Focusing on Lexis in English Classrooms in Japan: Analyses of Textbook Exercises and Proposals for Consciousness-raising Activities

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ABSTRACT

Recently the importance of focusing on lexis has been widely recognised in language acquisition theories. In particular, it is considered indispensable to deal with fixed expressions, lexical collocations and patterns, in consciousness-raising ways. This dissertation has attempted to reveal the problems of activities in the current English classrooms in Japan, especially regarding lexis teaching, and to propose activities that could develop learners' competence to use the language.

By analysing exercises from authorised textbooks, it has become obvious that English teaching in Japan has two problems. Firstly, the activities need to be more carefully constructed as to what knowledge they aim to develop in learners. There is too much emphasis on features of single words and not enough focus on lexical collocations. Secondly, the ways the activities are conducted need improvement. They merely require learners to memorise and manipulate the lexical items, and do not encourage learners to examine them.

This dissertation proposes several activities, such as creating a learner's concordance, comparing English collocations with Japanese collocations, and connecting patterns and meanings using reference materials. The activities should raise learners' consciousness of the significant lexical items, and encourage learners to analyse the language and learn from their findings.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Current lexis teaching in English classrooms in Japan

Although English education in Japan has long been criticised for failing to develop learners' ability to use English accurately and fluently (Ootsu, 1993; Sakai, 1995; Soejima, 1995), an effective solution to the problem does not seem to have been found yet. Thus, just as before, Japanese teachers and learners appear to be spending a considerable amount of time in English classrooms only to find that they cannot utilise the target language. Under these circumstances, in recent years, the importance of focusing on lexis has been widely recognised in theories of second language acquisition (Sinclair, 1991; Willis, 1993; Lewis, 1993; Carter, 1987; Hunston, Francis and Manning, 1997). Could this be the solution to the Japanese situation, and will learners finally have a possibility to become able to use English if only they come to concentrate on learning lexis? Does it merely mean that teachers need to spend more time in teaching lexis?

Things may not be so simple. For it seems that teachers and learners in Japan have already been spending a significant amount of time in lexis teaching. It is true that most Japanese high school students strongly like a certain type of vocabulary book, in which words frequently appearing in the past entrance examinations are listed separately. If people visit Japanese bookshops to buy English study-aid books, they will certainly find a large number of such books. Teachers are fond of conducting vocabulary tests in classes, and always encourage learners to memorise as many words as possible. They complain that their students have knowledge of grammar, but do not know enough vocabulary, and claim that they must teach more words. Teachers also like reading vocabulary books that list words and meanings, which are claimed to be useful for conversation (Mori, 1996; Tanaka, 1992), but, in fact, the books appear to be only interesting to read and unhelpful for the purpose of utilising the language since they do not present information concerning how to use the words. Therefore, before concluding that the problems of English classrooms in Japan will be perfectly solved if only teachers emphasise lexis, it is indispensable to carefully examine how lexis is actually treated in the current English classrooms in Japan, and to consider how it should be treated to improve the situation.

It appears that there are two kinds of problems in lexis teaching in Japan. One issue

may be that even when teachers deal with lexis in classes, they cover a limited aspect of lexis. It seems that teachers have only dealt with semantics of separate words, and have not sufficiently treated fixed expressions, lexical collocations and patterns, which are considered to be of importance for acquiring language (Sinclair, 1991; Hunston, Francis and Manning, 1997). The other problem may be found in the methods used by teachers to teach lexis in classrooms. It appears that at present teachers tend to show lists of words that they have chosen for learners, which are usually words that are likely to appear in entrance examinations, and encourage learners to memorise them.

In such classrooms the teachers' main role is likely to see if learners have memorised the objects perfectly. However, language is vast and teachers cannot teach all words learners actually need when they use the language. It will be argued in this dissertation that Japanese teachers need to change their approach to one which can raise learners' consciousness of the significant lexical elements, and encourage learners to examine their own experience of language and learn from their findings (Ellis, 1992; Willis and Willis, 1996).

1.2 Effects of authorised textbooks on English teaching

One effective way to examine what is actually being conducted in current English classrooms in Japan may be to analyse authorised textbooks, which are created according to the Ministry of Education's guidelines. Japanese schools are regulated to use these textbooks, and thus the methodologies underlying the textbooks have a far-reaching influence on English teaching in Japan.

The ministry announces its guidelines every ten years, and the present textbooks for high schools were constructed based on the 1989 guidelines. The ministry announced its new guidelines in 1999, according to which new textbooks will be created and come into use in high schools from 2003. Although both the 1989 guidelines and the 1999 guidelines claim that English education in Japan should aim at developing students' communicative ability (The Ministry of Education, 1989, 1999), they do not clearly show how the objective can be realised. For example, as to "English Course 1", which is designated as compulsory for every high school student, the 1999 guidelines state that through the course learners should acquire the basic ability to understand spoken and written English, and to speak and write their opinions in English. However, the guidelines do not specifically indicate how activities should be conducted to achieve the

goal, except for guiding teachers to conduct activities concerning phonetic sounds, grammar, recitation and non-verbal communication. Regarding lexis, the guidelines only give lists of words which should be treated in the course, and say that teachers should conduct activities in which learners can use the words.

It can be said that teachers are only given the objective of helping learners become able to communicate with other people in English, but that they are not shown methodologies to meet the objective. Under these conditions, what teachers usually do is to follow authorised textbooks: read the written texts together with learners and conduct the exercises which are displayed after the texts. Therefore, it can be conceived that by examining the textbooks, especially the exercises, the elements that most English teachers in Japanese schools emphasise in their classes, as well as the ways they actually conduct the activities, may become obvious. Then, the problems of the Japanese classrooms should become clear, and thus effective solutions could be found.

1.3 The aims and organisation of this dissertation

The objectives of this dissertation are twofold. One is to examine current English teaching in Japan through the analyses of exercises from authorised textbooks, especially in terms of lexical elements, and to clarify the shortcomings which underlie the learners' lack of ability to use English. The other is to propose activities which could improve the situation. The activities may be created on the basis of existing textbooks so as to raise learners' consciousness of the importance of lexical features, and to develop learners' competence to use the language in authentic situations.

In this dissertation chapter 2 reviews the literature on teaching lexis, and clarifies the significance of focusing on lexis in English classrooms. Then, it discusses the importance of teaching fixed expressions, lexical collocations and patterns, and the necessity of conducting consciousness-raising activities to help learners acquire knowledge of the essential lexical elements and to become a fluent and accurate user of English. Chapter 3 examines exercises from authorised textbooks of Japanese high schools, in particular, paying attention to lexis teaching. To identify the problems of the English teaching it analyses the exercises from two distinctive points of view; what kinds of lexical knowledge are required in the activities and in what ways they are presented. Chapter 4 proposes classroom activities, such as making a learner's

concordance, comparing English collocations with Japanese collocations and connecting patterns and meanings with the help of reference materials, which are developed in such a way that learners' consciousness of the significant lexical features can be raised. The activities are created to help learners develop ability to examine the language by themselves for their own purposes. Chapter 5 presents a conclusion. It summarises the findings, suggesting implications for lexis teaching in Japan, and identifying limitations of this dissertation where further research is needed.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW: WHY AND HOW TEACHERS NEED TO FOCUS ON LEXIS

This chapter reviews the literature concerning lexis teaching in classrooms. First, it discusses the importance of placing emphasis on lexis in teaching English. Next, it considers the significance of focusing on phrases, such as fixed expressions and lexical collocations. Then, it reviews the implication of bringing lexical patterns into the centre of language teaching. Finally, it discusses the advantage of conducting consciousness-raising activities for helping learners identify and analyse the essential lexical features.

2.1 Placing lexis before grammar

When language teachers reflect on their teaching and examine how successfully they have taught, one of the most important factors should be whether or not their students have become able to talk to each other to exchange meanings, by using the language they have learned. Teachers always need to remember what Halliday (1975) notes, which is the fact that the learning of a language is essentially the learning of meanings. Halliday (1978) considers that "language is a product of the social process" and "language arises in the life of the individual through an ongoing exchange of meanings with significant others" (p. 1). Stevick (1976) also points out that "method should be the servant of meaning, and meaning depends on what happens inside and between people" (p. 160).

