s biggest brat’ (see Appendix 5). The process of noticing is also evident in the CR activities (4.3.3) which require to underline and group words ending in -s or -’s (A) and referring to the present and simple past tense (B). The former activity, a recommendation at the initial stage (Ellis 1997-a: 116) demands less efforts on the parts of the students; whereas in the later one, the time orientation makes them notice the correct tense in the text. However, the students need a knowledge of verb forms and their different usage to notice the required verbs. Other features of noticing are associated with the unusual nature of the story (feature underlying all the reported stories, Farooq 1997) that may surprise the students; and the attempts to deal with communication problems when either the teacher or a student clarify or confirm a piece of information. Likewise, the story written by the students in each group (see 4.3.2) gives them an opportunity to notice a gap between their products and that of native speakers (Nunan 1991: 150). Additionally, the operation of comparing could be employed when the students, for instance, in the activities ‘A’ and ‘B’ (4.3.3) work on grouping or categorizing the required words. The process involves a mental comparison of the linguistic items in the written text with the ones the students are explicitly aware of. Ellis (1997-a: 121) explained the situation as follows: “New items and rules only become part of the developing interlanguage system if learners can establish how they differ from their existing interlanguage representation.”

6. CONCLUSIONS

The following two points may offer a rationale or justification for the validity of such procedures in an EFL context of Japanese learners.

Firstly, the learner, through her 6-8 years’ learning experience (Thompson 1995: 222-223, also see 3.1.2), no matter in what manner she has received instruction, may bring into the classroom a vast knowledge of grammar rules (Ellis 1997-a: 160) apart from a knowledge of her Universal Grammar (Freeman and Long 1994: 228) existing in her *long-term memory* which is likely to be exposed and employed specially for analyzing grammar. Literature also supports the statement as is evident in the comments made

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by Shortall (1996: 35) “. . . there is a wealth of language knowledge which the (L1 and L2) learner possesses about universal grammar which is perhaps not being taken into account, at least in L2 classrooms”. This implicit knowledge, which is largely hidden and consequently very little is known about it, can become explicit when the learner actually produces the language and manifests her grammatical rules (Ellis 1997-a: 111) as in this study. The knowledge then can lead classroom practitioners to select the right materials to help the learner.

Secondly, the learner may work productively if she feels that the learning material is (i) attractive in that it surprises the learner (Ellis 1997-a: 120), (ii) authentic in the form of ‘simplified’ text as suggested by Widdowson (cited in Jones 1994: 294), and (iii) processed in a game-like situation (Ellis 1997-a: 162), (iv) within groups (*ibid*: 109; and O’Sullivan 1994: 91). The material used as part of the teaching strategies in this study (Appendix 5), contains plenty of information in terms of the noun and the verb group, probably sufficient for beginners through intermediate learners to work on. Owing to its discursal nature, the information exists in most of the stories specifically designed for the EFL/ESL learners. However, not all such stories are based on topics that attract readers, neither are they classroom-tested. The data reported by the writer (Farooq 1997) can be readily employed, which otherwise requires classroom practitioners to either inspect or structure it (Ellis 1997-a: 161).

A recommendation for further research should be towards the implementation of the designed procedures in the actual classroom setting with the objective suggested by the proponents of the classroom research that “. . .claims made by SLA researchers outside the classroom can be settled only by validating studies inside the classroom” (Nunan 1991: 149; also see Ellis and Hedge 1993: 9-10; and Ellis 1997-a: vii-viii).

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Appendix 1: A Sample of a Student's Written Work

Topic: My English Language Learning History

Paragraph 1

- 01 I studied English first time when I was junior high school student.
- 02 I didn't like English very much, but I like watch Sesami Street on TV and to hear Disney's CD.

Paragraph 2

- 03 Since I entered high school, I learned application words, long sentences and listening.
- 04 I enjoyed listening class, so we can watch English drama's on TV.
- 05 But reading class was so difficult, I couldn't understand well all of the contents.
- 06 I started to learn English by teaching materials for college examination.
- 07 I couldn't continew it because I was capricious.