Recently, several linguists have proposed the importance of bringing lexis into the centre of English classrooms in order to help learners develop their ability to use English to exchange messages with people. The importance of putting lexis before grammar is clearly expressed by the words of Lewis (1993), "language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalised grammar" (p.) and "grammar as structure is subordinate to lexis" (p.). Little (1994) also argues that "words inevitably come before structures" (p. 106). He considers that there are differences between explicit and implicit grammatical knowledge, and that learners cannot use explicit grammatical rules as a tool to communicate, unless they "know some of the words whose behaviour the rules describe" and "implicit knowledge of grammatical rules can develop only in association with a developing mental lexicon" (p. 106). Moreover, Widdowson (1989) notes that communicative competence is not a matter of knowing rules, but "a matter of

knowing a stock of partially pre-assembled patterns" (p. 135). He argues that "rules are not generative but regulative and subservient" (p. 135) and that they are useless unless they can be used for lexis.

By claiming the importance of focusing on lexis, the linguists do not mean that teachers only need to teach lexis, and should exclude grammar from classrooms. Rather, it is considered that lexis and grammar are inseparable in nature and completely interdependent (Sinclair, 1991; Hunston and Francis, 1998). Willis (1993) clearly notes the fact that grammar and lexis are two ways of picturing the same object, that is, language. The lexis lists words and meanings, and classifies the patterns, and the grammar lists structures and categorises words to the structures. He considers that "the language learners are involved in the job of discovering the language", and in the task "they have to work simultaneously with the grammar and the lexicon" (p. 84). However, Willis (1990) considers that at present the description of language teachers offer learners is heavily loaded towards grammar, and teachers need to pay more attention to lexical elements in classrooms, since if teachers emphasise grammar too much, the creation of meanings is likely to be put off. The inseparability of grammar and lexis will be discussed in section 2.3 in detail.

Sinclair and Renouf (1988) point out that focusing on lexis in classrooms has several advantages. First, teachers can highlight the common uses, important meanings and patterns, of the most frequent words, which are things worth learning, since learners are likely to have chances to use what they have learned in authentic situations. Second, it is possible for teachers to encourage a learner to make "full use of the words that the learner already has", regardless of the learner's level (Sinclair and Renouf, 1988, p. 155). Willis (1990) also notes that it is easier for learners to start exploration of the language if they start from lexis, which is concrete, rather than grammatical rules, which are abstract. Moreover, Willis (1994) points out that lexis offers more powerful generalisation, and that learners can have more evidence to analyse language and demonstrate their hypothetical generalisations on the language.

When we reflect on the Japanese situation, it is evident that it is not enough just to say that focusing on lexis is important and that if only we emphasise lexical elements somehow, the present situation that learners cannot acquire the ability to use English will be improved. For it seems that even though in English classrooms the main method

has been mostly grammar-focused, teachers have actually spent a large amount of time in teaching lexis. Therefore, what is significant may be not only to claim the importance of focusing on lexical elements, but also to consider carefully what kinds of lexical features should be presented and how they should be presented.

2.2 Teaching lexis in forms of phrases

2.2.1 Advantages of learning phrases

As stated before, it is not sufficient only to say that lexis should be stressed in classrooms, and it is indispensable to consider what aspects of lexis teachers need to focus on. It can be considered essential to teach lexis in forms of phrases, not as separate single words. When linguists claim the significance of lexical phrases in second language acquisition, there can be two different kinds of approaches to phrases. One is that they consider that phrases are important, because phrases are how the language is made. The other is that they consider phrases are essential because phrases are useful to learners. What Pawley and Syder (1983), Sinclair (1991) and Lewis (1996) argue below may be categorised into the first approach. What Benson, Benson and Ilson (1997), and Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) point out below can be classified into the second approach.

Pawley and Syder (1983) have two questions concerning native speakers' linguistic capacities. One is how native speakers can select a sentence that is natural and idiomatic from among the various grammatically possible items, which can be non-native-like or odd usages. The other is how native speakers can produce fluent complex multi-clause utterances spontaneously. They argue that native speakers are capable of fluent and idiomatic control of language because they possess "knowledge of a body of 'sentence stems' which are 'institutionalized' or 'lexicalized'" (p. 191). They consider that such a sentence stem is "a unit of clause length or longer whose grammatical form and lexical content is wholly or largely fixed", such as "*what I think is…*" and "*Come to think of it, …*", and estimate that native speakers have, at least, several hundreds of thousands of such units (p. 191).

Sinclair (1991) explains the mechanism of native speakers' language use by two

different principles; the open-choice principle and the idiom principle. When the open-choice principle operates, “a large range of choice opens up and the only restraint is grammaticalness” (p. 109). On the other hand, while the idiom principle is at work, “language users have a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices, even though they might appear to be analysable into segments” (p. 110). Sinclair (1991) observes that although language users apply both of the principles, the one which dominates is the idiom principle, and that most texts will be interpretable by the idiom principle. Lewis (1996) also notes that “much of our supposedly ‘original’ language use is, in fact, made of prefabricated chunks, often, perhaps usually, much larger than single words” (p. 10).

Benson, Benson and Ilson (1997) claim the significance of acquiring phrases from the perspective of language use. They consider that in order to become able to express oneself fluently and accurately in speech and writing, learners “must learn to cope with the combination of words into phrases, sentences, and texts” (p.). Moreover, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) present several advantages of learning lexical phrases. First, learners can construct sentences creatively simply because the phrases are stored and reprocessed as whole chunks, and this can ease frustration and develop motivation and fluency. Second, since phrases have their origins in common and predictable social contexts, it is easier for learners to memorise them, compared with separate words. Third, phrases work as productive tools of communicating with other people, which can further create social motivation for learning the language. Fourth, since most phrases can be analysed by regular grammatical rules, and be classified into patterns, learning phrases can help learners understand grammatical rules of the language.

2.2.2 Collocations, idioms and fixed expressions

When we consider collocation as “the restrictions on how words can be used together” as Richards, Platts and Platts define it (1992, p. 62) or as “a group of words which occur repeatedly in a language” as Carter defines it (1987, p. 47), all phrases can be considered to be some kind of collocation. Sinclair (1991) observes that words seem to be selected in pairs and groups, and that many uses of words and phrases attract other words in strong collocation, as seen in “*hard work*”, “*hard luck*” and “*hard facts*”.

McCarthy (1990) points out that languages are filled with strong collocations, and

therefore "collocation deserves to be a central aspect of vocabulary study" (p. 12). Also, Nattinger (1988) says that collocations aid, not only in memorising these words, but also in "defining the semantic areas of a word" (p. 69). Furthermore, Aitchison (1994) notes that collocations are particularly strong links in human minds, and that humans utilise the firm connections of collocational links to make other, temporary links, and in this activity "logical relationships are only partly useful" (p. 98).

Idioms and fixed expressions can be considered to be items of special collocations. Carter (1987) describes idioms as "restricted collocations which cannot normally be understood from the literal meaning of the words which make them up" (p. 58), such as "*have cold feet*" and "*to let the cat out of the bag*". Carter (1987) argues that among collocations there are also other fixed expressions, such as "*as far as I know*", "*as a matter of fact*" and "*if I were you*". They are not idioms but are also semantically and structurally restricted, which, according to Carter (1987), are described by other linguists as "patterned phrases and frozen forms" (Nattinger, 1980) and "lexicalized sentence stems" (Pawley and Syder, 1983), and more generally known as "stable collocation" and "patterned speech". Furthermore, it can be said that idioms are included in fixed expressions. McCarthy and O'Dell (1994) define idioms as "fixed expressions with meanings that are not clear or obvious" (p. 148). Moon (1998) also considers that fixed expression "subsumes idioms" (p. 2).

As Moon (1998) points out, it is significant to remember that many fixed expressions are actually not fixed, and they can have some variations. Carter (1987) considers that, as far as the relative fixedness is concerned, all phrases are in some way fixed, but some are more fixed than others. He suggests three indicators to determine the fixedness of particular lexical patterns: collocational restriction, syntactic structure and semantic opacity. According to Carter, in terms of collocational restriction, the least fixed collocations are "lexical items to be open to partnership with a wide range of items", such as "*take a holiday*" and "*run a business*". The most fixed collocations are closed partnerships, such as "*pretty sure*" and "*cash and carry*". In respect of syntactic structure, the least fixed examples are such as "*break somebody's heart*", which can have various forms, such as "*heart-breaking*", "*heart-broken*" and "*heart-breaker*". The most fixed examples are "*to be good friends with somebody*" and "*the more the merrier*", which cannot have other variations of forms to convey the same meaning. In

regard to semantic opacity, the least fixed phrases are ones whose meanings are clear from the meanings of the individual words, such as "*long time, no see*" and "*when all is said and done*". The most fixed phrases are those such as "*to be on the ball*" and "*to carry the can*", whose meanings cannot be deduced from the meanings of the individual words.