Paragraph 3

- 08 I studied abroad to Australia from September to December last year.
- 09 I was very surprised so I couldn't listen English of host family at all.
- 10 I have learned reading and writing but I didn't learn listening very much still now.
- 11 I found that listening English is most important for my future.

Paragraph 4

- 12 Now I'm learning English news.
- 13 I like them.

..

- 14 I can't write and speak well but I'd like to hear English.
- 15 I think I will learn English for communication.

Appendix 2: Errors from L1 Transfer

1. Negative Transfer

Type 1: Count nouns (underlined) in the forms of *loan words* posed difficulties in conveying plurality. Words in [] below are written in (Japanese) Roman letters.

- 01 I enjoyed listening class [=kurasu] . . .
- 02 I like her oral communication class.
- 03 She taught English song [songu] . . .
- 04 . . . they listening music of song by English.
- 05 I started listening English program [puroguramu] . . .
- 06 I listened English radio program about everyday.
- 07 I wanted to study other language. [rangeji]
- 08 . . . and want to read at the word [wado] of English.
- 09 I liked story [sutori] in school book. [bukku]
- 10 After I came Japan, I watching English lesson [resson] on TV . . .
- 11 . . . I went to New Zealand with my class mate. [kurasumetu]
- 12 When I tried to take entrance examinations of junior college. [karegi]
- 13 And they used to give me tape [tepu] of . . .
- 14 I thought Japanese student [gakusei] worry about grammar,

Type 2: Despite the presence of the quantifiers (*more, many, a lot of*); the plural demonstrative (these) and the third person plural pronoun (they), the negative L1 transfer posed difficulties in conveying plurality.

- 15 I didn't have more word [=wado] and . . .
- 16 I could meet many good teacher [sensei] . . .

..

- 17 I went to many place [*basho*] in NY . . .
18 The experience gave me many English word.
19 I read a lot of English book [*bukku*] everytime. That book was very interesting for me.
20 These contrys language [*rangegi*] is not English.
21 . . . so they can't be good speaker [*supikka*] at that time.

Type 3: Presence of the ordinal numerals *1st* led the students to pluralize a count noun leading to errors.

- 22 when I was 1st years students (noun referred to people) at Junior High.
23 But I didn't listend 1st years English class.

Type 4: Japanese linguistic item [*no* = 's] posed difficulties in conveying a noun correctly.

- 24 . . . and to hear Disney's CD [= *dizuni no CD*]
25 . . . so we can watch English drama's on TV [*terebi no dorama*]
26 Text book was Junior high school's textbook [*gakko no tekusuto*]
27 The first class's topic [*kurasu no topikku*] was "family".

2. Positive Transfer

Type 1: Cardinal numerals (underlined) before count nouns helped learners to convey plurality.

- 28 Now I'm learning English news* [= *niusu*]. I like them*.
29 I went to there for a year [*ichi nen ni ikkai*].
30 It was for about 10 days only [*toka kan*].
31 When I was 13 years old . . . [*jyu san sai*].
32 I learned at after school once a week [*shu ni ikkai*].
33 I stayed there only 3 weeks [*san shu kan*].
34 . . . 5 or 6 girls . . . [*go nin ka roku nin no onna (-tachi) no hito*]
35 I went to New Zealand for 3 weeks [*san shu kan*].
36 I went to Australia for about 3 months [*san ka getsu*].
37 And the teacher had not been changed for 3 years [*san nen kan*].

Type 2: Nouns referring to people (underlined) helped learners convey plurality correctly.

- 38 We were good friends [= *tomo-dachi*]
39 I and my friends.
40 I met good host family, teachers [*sensei -gata*] and friends.
41 When I made new friends at high school
42 I had Ausrtalian and N.Z. friends..
43 There were mother and 2 boys [*otoko -tachi*] only.
44 I was taught 2 teachers American and Japanese.
45 . . . they were my special teachers.

Type 3: Quantifiers (*many, a lot of, more* and *some*) helped learners convey plurality.