Sinclair (1991) points out that words and phrases tend to co-occur with certain grammatical features, or grammatical patterns, such as "to-infinitive" and "–ing" forms. Like Sinclair, Carter (1987) notes that teaching collocation would be seriously incomplete "if grammatical patterning were not included alongside lexical patterning" (p. 57). Hunston and Francis (1998) observe that highly frequent collocation, such as "*it occurs to me that*" and "*drive me mad*", which seem to be fixed phrases are actually simply extreme cases of patterning, where lexis is particularly restricted. The interdependence of lexis and grammar will be discussed in section 2.3 in more detail.

Willis and Willis (1996) point out that it is significant to note that the learning of phrases is open-ended. Therefore, teachers should not try to present as many examples as possible, and to make learners memorise the phrases, which appears to have been done in Japanese classrooms. Instead, teachers should raise learners' consciousness of the importance of the elements. This issue will be discussed in section 2.4 in detail.

2.3 Focusing on lexical patterns

As discussed so far, lexis should come before grammar in learning English, and teachers need to focus on the significant lexical elements in classrooms. However, this does not mean that teachers need not deal with grammar. What is truly expected from teachers is to make bridges between grammar and lexis.

Sinclair (1991) considers that descriptions of English cannot be divided into two separate components, lexis and grammar, since grammatical features are decided by lexis and all lexical elements can have grammatical patterns. He observes that "many uses of words and phrases show a tendency to co-occur with certain grammatical choices" (p. 112), and as an example gives the phrase "*set about*". When the phrasal verb is used with the meaning of "inaugurate", it is usually followed by a transitive verb in the "–ing" form. He also points out that it is "unhelpful to attempt to analyse grammatically any portion of text which appears to be constructed on the idiom

principle" (p. 113). As an instance, he presents the phrase, "*of course*", which it is useless to analyse as the combination of a preposition and a noun.

Hunston, Francis and Manning (1997) consider that although grammar and lexis have been treated separately in traditional coursebooks, it is possible to connect them by focusing on patterns, which are "the grammar of individual words" (p. 208). They observe two essential points regarding patterns: firstly "all words can be described in terms of patterns" and secondly "words which share patterns also share meanings" (p. 209). They further argue that a word only means a certain matter when it is used with a particular pattern, and that words which have several meanings often display different patterns for the different meanings. Conversely, sets of words that share patterns also tend to share meanings.

Hunston, Francis and Manning (1997) note teaching patterns is essential for promoting learners' understanding, accuracy, fluency and flexibility. First, since "patterns can themselves be seen as having meaning", by knowing relationships between patterns and meanings, learners may be able to guess the meaning of an unknown word in context (p. 213). Second, knowing which patterns are used with which words is indispensable to develop learners' accuracy. Learners can be encouraged to register new vocabulary as part of a phrase with a certain pattern rather than as an isolated individual word. Third, learners can develop fluency by having access to a mental lexicon consisting of prefabricated chunks with the notion of patterns. It can be said that patterns extend the effectiveness of knowing ready-made phrases even further, since by having a good command of patterns learners can connect several patterns together, and produce more complex and longer utterances with fluency. As an example, Hunston, Francis and Manning (1997) show that the sentence "*He understood that she wanted to quarrel with him*" can be produced by linking the three different verb patterns, such as "*understand* that-clause ", "*want* to-infinitive" and "*quarrel with* noun". Lastly, by possessing a variety of patterns to express one meaning, it is possible for learners to develop flexibility in expressing their ideas.

2.4 Conducting consciousness-raising activities

Carter (1987) suggests that one of the reasons why teachers have not placed emphasis on lexis in classrooms is that while structures or grammar appear to be finite,

relations within lexis seem to be infinite. In terms of the infiniteness of lexical elements, Willis and Willis (1996) also argue that "language is so vast and varied that we can never provide learners with a viable and comprehensive description of the language as a whole" (p. 63). However, Willis and Willis (1996) note that teachers can help learners by providing them with consciousness-raising activities, which are defined as "activities which encourage them to think about samples of language and to draw their own conclusions about how the language works" (p. 63). Moreover, Schmidt (1990) argues that unconscious language learning is impossible, and that "intake is what learners consciously notice" (p. 149). He considers that paying attention and noticing should be applied to all aspects of language, such as lexis, grammar and phonology.

Ellis (1992) describes consciousness-raising by contrasting it with practice. He suggests that "practice is primarily behavioural" while "consciousness-raising is essentially concept-forming in orientation" (p. 234). He argues that when learners engage in practice, they are expected to produce sentences using the target features, and to repeat and perform the features correctly. On the other hand, the main characteristics of consciousness-raising activities are that teachers attempt "to isolate a specific linguistic feature for focused attention" and learners are "provided with data which illustrate the target feature", and are "expected to utilise intellectual effort to understand the target feature" (p. 234). Rutherford (1987) argues that a feature which is raised to consciousness should not be treated as an object or product to study and memorise, but should be looked on as an aspect of process.

It is important to reflect on what kinds of activities can actually raise learners' consciousness of the significant lexical elements, such as fixed expressions, collocations and lexically-dependent patterns. Petrovitz (1997) argues that they must be activities which "present and bring attention to aspects of certain lexical items again and again in every skill area within a course of instruction" (p.206). Moreover, Lewis (1996) points out that they should be activities based more on questions than answers, which encourage "in both learners and teachers an acceptance of the ambiguity and uncertainty which underlies language" (p. 14).

Willis and Willis (1996) give actual categories of consciousness-raising activities, such as identification, classification, hypothesis building, cross-language exploration, reconstruction and training in how to use reference materials. As an activity of

identification, classification and hypothesis building, it can be effective to encourage learners to create concordances based on texts which they have been exposed to. Willis (1993) argues that through making concordances, "language learners are provided with exercises which focus attention on the common word patterns contextualised within it" and they are encouraged to "examine their own experience of language and learn from it" (p. 91). Little (1994) suggests that learners can "discover a great deal about the grammar of their target language by making their own concordances" (p. 120). Tribble and Jones (1990) also consider that concordances let learners "rearrange texts in such a way that it becomes possible to see patterns that would not otherwise be visible" (p. 9). Furthermore, Johns (1991) notes that by conducting concordance-based exercises, learners can "develop inductive strategies that will help them to become better language learners outside the classroom" (p. 31).

Hunston, Francis and Manning (1997) also show examples of activities for raising consciousness of patterns through identification and classification. They suggest three types of activities: getting learners to identify patterns in texts, encouraging learners to identify groups of the same meanings in lists of words, and asking learners to look for a certain pattern and find words used with it outside the classroom.

Regarding cross-language exploration, James (1994) suggests that raising awareness for learners' own native language can help learners understand the second language by comparing the two languages and "facilitating bridge between them" (p. 212). He argues that by contrasting L1 and L2 learners can recognise that they already know in L1 something which may appear quite new in L2. He points out that the comparative activity can greatly contribute to learners' learning know-how.

As to training in how to use reference materials, it is important to select informative books. Collins COBUILD English Dictionary (Sinclair, 1995), The BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations (Benson, Benson and Ilson, 1997) and Collins COBUILD Verbs: Patterns and Practice (Francis, Manning and Hunston, 1997) are based on evidence and show useful lexical usages. Samples in the reference materials are selected to indicate word partners and patterns that are frequently and repeatedly found in authentic English. By becoming able to use the materials efficiently, learners can establish a strong connection to the common uses, important meanings and patterns of frequent words.

As discussed in this chapter, focusing on lexis in English classrooms is highly important. Teachers should especially emphasise learning phrases, such as fixed expressions and collocations, which are essential elements in the language. Bringing patterns into the centre of language learning has a distinct possibility in connecting lexis with grammar, and acquiring the language in accessible manners. Since lexical elements are infinite and it is impossible to teach all that learners need, teachers should conduct activities that can raise learners' consciousness of the important lexical items. As Carter (1993) points out, "what can be taught is the procedural ability, the ability to learn how to learn" (p. 148), and learners can become more efficient learners if they can analyse what they are learning and why they are doing it.

CHAPTER 3 ANALYSES OF EXERCISES FROM AUTHORISED TEXTBOOKS

3.1 The aim of the analyses

As discussed in chapter 2, focusing on lexis in English classrooms is highly significant, and the teaching should be done in ways to raise learners' consciousness of the important features of lexical elements. The lack of this notion in English classrooms in Japan can be considered one of the major factors that underlie the learners' inability to use the language after six years of English education in secondary schools. In order to seek solutions to the Japanese problem, it is important to clarify how lexis is actually treated in the English classrooms.

How lexis is dealt with in the classrooms may differ to some extent depending on the teachers' intentions. However, every Japanese school is officially regulated to use textbooks authorised by the government, and teachers usually do follow the contents of the textbooks. In particular, exercises presented in the textbooks are the points which the textbook writers intend to emphasise, and teachers are likely to follow the guides. Therefore, it is possible to ascertain what is taught and emphasised in English classrooms in Japan by examining exercises presented in authorised textbooks. By investigating the exercises, this chapter seeks answers to questions of how much emphasis is placed on lexis in classrooms, what kinds of knowledge of lexis are dealt with, and in what ways the elements are treated.