- ..
- 46 She made many [*takusan no, ikutsu ka no*] countries . . .
- 47 . . . I studied many things.
- 48 Because I had to remain many words and . . .
- 49 I don't know how many times I cried . . .
- 50 she said for us "I will traveling a lot of [*ikutsuka no*] countries".
- 51 I talked about a lot of themes . . .
- 52 I got a lot of things.
- 53 . . . with a lot of friends.
- 54 I also liked a lot of games.
- 55 . . . I really thought I want to get more [*motto*] English abilities.
- 56 I had some (*ikutsuka no*) books, tapes, videos, . . .
- 57 Now, I use some books, videos, CDs, tapes, . . .

3. Non-existent linguistic items (items which do not exist in the L1)

Type 1: Absence of the definite article [*the*] in Japanese (L1) posed difficulties for the students in placing the article before a noun.

- 58 I studied English (for) [] first time . . .
- 59 . . . "Your English pronunciation is [] Japanese pronunciation" [*nihon jin no hatsuon*].
- 60 I started English when I was (in) [] 6th grade in elementary school.
- 61 [] Text book was [] Junior high school's textbook
- 62 I stayed (with) [] Belleword family.
- 63 There were [] mother and 2 boys only . . .
- 64 . . . I can studied [] real English. [*honto no eigo* OR *hommono* as opposed to *nisemono* = artificial]
- 65 When I tried to take [] entrance examinations of junior college . . .
- 66 [] American teacher couldn't* Japanese [*nihon go hanase nakatta*] . . .
- 67 [] Japanese teacher taught me a lot of grammer.
- 68 . . . in [] Nonoike church.
- 69 So, I entered [] international secretary course in Aichi Women's Junior College.

Type 2: Absence of the indefinite article [*a/an*] in Japanese (L1) posed the students difficulties in placing the article before a count noun.

- 70 . . . when I was [] junior high school student.
- 71 I got [] letter from Vuetnum.
- 72 I met [] good host family
- 73 when I read [] book at fast English class.
- 74 . . . and writing[] diarry by English.
- 75 It was [] good experience, too
- 76 There was a [] American teacher in my high school.
- 77 . . . so I began to go to [] grammar (means cram school) school.
- 78 I went to [] speach contest . . .
- 79 I could get [] good score.
- 80 I had [] good day everyday

..

Type 1: Underlined verbs are over-generalized present tense to represent pastness in narrative, resulting in errors.

Subtype 1: *verb* for *verb + ed*

- 01 I didn't like English very much, but I like . . .
- 02 I think I like English at *that time*.
- 03 I like her oral communication class.
- 04 I didn't understand English but I also like a lot of games . . .
- 05 First, I hate English study, because, our English teacher *was* not . . .
- 06 So I *was tired* and hate English . . .
- 07 I hate it because I must learn it fast.
- 08 I prefer the reader class than the grammar.
- 09 So I choose* the G course of Aichi women's Junior College.
- 10 I *went* to Juku (=cram school) before enter junior college.

Subtype 2: *do + not + verb* for *did + not + verb*

- 11 Because I don't like English teacher *when I was* . . .
- 12 I don't like school English but I *liked* . . .
- 13 . . . but I don't dislike him.

Subtype 3: *is + adjective* for *was + adjective*

- 14 The second year of high school, I *met* one English teacher. He is very hard teacher, . . .
- 15 I *learned* many English words and Grammar for examination of college. Though English study is very boring, . . .

Subtype 4: *is/are + noun* for *was/were + noun*

- 16 However, it's a small worry.
- 17 *When I was* junior high school, my favorite class is English.
- 18 *When, I went to* Australia, my teachers are school teachers.
- 19 In high school, I *met* one woman, Her name is Sheryl. She is* from New Zealand.

Subtype 5: *verb + to-infinitive* for *verb + ed + to-infinitive*

- 20 I *began* to listen music of song by English and want to read . . .
- 21 I want to go abroad to study, but my high school teacher *couldn't take* test for to go abroad because my English score *was* bad . . .
- 22 *That time* I decided I want to learn English more and I want to know . . .
- 23 I *studied* it hard because I want to . . .
- 24 This course's entrance exam *was* English, so I have* to study . . .
- 25 Because, we have* to pass . . .
- 26 I *spoke* English with . . . And I talk* to English with . . .
- 27 *When I was* high school, I like to study English because I had Australian . . .
- 28 I want* to be good English speaker and I want to somewhere by myself.

..

29 I would like to go “Costa-rica” or “Tailand”.

30 I’d like to talk in English when I was . . .

Subtype 6: *can + verb* for *could + verb*

31 I *enjoyed* listening class, so we can watch . . .

32 Teacher *told* us to learn by heart as much as we can*.

33 *When I was* kindergarden, I knew English first time. I can speek only 2 words.

34 I’m very happy!! and I can* studied* real English.

35 . . . and we can stady more speaking and . . .

Type 2: Underlined irregular verbs are over-generalized and resulted in errors.

irregular verb + ed for *irregular past*

36 I singed English, but I *didn’t* feel it is English.

37 I *wanted* to work in Hotel, so I harded* to study English.

38 I feeled it is difficult stuying English for me, yet.

39 She sometimes teached us English after school.

40 . . . so I feeled English is difficult!.

41 . . . but they speaked srow for me.

42 My teacher teached easy to us.

43 I was writtet a reseave by teacher.

[* refers to ambiguity in or a mismatch with the specific Type/Subtype]

Appendix 4: Students' attitudes toward English learning

The following sentences are extracted from the students' written sample

A. Attitude toward grammar

- 01 I don't like school English but I liked speaking and listening.
- 02 I couldn't understand English grammar, so I began to go grammar school.
- 03 When I was a junior high school student, I was good at English, but in high school, I couldn't understand grammar. Because I felt the grammar class very bored. I prefer the reading class than the grammar.
- 04 I thought Japanese student worry about grammar, so they can't be good speaker at that time.
- 05 Japanese teacher taught me a lot of grammar. That was very difficult for me, but I learned very hard.
- 06 When I learned English in high school, I learned only grammar.
- 07 I don't like grammar, so I didn't study hard little by little. My English power was decrease little by little.
- 08 I didn't like English very much, but I like watch Sesami Street on TV and to hear Disney's CD.
- 09 At the High School, English was to be more difficult. So I couldn't get high score at the test. I was getting hate English at that time.

..

- 10 . . . but this English was a lot of grammar. So I don't understand it and I hate English.
- 11 I studied English for entrance examination, but it was meaningless. I forgot all what I memorized.
- 12 I disliked English, because I had to remain many words and grammar. And I disliked school's English teachers.
- 13 Almost of this was transition English to Japanese.
- 14 I learned many English words and grammar for examination of college.

B. Attitude toward speaking and listening

- 15 When I entered at AWJC, I enjoyed to study English, because there don't have class of just grammar and we can study more speaking and use English in foreign country.
- 16 I enjoyed listening class, so we can watch English drama's on TV.
- 17 I found that listening English is most important for my future.
- 18 Now I'm learning English news. I like them.
- 19 I can't write and speak well but I'd like to hear English.
- 20 I think I will learn English for communication.
- 21 I like her Oral Communication class.
- 22 I began to listen music of song by English and want to read at the word of English and was interesting in English.
- 23 I thought that if I spend with English speaker, I would be able to use English.
- 24 I had been spend for 3 weeks in N.Z, I thought that I should study English more hard. We can learn real English every day, any time.
- 25 I don't like school English but I liked speaking and listening.
- 26 I would like to study speaking more.
- 27 I went to EAON which is a crammer of English conversation before going to Australia. Because I wanted to be good at communication.
- 28 I also felt it's very important to try to talk.
- 29 I could learn more communication English.
- 30 I interested in English more.

..