3.2 Methods and materials

This dissertation analyses exercises from Japanese high school authorised textbooks for "English Course 1", a course which is designated as compulsory by the Ministry of Education through its guidelines. All authorised textbooks for "English Course 1" follow the same structure, which is a set of about twelve written texts and accompanying exercises. Teachers are likely to teach English according to the organisation of the textbooks, first read the texts with learners and then help them do the exercises. Therefore, examining the contents of the exercises can reveal how ordinary teaching is conducted in English classrooms in Japanese high schools.

As representative of all the coursebooks available, I chose five textbooks of "English Course 1", i.e. Textbook A, Textbook B, Textbook C, Textbook D and Textbook E.

Among several English subjects taught in Japanese high schools, I selected the coursebooks for “English Course 1”, which is a course, along with “English Course 2”, that Japanese teachers usually consider one of the most significant English subjects and actually devote the most time to among all English courses in high schools. Therefore, the textbooks of the course can be considered typical of Japanese textbooks, and the result of the analyses could be extrapolated to English teaching in Japan as a whole.

Since most exercise patterns in “English Course 1” are similar to one another, the above five textbooks, which are all intermediate-level and seem to have somewhat different attitudes towards lexis teaching, were selected among all possible textbooks for “English Course 1” published in 1998. In particular, Textbook D was chosen to be analysed since it was the most popular coursebook for “English Course 1” in Japanese high schools in 1997 (Jijitsushinsha, 1997), and thus the textbook can show what kind of textbook is preferred by Japanese teachers.

All textbooks published in 1998 were written according to the 1989 guidelines, which stress the importance of developing learners’ ability to use English. Although new guidelines were announced in 1999, according to which new textbooks will be developed and come into use from 2003, the basic pattern of textbook exercises is expected to remain the same since the fundamental idea of the 1999 guidelines is not greatly changed from that of the 1989 guidelines.

In order to reveal how lexis is treated in textbook exercises, this chapter classifies exercises in terms of their characteristics. My initial attempts to categorise exercises ran into problems because the categories tended to overlap. For example, at first, I tried to categorise exercises into three groups: “lexis-focused”, “grammar-focused” and “lexis-and-grammar-focused”. However, the classification did not work well, since the definition of “focused” was ambiguous. It seemed that “grammar-focused” exercises also required some lexical knowledge, and “lexis-focused” exercises were inextricably bound to knowledge of grammar. Therefore, it was concluded that there could be little significance to divide exercises into the three groups. It can be said that facing the impossibility of separating lexis and grammar was inevitable, since, as discussed in section 2.3, the description of language cannot be divided into two segments of lexis and grammar. The difficulty I faced can be said to highlight the fact that grammatical features are dependent on lexis and all lexical elements can have grammatical patterns

(Sinclair, 1991; Hunston and Francis, 1998).

Second, I tried to categorise exercises according to surface types of exercises, such as “word to word translation”, “gap-filling”, “transformation”, “identifying lexical-dependent patterns”, “memorising fixed phrases” and “knowing collocations”. However, I encountered difficulties again, since some of the exercises did not fit in any of the five groups or could be categorised into 2 groups. For example, exercises of “transformation” or “gap filling” could be a test of collocations, patterns or fixed phrases. The main problem in the categorisation seemed to be that two questions which belong to different levels had been asked at the same time. One is (1) what kind of knowledge does the learner need to do the exercise (for example, fixed expressions, lexical collocations, patterns, grammatical rules) and the other is (2) what kind of exercise is it (for example, gap filling, transformation, multiple choice, identification, classification).

The two questions are on different levels and it can be considered unavoidable that the attempts to answer the two questions at the same time caused a problem. Therefore, this chapter examines the two issues in turn: first, what kinds of knowledge are needed to do the exercises and then, in what ways do the exercises treat the lexical elements. In the first stage of the analyses, all exercises of the five textbooks are examined to answer the first question, “what knowledge?”, and on the second stage, two textbooks that have emphasis on lexical exercises are selected and further examined to find answers to the second question “in what ways?”.

3.3 What kinds of knowledge are needed to do the exercises?

This section analyses exercises of the five textbooks for "English Course 1”, i.e. Textbook A, Textbook B, Textbook C, Textbook D and Textbook E. It clarifies what kinds of knowledge are needed to do the exercises; in other words, what sorts of knowledge learners are expected to have to do the exercises, and what kinds of information learners can gain after engaging in the exercises.

3.3.1 How to categorise

This section categorises textbook exercises into five groups according to what kinds of knowledge the exercises demand from learners (see Table 1). The categories are (1)

fixed expressions including idioms, which are semantically opaque and/or structurally restricted; (2) lexical collocations, which typically consist of content words, such as nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs; (3) lexically-dependant patterns or grammatical collocations, which consist of dominant words and grammatical words, such as prepositions or grammatical structures; (4) features of individual words, such as antonyms, derivations or meanings of single words; and (5) grammatical rules, which restrict structures and the language system, such as word order, the tense system and the articles.

In the above categorisation, fixed expressions including idioms are classified in category (1) separately from lexical collocations in category (2), in order to examine clearly how much emphasis is placed on the two categories, which are predicted to not be focused on sufficiently in English classrooms in Japan. Since fixedness of phrases is never absolute, the classification can easily run into problems unless it is clearly defined from the beginning. As discussed in section 2.2.2, here we consider the broad sense of collocations as any restrictions on how words can be connected together (Richards, Platts, and Platts, 1992), and idioms and fixed expressions as special collocations that are relatively more fixed semantically and/or structurally than ordinary word combinations (Carter, 1987). Furthermore, we consider that idioms are included in fixed expressions (McCarthy and O'Dell, 1994; Moon, 1998). Therefore, category (1) collects word associations whose meanings cannot be deduced from the meanings of the individual words, and/or which are structurally fixed and are used as patterned or frozen phrases. Category (2) gathers word combinations whose meanings are transparent from the meanings of the individual words and which are open to partnership with a wide range of items, and not structurally and semantically fixed.

Table 1 Categorisation of exercises in terms of "what knowledge is needed?"

Category	**Explanation**	**Example**
(1) Fixed expressions including idioms	Phrases which are semantically opaque and/or structurally fixed	● *give it a try* ● *as far as I'm concerned* ● *in spite of* ● *as happy as the day is long* ● *like a bear with a sore head*

(2) Lexical collocations	Word associations or word partners which consist of content words, such as nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs.	● *hard work* ● *strong tea* ● *hold the record* ● *offer a job*
(3) Lexically-dependant patterns (grammatical collocations)	Word associations which consist of dominant words and grammatical words, such as prepositions or grammatical structures, such as to-infinitives and that-clauses	● *look for* ● *hope* to-infinitive ● *good at* -ing ● *an idea* that-clause
(4) Features of individual words	Characteristics of individual words, such as antonyms, synonyms, derivations and meanings	● *above – below* ● *success – succeed* ● *lack of rain = drought*
(5)Grammatical rules	Restrictions on structures and the language system, such as word order, the tense system and the articles	● *The name has been changed* (the passive voice) ● *If I knew the restaurant, I could take you there* (the subjunctive mood)

The distinction between category (2) and category (3) may also need to be clarified. Category (3) is a collection of grammatical collocations, which consist of dominant words (noun, adjective, verb) and grammatical words, such as prepositions or grammatical structures, such as “to-infinitive” or “that-clause” (Benson, Benson and Ilson, 1997), and can work as bridges between lexis and grammar (Hunston, Francis and Manning, 1997). In contrast to grammatical collocations, lexical collocations, which are collected in category (2), usually consist of nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs, and do not contain prepositions, “to-infinitive” or “that-clause”. Therefore, to sum up, the broad sense of collocations can be grouped into three categories in the analyses; semantically and structurally fixed ones into category (1), lexical collocations which are semantically transparent and structurally open into category (2), and grammatical collocations into category (3). These three categories of collocations can be considered to be the essential elements for acquiring competence to use the language, as discussed in chapter 2, which are predicted to be insufficiently dealt with in English classrooms in Japan.

Exercises concerning features of individual words are classified into category (4), which seems to be one of the major lexical elements that authorised textbooks deal with.

All exercises treating grammar rules are classified into category (5). However, if grammatical restrictions are treated in connection with lexical patterns, they are grouped into category (3). Category (5) also appears to represent typical exercises in authorised textbooks.

Examples of each category are shown in Table 1. Fixed expressions, such as "*give it a try*" and "*as far as I'm concerned*", and idioms, such as "*as happy as the day is long*" and "*like a bear with a sore head*", are classified into category (1). Lexical collocations, such as "*hard work*", "*hold the record*" and "*offer a job*", are classified into category (2). Lexical patterns or grammatical collocations, such as "*look for*", "*hope* to-infinitive" and "*an idea* that-clause", are grouped into category (3). Antonyms, derivations or meanings of individual words, such as "*above*" for "*below*" and "*success*" for "*succeed*", are grouped into category (4). All exercises that deal with grammatical rules concerning structures and the language system, such as changing the active voice into a passive voice, and choosing a correct verb tense, are classified into category (5).

Actual examples of exercises in the five textbooks classified into each category are shown in Table 2. It is important to note that in the examples the knowledge which is required from learners is often disguised rather than highlighted. For instance, the first example of lexical collocations in category (2) does not highlight the combination of "*won*" and "*applause*", and it can be said that the example only tests the knowledge of meanings of the individual words included. Due to the disguise, it was often not clear what knowledge the textbook writers were aiming at, which created difficulties for categorising the exercises of the textbooks. The difficulties can suggest that the textbook writers have a low level of awareness of what knowledge they are really requiring from learners. More examples of exercises will be shown and discussed in detail in section 3.3.3 and section 3.4.3.

When categorising exercises in the textbooks, some activities shown in the books, such as comprehension quizzes and translations either from Japanese to English or from English to Japanese, are excluded from the objects of the analyses. Although comprehension questions and translations can be useful to some extent, they are almost always presented in authorised textbooks, and can be considered to demand all aspects of knowledge of the language, in other words, not to focus on any particular element of

the language. Therefore, these activities are excluded from the analyses of this dissertation, whose aim is to focus on the examination of lexis-related exercises. The effectiveness of the excluded activities may need to be investigated in future study.

Table 2 Examples of textbook exercises categorised based on "what knowledge?"

Category	Example
(1) Fixed expressions including idioms	Fill in the blanks. (Textbook C, p. 100) ● *The man took eggs out of the bag one ( ) one.* ● *Believe me, I fell in love ( ) the woman at first sight.*
(2) Lexical collocations	Select the right words from the parentheses. (Textbook A, p. 89) ● *The singer won the (applause / screaming / echoing) of the audience.* ● *She showed me her (fear / pain / gratitude) by inviting me to dinner.*
(3) Lexically-dependant patterns	Modify the following verbs into the correct forms. (Textbook E, p. 105) ● *I really enjoyed (watch) the movie on TV last night.* ● *Mary looks like a nice girl. I'd like (talk) to her.*
(4) Features of individual words	Write words which are indicated below. (Textbook B, p. 40) ● the antonym of *above* ● the verb form of *success*
(5)Grammatical rules	Select the right words from the parentheses. (Textbook C, p. 111) ● *If you hadn't helped me then, I (failed / would fail / would have failed) in my business.*

Note: All the instructions are originally written in Japanese, and the writer of this dissertation translated them into English.

3.3.2 Results of the categorisation

Table 3 shows the results of the categorisation. The categories from (1) to (5) indicate the numbers of activities which belong to the five categories discussed above. Each activity usually consists of four to five short questions, as those shown in Table 2. Below the total exercises the numbers of lexis-related exercises are indicated, which are the sum total of the categories (1), (2), (3) and (4). Moreover, below the total lexis-

related exercises, the numbers of exercises of the essential lexical elements, which include fixed expressions, lexical collocations and lexical patterns categorised in the categories (1), (2) and (3), are shown. Table 4 indicates the percentages of exercises in each category to the total exercises. Since the number of the total exercises in each textbook greatly differs, it should be appropriate to examine the percentages shown in Table 4 when comparing the figures of the five textbooks.

Table 3 Results of the categorisation (number of exercises)

Category	Text-book A	Text-book B	Text-book C	Text-book D	Text-book E	Average of the five
(1) Fixed expressions	23	12	14	14	0	13
(2) Lexical collocations	7	0	0	0	0	1
(3) Lexically-dependent patterns	16	12	12	10	11	12
(4) Features of individual words	19	12	0	1	0	6
(5) Grammatical rules	8	10	12	15	26	14
Total exercises (1+2+3+4+5)	73	46	38	40	37	46
Lexis-related elements (1+2+3+4)	65	36	26	25	11	32
Essential lexical elements (1+2+3)	46	24	26	24	11	26

It may be appropriate to start by examining the average figures of the five books. It can be observed that exercises treating lexis-related elements account for 70% of the total, which largely exceeds the percentage of the exercises treating grammar rules, which is 30 % of the total (Table 4). These figures may appear to suggest that the five textbooks treat lexis as a central factor in exercises. However, it is important to carefully consider the differences among the textbooks.

Table 4 Results of the categorisation (percentage of exercises to the total)

Category	Text-	Text-	Text-	Text-	Text-	Average

	book A	book B	book C	book D	book E	of the five
(1) Fixed expressions	32%	26%	37%	35%	0%	27%
(2) Lexical collocations	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%
(3) Lexically-dependent patterns	22%	26%	32%	25%	30%	26%
(4) Features of individual words	26%	26%	0%	3%	0%	14%
(5) Grammatical rules	11%	22%	32%	38%	70%	30%
Total exercises (5+6)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Lexis-related elements (1+2+3+4)	89%	78%	68%	63%	30%	70%
Essential lexical elements (1+2+3)	63%	52%	68%	60%	30%	56%

In Textbook E 70% of the total exercises deals with grammatical rules, and only 30% handles lexical elements (Table 4). This textbook can be said to be a representative of the traditional English textbooks in Japan, which do not pay much attention to lexis, and focus on grammatical rules. It should be pointed out that Textbook E is one of the most popular textbooks in Japanese high schools, and that according to 1997 statistics (Jijitsushinsha, 1997), the textbook was the third preferred textbook among the intermediate-level textbooks for "English Course 1". The remaining four textbooks, Textbook A, Textbook B, Textbook C and Textbook D place more emphasis on lexical elements, respectively 89%, 78%, 68% and 63% of the total. Textbook D is the most popular intermediate textbook for "English Course 1" in 1997, and Textbook C is the sixth popular, and Textbook B is the seventh popular.

It becomes obvious that the four textbooks which emphasise lexis more than Textbook E also have problems when they are examined more carefully in terms of what aspects of lexis they focus on in the exercises (see Table 4). Textbook C deals with fixed expressions (37%) and patterns (32%), but with no lexical collocation (0%). Textbook D has a similar tendency to Textbook C. It deals with fixed expressions (35%) and patterns (25%), but does not treat lexical collocation (0%). Textbook B seems to emphasise lexis-related exercises (78%) than Textbook C (68%) and Textbook

D (63%), but it actually deals more with features of individual words, such as meanings and derivations of single words (26%), and it treats the essential lexical elements less (52%) than Textbook C (68%) and Textbook D (60%). Textbook A devotes 89% of the total exercises to lexis-related elements, and also presents exercises related to lexical collocations (10%), which the remaining four textbooks do not deal with at all. This textbook can be considered the most lexis-focused textbook among the five. However, its weak point may be that it pays more attention to features of individual words (26%) than to lexical collocations (10%) and lexical patterns (22%). As a result, regarding the essential lexical elements, Textbook A deals less (63%) than Textbook C (68%).

3.3.3 Evaluation of the results

To begin with, it is important to note that there are some textbooks that emphasise exercises demanding knowledge of grammatical rules to the exclusion of those demanding knowledge of lexis. Textbook E represents this group. As mentioned before, Textbook E is the third most popular book among the intermediate textbooks for "English Course 1". It reveals the reality that English teachers in Japan are still fond of ways to give priority to grammar rules, since it is teachers who choose textbooks, and when they select textbooks, the organisation of exercises is one of the crucial factors. Examples of exercises treating grammar rules are shown in Table 5, which seem to require learners only to manipulate grammar rules separated from lexical features. For example, in engaging in the first exercise in Table 5 learners only need to pay attention to the use of a relative adverb. The selection of textbooks that stress these types of exercises can be considered one of the main reasons why Japanese learners do not become able to use English since rules can develop only in association with lexis (Widdowson, 1989; Little, 1994).