Appendix 5: The materials used as a part of the teaching strategies

Brats

Comprehension Question: Who do you think won the first prize? (Farooq 1997: 70)

A few years ago a French toy company had an unusual contest--a "biggest brat" contest. The company had a prize for the child whose behavior was the worst in the world. Over 2,000 parents entered their children in the contest. "Our child is the

..
world's biggest brat!" they wrote. The parents made lists of all the bad things their children had done. Judges read the lists and chose the winner. She was a little girl from the United States. Her name was Lizzie, and she was four years old. Here are a few of the things Lizzie did to win the title, "The World's Biggest Brat":

- She put a garden hose into the gas tank of her father's car. Then she turned on the water.
- She painted a leather sofa with spray paint.
- She threw her mother's wedding ring into the toilet. Then she flushed the toilet.
- She put an ice cream sandwich into the VCR.
- She set the table for dinner. Then she glued the silverware to the table. Imagine her parents' surprise when they sat down to eat and tried to pick up their forks.

Lizzie may be the world's biggest brat, but she is certainly not the world's only brat. Alo is a five-year-old boy from Bangladesh. One afternoon, while his father was asleep on the sofa, Alo cut off his father's mustache. A few days later, he cut off his brother's eyebrows when his brother was sleeping in the bedroom. A few weeks after that, he cut off most of his mother's hair when she was asleep at night. Alo's family now keeps every pair of scissors under lock and key and always sleeps behind locked doors. The behavior of a Mexican boy named Manuel is perhaps even worse than Lizzie's and Alo's because it is more dangerous. Manuel likes to play with matches. One day he found some matches near the kitchen stove. He took the matches, sneaked into his parents' bedroom, and set fire to the curtains. Fortunately, Manuel's mother walked into the bedroom just in time. She pulled down the curtains and put out the fire before it spread.

Hiroshi, a young Japanese man, says that he rarely misbehaved when he was a young child but turned into a real brat when he was about 13. "My friends and I used to sneak around at night and let the air out of tires. We were terrible," he says. "Our parents tried to control us, but they didn't have much success. We drove them crazy."

No mother or father wants to be the parent of a brat. Parents everywhere try to control their children's behavior. Some parents spank their children when they misbehave. Other parents won't let their children watch TV or eat dessert. In Japan, parents often send their children outside when they misbehave and tell them they can't come into the house. In the United States, parents do just the opposite: they send their children to their bedrooms and tell them they can't go outside.

..

Lizzie's parents don't know what to do about Lizzie. Her mother says, "I keep telling myself that Lizzie is going through a stage, but sometimes I don't know...It seems like she's always getting into trouble." Lizzie's father says, "One day we'll look back on all this and laugh."

What does Lizzie think about her behavior ? Lizzie doesn't like to talk about it. When a reporter asked Lizzie if she was "a bad girl," Lizzie kicked his leg. Then she yelled, "I'm not a brat ! I'm an angel ! Get out of my house !
(Heyer 1993: 3)

Appendix 6: A list of ‘true stories’ after classroom testing at various levels of Japanese learners

No	Title	Interests	Difficulty	Ref #	Page #
01	Before and After	***	**	12	13
02	A Little Traveler	***	**	12	25
03	A New Man	**	*	12	29
04	The Coin	***	**	12	33
05	Buried Alive	***	*	12	37
06	The Winning Ticket	*	**	12	41
07	The Luxury Hotel	*	*	12	45
08	I Ran for Everybody	*	*	12	46
09	Thanks a Million	*	**	12	65
10	A Strong Little Boy	**	*	12	73
11	The Gift	**	**	13	10
12	Oh Boy, What a Ride!	**	*	13	14
13	The Twins of Sam	***	***	13	18
14	The Baby Exchange	*	**	13	22
15	Everybody's Baby	***	**	13	30
16	Finders Keepers?	*	***	13	54
17	A Long Fishing Trip	***	**	13	78
18	Brats	*	***	14	2
19	The World's Largest Family	***	**	14	20
20	Misunderstandings	*	***	14	38
21	A Real Bargain	*	***	14	44
22	There's Something in . . .	***	*	11	10
23	Two Happy Men	***	*	11	34
24	The Kind Waitress	**	*	11	46
25	Alone for 43 years	**	*	11	54
26	The Escape from Cuba	***	*	11	74

Table List of Story Titles with (i) Students’ Interests (***liked by all classes), (ii) Level of Difficulty (***most difficult), (iii) Reference # and (vi) Page # in the particular reference. (Farooq 1997: 66)