Table 5 Examples of textbook exercises concerning grammatical rules

Connect the two sentences by the use of a relative adverb. (Textbook E, p. 118) ● *He got angry for some reason. I can't imagine the reason.* Change the sentence to one that emphasises the word underlined using the pattern "*it is* ~ that-clause". (Textbook D, p. 91) ● *Carol came to see me yesterday.*

Choose the appropriate words from the parentheses. (Textbook C, p. 111)

- *If you hadn't helped me then, I* (*failed / would fail / would have failed*) *in my business.*

Rewrite the sentence into a passive form. (Textbook C, p. 64)

- *We'll send a free copy of the book on request.*

Fill in the blanks so that the following two sentences can have a similar meaning. (Textbook C, p. 87)

- *I lost my key this morning. I'm still looking for it.*
- *I* ( ) ( ) ( ) *for my key since this morning.*

On the other hand, it is of great significance to note that there are some textbooks which put more emphasis on lexical elements than on isolated grammar rules, such as Textbook A, Textbook B, Textbook C and Textbook D. The most popular textbook, Textbook D, deals with lexis-related elements in 63% of the total exercises (Table 4). The remaining three textbooks, Textbook A, Textbook B, and Textbook C treat lexis-related elements in more than two thirds of the total exercises, respectively 89%, 78% and 68%. Therefore, it can be said that some Japanese teachers actually emphasise lexis in their classrooms, and that the problems can be found in a deeper place, that is, in the contents of the lexis teaching, which we need to examine further.

First, it can be argued that the focus on features of individual words is one of the major problems in Japanese lexis teaching. As seen before, both Textbook A and Textbook B treat features of single words in 26% of the total exercises. The typical ways that the textbooks deal with features of individual words are shown in Table 6. Textbook B asks the antonym of "*above*" and the verb form of "*success*". Textbook A tests the knowledge of the meanings of "*practice*" and "*fade*". When Japanese teachers claim the importance of teaching lexis, it is likely that they mean the teaching of meanings and derivations of individual words as above, and do not mean to teach how words are used with other words or in what patterns they appear in sentences or real contexts. It is obvious that even though learners may gain the knowledge of meanings and derivations of individual words through the exercises, they will not become able to use them since they do not know how to use them.

This preference of teaching isolated single words is not only shown in the exercises

of the authorised textbooks, but also evident in the popularity of vocabulary books which are recommended by teachers and treasured by high school learners who aim at entrance examinations for universities. In the books, such as Target 1900 (Miyagawa, 1996) and Eitango Bunya Betsu [English Vocabulary in Categories] (Kanai et al., 1995), meanings of individual words are listed according to categories, such as politics and history, or to frequency of appearance in the past examinations.

Table 6 Examples of textbook exercises concerning features of individual words

Write words which are indicated below. (Textbook B, p. 40)
- the antonym of *above*
- the verb form of *success*

Choose the words which fit the following definitions. (Textbook A, p. 144)
- *do something repeatedly to improve one's skill*
- *lose power, color or freshness*
  (*fade / stagger / practice / endure*)

Second, it is also problematic that the textbooks do not treat lexical collocations in the exercises. If learners aim to become able to use English in real life, they need to be more familiar with lexical collocations (Sinclair, 1991; McCarthy, 1990). However, Textbook A is the only textbook that could be said to present exercises which are related to lexical collocations, and the remaining four textbooks do not deal with lexical collocations at all. Examples regarding lexical collocations presented in Textbook A are shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Examples of textbook exercises concerning lexical collocations

Select the appropriate words from the parentheses. (Textbook A, p. 89)
- *The singer won the (applause / screaming / echoing) of the audience.*
- *She showed me her (fear / pain / gratitude) by inviting me to dinner.*

Select the appropriate words from the parentheses. Modify its form where necessary. (Textbook A, p. 46)
- *If water ( ), it becomes ice.*
- *When water ( ), it flows very quickly.*
- *If water ( ) in a particular direction, it moves slowly and steadily.*

(freeze / pour / develop / demolish / flow)

They are exercises which have elements of collocations such as "*win applause*", "*show gratitude*" and "*water freezes*". However, when learners engage in the exercises, the knowledge actually required from learners appears to be the information about meanings of the individual words, such as "*applause*", "*gratitude*" and "*freeze*". I categorised these exercises into the group of exercises concerning lexical collocations, since they are the only examples which could be found in the five textbooks for this category, and they can be considered to have a possibility to be focused on the collocational features if teachers can draw attention to the collocational restrictions in conducting the exercises. The textbooks should be modified to treat more lexical collocations, and activities should be created to require from learners knowledge of collocational restrictions (Rudzka et al., 1995), not meanings of individual words. Table 8 shows examples of exercises focusing on lexical collocations presented in other materials. The activities focus on features of collocations, where learners are required to have knowledge of the combinations, such as "*generate*" and "*electricity*", "*do*" and "*homework*" and "*a loaf of*" and "*bread*".

Third, contrary to my initial prediction, the textbooks devote a considerable part of their exercises to the elements in categories (1) and (3), that is, fixed expressions and patterns, which are essential for acquiring competence to use English (Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1992; Hunston, Francis and Manning, 1997). Examples of exercises in the two categories are shown in Table 9 and Table 10. Firstly, in terms of fixed expressions, Textbook A, Textbook B, Textbook C and Textbook D present exercises related with the elements in one fourth to one third of the total exercises (Table 4). Textbook E is the only coursebook that does not pay attention to the features in exercises. Secondly, with regard to lexical patterns or grammatical collocations, all five textbooks deal with the items in about 20% to 30% of the total exercises.

Table 8 Examples of exercises treating lexical collocations in other materials

- Test your collocational competence by filling in this chart. It took a native speaker 45 seconds to identify the collocations in this table. Time yourself while completing the chart. (The Words You Need, Rudzka et al., 1995, p. 33)

	electric-ity	*effects*	*hostility*	*plays*	*heat*	*Food*	*films*
produce							
generate							

- Which words in column A can combine with words from column B? (Headway: Upper-Intermediate, Soars and Soars, 1987, p. 87)

A	B
to do *to make*	*an appointment, sure, a lot of damage, up your mind,* *your homework, a mess, your best, an excuse, sense*

- Match the words on the left side with those on the right side. (Teaching and Learning Vocabulary, Taylor, 1990, p. 48)

a loaf of	*flour*
five	*sugar*
two packets of	*flowers*
a role of	*cigarettes*
a bottle of	*bread*
a bag of	*kitchen paper*
twenty	*books*
a bunch of	*apples*
a kilo of	*medicine*
a pound of	*tea*

- Correct the mis-collocations in these sentences. (English Vocabulary in Use: Upper-intermediate, McCarthy and O'Dell, 1994, p. 79)

1. I can't come out. I'm studying. I'm passing an examination tomorrow.
2. Congratulations! I hear you succeeded your examination!
3. I got some good notes in my continuous assessment this term.

- Write the opposite of these phrases and expressions. (English Vocabulary in Use: Pre-intermediate & Intermediate, Redman, 1997, p. 31)

1. strong accent 2. strong coffee 3. tell the truth 4. catch the bus

Table 9 Examples of textbook exercises concerning fixed expressions

Fill in the blanks. (Textbook C, p.100)

- *The man took eggs out of the bag one ( ) one.*
- *Believe me, I fell in love ( ) the woman at first sight.*

Put the different parts of the sentences in the correct order. (Textbook C, p. 87)

- *This area used to be a paradise for wild birds. It is (we / see or hear / can no longer / that / a pity) any birds around here.*
- *"Why don't we telephone Bill?"*
  "OK, but (we don't know / the trouble / his telephone number / that / is)."

Select the appropriate expression from the parentheses. (Textbook A, p. 31)

- *Last week my father had a day off and took me fishing at Lake Biwa.*
  –( ). You have a wonderful father.
  (Not necessarily / That sounds nice / As far as I know / That's true)

Table 10 Examples of textbook exercises concerning lexical patterns

Change the verbs in brackets into the appropriate form. (Textbook E, p. 105)
- *I really enjoyed (watch) the movie on TV last night.*
- *Mary looks like a nice girl. I'd like (talk) to her.*

Fill in the blanks (Textbook B, p. 70)
- *The letters US stand ( ) the United States.*
- *My teacher encouraged me ( ) go on studying art.*

Put the different parts of the sentences in the correct order. (Textbook C, p. 13; Textbook D, p. 145)
- *His name is Robert, but we (him, Bob, call).*
- *The kind words from his teacher (Tommy, made, happy) all day.*
- *I need (on, to, my homework, concentrate) for a while.*

Choose the appropriate words from the parentheses. (Textbook A, p. 154)
- *There are ( ) that she will get married.*
- *This is the ( ) that she is innocent.*

(news / proof / rumors)

It is significant to note that English classrooms actually treat fixed expressions and lexis-related patterns in exercises. Considering the fact, we need to examine why Japanese learners cannot utilise, in real situations, the phrases and patterns they have learned in the exercises. It can be argued that treating the multi-word items as fixed and as objects to be memorised one by one is a part of the problem. The textbooks seem to treat fixed expressions and patterns as a group of isolated items, as seen in examples in Table 9 and Table 10. This problem will be discussed in section 3.4.3 in more detail.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, it appears that the textbook writers do not have sufficient awareness of what knowledge they are actually presenting. It seems that they tend to make exercises by firstly deciding the surface types, such as fill-in-blanks, multiple choices or ordering words, and then choosing what elements to put in the frames. In categorising exercises, it was often found that in an activity of fill-in-blanks for fixed expressions, a couple of questions concerning knowledge of individual words and grammatical collocations were mixed.

As seen in this section, it is indispensable for teachers to be careful not to think that if only they treat more lexis in classrooms, learners will be able to use English. They should be careful to choose what kinds of lexical knowledge learners need in order to become able to use the language. Teachers should also keep in mind that it is not only a matter of what to teach, but also a matter of how to teach them, and that the two issues should be considered separately.

3.4 In what ways are lexical elements treated in activities?

In section 3.3 we have examined what kinds of knowledge are required to do the exercises of the existing textbooks. There seems to be another crucial factor in examining textbook exercises, which possibly has a greater effect on the development of learners' ability to use English, that is, the way the lexical elements are treated. In section 2.4, it has been discussed that since lexical elements are vast and it is impossible to teach all lexical elements, teachers need to carefully consider how to teach them (Willis and Willis, 1996). It is significant for teachers to conduct exercises in ways to raise learners' consciousness of the importance of lexical elements, so that learners can acquire the lexical elements which are usable and accessible in real contexts, by themselves even outside the classroom. This section will clarify in what ways lexis teaching is actually conducted in Japanese classrooms by examining exercises from authorised textbooks.

3.4.1 How to categorise

This section analyses two textbooks, Textbook A and Textbook C, in which more emphasis seems to be placed on the significant lexical elements, including fixed expressions, lexical collocations and lexical patterns, compared with the remaining three textbooks. As seen in section 3.3.2, Textbook C deals with the essential lexical elements in 68% of the total exercises and Textbook A treats them in 63% of the whole exercises (Table 4). It is significant to investigate what kinds of problems the books have in terms of ways the lexical elements are treated, which should offer suggestions concerning improvement of the exercises.

In order to make the shortcomings of the textbooks clear, the exercises regarding the essential lexical elements are classified into two categories, consciousness-raising (C-R)

activities and non-consciousness-raising (non-C-R) activities (Table 11). In section 2.4 I have advised the use of C-R activities as opposed to practice, which can be considered typical of non-C-R activities. C-R activities can help learners focus on a specific feature by providing data which illustrate the target elements. In C-R activities both teachers and learners are expected not to pursue the one correct answer, but to accept the ambiguity and uncertainty, and to examine data to draw their own conclusions (Lewis, 1996; Willis and Willis, 1996). On the other hand, in non-C-R activities learners are required to follow teacher models and to produce correct phrases or sentences by using target elements (Ellis, 1992). For example, exercises of identifying, classifying, hypothesis building, comparing features of L1 and L2, reconstructing and training in how to use reference materials can be categorised into C-R activities (Table 11). Exercises of gap-filling, transformation, multiple choice, and reordering of words can be categorised into non-C-R activities.

Examples of C-R activities are illustrated in Table 12. Since only one example was found in the authorised textbooks, more examples are drawn from Collins COBUILD English Course 1 (Willis and Willis, 1988), and other materials written by McCarthy (1990), Gairns and Redman (1986), and Willing (1989). These activities have elements of C-R activities, such as identification, classification and cross-language exploration concerning "*look*" and "*to*", and reference training in finding collocations of "*damaged*" or patterns of "*advise*", "*suggest*" and "*insist*".

Table 11 Categorisation of exercises in terms of "what ways are they conducted?"

Category	**Explanation**	**Example**
Consciousness-raising activities	● Learners are encouraged to focus on a specific linguistic feature, to examine data which illustrate the target feature and to draw their own conclusions.	● Identify a particular pattern of words in a passage ● Classify words according

	● Concept-forming ● Based more on questions than answers ● Teachers and students need to accept the ambiguity and uncertainty	to patterns and meanings ● Build a hypothesis on collocational restrictions ● Compare collocations between the first language and the second language ● Get training in how to use reference materials
Non-consciousness-raising activities	● Learners are expected to repeat the target features and to create correct sentences using the target features. ● Behavioural ● Students are expected to find the one correct answer	● Gap-filling ● Transformation ● Multiple choice ● Reordering of words to complete correct sentences ● True or false ● Connect two sentences to make a grammatically correct sentence by using rules

Table 12 Examples of consciousness-raising activities

Compare the meanings of the words underlined using a dictionary. (Textbook A, p. 32) ● *The doctor ordered me to stay in bed.* ● *He called our names in alphabetical order.* Find all the phrases with the word "*look*". Do you have the same word in your language for all these meanings? (Collins COBUILD English Course1, Willis and Willis, 1988, p. 40) ● *A lot of people are looking for houses in this area.* ● *Could you look after the children for me? I have to go out at 6:30.* ● *Excuse me, could I look up a word in your dictionary?*

Grammar words "*to*" (Collins COBUILD English Course1, Willis and Willis, 1988, p. 42)

1. Do you have the same word for all these uses of "*to*" in your language?

- *I went to see my sister. (purpose)*
- *We asked people to write about… (after ask, want, plan etc.)*
- *It was nice to see you. (after it)*
- *What's the best way to travel? (after place, way, thing etc.)*

2. Which categories do these sentences belong to?

- *Work in groups to do these puzzles.*
- *The cheapest thing to do is take a bus.*

Before looking up the BBI dictionary, try to answer the following questions: (Vocabulary, McCarthy, 1990, p. 138)

- What adverb modifiers might precede the adjective "*damaged*"?
- List some verbs that might occur with the noun "*a dance*" (e.g. "*have a dance*").

Which of the following verbs can you use to complete the sentence below? Use your dictionary to check your answers and notice that there is more than one correct answer in some of the examples. (Working with Words, Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 131)

(tell advise suggest warn insist)

- *He/The doctor ( ) that I go/I should go/ I went to bed.*
- *She/The nurse ( ) on him/his going to bed.*

Collecting collocations (Teaching How To Learn, Willing, 1989, p. 100)

- Teachers choose a current newspaper article loaded with interesting adjective-noun combinations.
- Learners read the article and explore meaning. When the central point of the story has been understood go on to exploit the language.
- Learners highlight nouns in the story.
- Using a different colour highlighter, the learners pick out six of these nouns which have adjective-noun combinations.
- Ask learners to think of other nouns which they associate with the adjectives: for example, *solid base / gold / brick / investment /rock /…*

3.4.2 Results of the categorisation

The numbers of C-R and non-C-R exercises in the two textbooks are shown in Table 13. Textbook A has 46 exercises dealing with the essential lexical features, including fixed phrases, lexical collocation, and patterns. Among them, however, only one exercise can be considered to raise learners' consciousness, which is related to reference training as shown in Table 12. As to Textbook C, it has 26 exercises concerning the valuable lexical items, but there is no activity which can be considered to develop learners' consciousness of the elements. In the two books all the exercises except one activity are non-C-R exercises, such as gap-filling, selecting appropriate forms or words

and reordering words to complete correct phrases as seen in Table 14.

Table 13 Results of the categorisation (number of exercises)

Category	**Textbook A**	**Textbook C**
Consciousness-raising activities	1	0
Non-consciousness-raising activities	45	26
Total exercises of the essential lexical elements	46	26

3.4.3 Evaluation of the results

Although Textbook A and Textbook C deal with the essential lexical elements more than the other textbooks, they do not create exercises in ways to raise learners' consciousness of the importance and usefulness of the elements. In particular, it should be emphasised that although the two textbooks devote a considerable amount of their exercises to treating phrases and lexical patterns, they restrict the advantages of their selection of the lexical features by adopting non-consciousness-raising methods.

Table 14 Examples of non-C-R activities

Fixed expressions	Select the appropriate phrase from the parentheses. (Textbook A, p. 31) ● *"Last week my father had a day off and took me fishing at Lake Biwa." "( ). You have a wonderful father."* *(Not necessarily / That sounds nice / As far as I know / That's true)* Fill in the blanks. (Textbook C, p. 100) ● *The man took eggs out of the bag one ( ) one.* ● *Believe me, I fell in love ( ) the woman at first sight.* Put the different parts of the sentences in the correct order. (Textbook C, p. 87) ● *This area used to be a paradise for wild birds. It is (we / see or hear / can no longer / that / a pity) any birds around here.* ● *"Why don't we telephone Bill?" "OK, but (we don't know / the trouble / his telephone number / that / is)."*
Lexical collocations	Select the appropriate words from the parentheses. (Textbook A, p. 89) ● *The singer won the (applause / screaming / echoing) of the audience.* ● *She showed me her (fear / pain / gratitude) by inviting me to dinner.*

	Select the appropriate words from the parentheses. Modify its form where necessary. (Textbook A, p. 46) ● *If water ( ), it becomes ice.* ● *When water ( ), it flows very quickly.* *(freeze / pour / develop / demolish / flow)*
Lexical patterns	Put the different parts of the sentences in the correct order. (Textbook C, p. 13) ● *His name is Robert, but we (him, Bob, call).* ● *The kind words from his teacher (Tommy, made, happy) all day.* Modify the verbs in the parentheses into the appropriate forms. (Textbook C, p. 31) ● *I didn't feel like going out because it kept (rain) all day.* ● *The movie has started. All the people there look very (excite).* Write a sentences following the instruction. (Textbook A, p. 75) ● Express what you are not allowed to do using "*are forbidden to*". Choose the correct words from the parentheses. (Textbook A, p. 154) ● *There are ( ) that she will get married.* ● *This is the ( ) that she is innocent.* *(news / proof / rumors)*

One of the characteristics of treating fixed expressions in the exercises is that they only require learners to memorise the phrases with their meanings. For example, Textbook A asks learners to select the expression "*That sounds nice*" to complete a dialog (Table 14). The exercises concerning fixed expressions in Textbook C are done by filling in blanks or re-ordering words to complete the correct expressions, such as "*one by one*", "*fell in love with*" and "*it is a pity* that-clause". In these activities, if learners have memorised the phrases and their meanings, they can produce the correct answers, and there does not seem to be a need to utilise their intellectual ability to draw their own conclusions. As discussed in section 3.3.3, concerning exercises about lexical collocations, learners are only required to know the meanings of the individual words included, such as "*applause*" and "*gratitude*". The textbook writers fail to draw learners' attention to the notion of collocation.

Moreover, the examples of dealing with lexically-dependent patterns also require only memorisation and manipulation. Textbook C presents exercises related to patterns, such as reordering words to make "*we call him Bob*" and "*his teacher made Tommy happy*", and changing words into the correct forms to complete "*keep raining*" and

"*look excited*". Textbook A demands learners to make a sentence using the pattern "*are forbidden to*". In these exercises the patterns are treated as if they were "fixed expressions" to memorise.

Furthermore, in the exercise of filling "*rumors*" and "*proof*" into the blanks, even though it deals with the valuable pattern "noun that-clause", which could introduce other nouns of the pattern, such as "*idea*" and "*hope*", it does not focus on this feature. In the activity learners can answer the questions if only they know the meanings of "*news*" and "*proof*" and "*rumors*". In this sense it is possible to categorise this activity into the group of activities which treat features of individual words.

There is no element of identifying, classifying, hypothesis building, comparing features of L1 and L2, reconstructing and training in how to use reference materials in the activities. One of the serious problems seems to be that each lexical item is presented separately and is not categorised according to meanings and patterns. For example, in the activity of fixed expressions, the question of "*one by one*" is followed by that of "*fell in love with*", and there seems to be no connection between the two expressions (see Table 14). In the activity of patterns, the pattern "*kept raining* (verb + –ing)" is followed by the pattern "*look excited* (verb + –ed)", and the two different patterns are mixed in the same activity. The purpose of these activities seems to be to check learners' memorisation rather than to help them examine the language. In the activities, target features are not highlighted, and learners are not encouraged to notice the patterns of lexical elements, and are likely to try to memorise each item separately.

Although learners may gain some knowledge of lexis from the present exercises, the information they have received is likely to be stored individually in their mind, and is not available to be used in authentic situations. Moreover, learners are unlikely to connect the knowledge they learn from the present exercises to what they have already learned before or to what they will learn in future study. As Widdowson (1983) argues, the learning of language can be considered "a matter of relating knowledge abstracted from past experience as system" to "actual instances by procedural, problem solving activity" (p. 108). In order to obtain lexical elements which can be used in authentic situations, it is indispensable for learners to acquire them by analysing the language for themselves. Without developing this attitude, it may be impossible for learners to learn the vast amount of lexical items they need for actual use.

3.5 Conclusion of the analyses

It has been discussed that exercises in authorised textbooks do not deal with lexis in satisfactory ways. There are several aspects which can be improved to make the exercises more effective. First, the knowledge of lexis which learners need to do the exercises is not selected sufficiently in the textbooks. There is too much emphasis on features of individual words, and not enough focus on lexical collocations. Second, although some books lay stress on fixed expression and lexical patterns, the exercises are conducted in ways of manipulation and memorisation, and do not raise learners' consciousness of the elements. Exercises need to be modified to help learners examine and analyse the language for their own purposes. It should be emphasised that teachers need to note two distinctive points in improving exercises. First, they need to carefully choose what kinds of lexical features their learners need, and then consider how to present them so that learners can internalise the knowledge they learn.

As mentioned before, textbooks of "English Course 1" usually consist of written texts and exercises. What seems problematic is that although some textbook writers are keen on using more authentic materials and changing topics of the texts to current and popular ones, such as environmental problems and the Internet, it does not seem that they are concerned with the improvement of the methodologies they use for the exercises. Exercise patterns of English textbooks in Japan do not appear to have changed even after the government announced through the 1989 guidelines that one of the main objectives of English education in Japan is to develop learners' communicative activities. Japanese learners may gain more useful ability through improved exercises even using the same existing written texts. Examples of improved exercises will be discussed in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4 PROPOSING ACTIVITIES FOR EXISTING TEXTBOOKS

In chapter 3 we have seen the serious defects of the Japanese authorised textbooks. First, there is too much emphasis on features of individual words, and not enough stress on lexical collocations. Second, the exercises are not created so as to raise learners' consciousness of the significant lexical elements, such as phrases and patterns. Instead, the textbooks merely present the lexical items the writers have selected and encourage learners to memorise them separately.

It is suggested that the exercises of the existing textbooks need to be modified not

only to focus on the significant aspects of lexis, such as fixed expressions, lexical collocations and patterns, but also to raise learners' consciousness of these features. This is because it is impossible for teachers to present every element learners need to acquire and also because learners can become better language learners by analysing the language for themselves (Willis and Willis, 1996; Johns, 1990). It seems that the best things that teachers can do for learners are to raise learners' consciousness of the significant features of language and to introduce possible strategies learners can apply to improve their own ability to use English. Thus, this chapter proposes three kinds of activities which could meet the above objectives, such as making a learners' concordance, comparing Japanese collocations with English collocations and connecting patterns and meanings by utilising informative reference materials.

4.1 Creating a learners' concordance

Learners can be encouraged to make their own concordance from texts they have already learned and to identify fixed expressions, lexical collocations and lexically-dependent patterns in the concordance. By making their own concordance, learners can experience the work of searching through data to identify particular phrases and patterns and to classify them into groups. Through this activity they should become able to observe texts more critically and carefully than before.

4.1.1 A learners' concordance of "*dream*"

Text 1 is a sample text, "Without Valleys You Can't Have Mountains", which is extracted from a Japanese authorised high school textbook, Polestar. In the textbook, the written text is followed by several non-consciousness-raising activities, just as seen in chapter 3, such as memorisation of fixed expressions and lexical patterns, such as "*at least*", "*after all*" and "*go through*", and transformation of sentences using grammatical rules, such as relative pronouns. It seems that the knowledge learners can obtain from the exercises is limited and remains separated from the knowledge that they have already acquired, and that the knowledge is unlikely to develop further to become a part of their internalised language competence.

To modify the existing exercises, learners can be asked to make their own concordance by hand, not using computers, to explore the language presented in the text

for themselves. As discussed in section 2.4, making a learners' own concordance is considered to facilitate learners' competence to analyse the language (Willis, 1993; Little 1994; Johns, 1991; Tribble and Jones, 1990). For example, they can be asked to look for the word "*dream*" in the text. Table 15 shows a concordance that learners may be able to construct. Teachers can prepare the table with only the center column filled with the target word "*dream*", and learners are asked to search for the word in the text and write down five words before and after the target word. Learners are encouraged to become a researcher and examine the text, focusing on with what kinds of words and in what patterns "*dream*" is used.

Text 1 A sample text "Without Valleys You Can't Have Mountains"

Who am I to give advice to young people? Am I a teacher, a scholar? No. But I am a happy man, living where I want to live, living the way I want to live. I am surrounded by nature and friends, and I live with the woman I love. I have not forgotten how to sing, laugh, or cry. That is why. I have become what I am today neither by chance nor by luck. It all started when I was thirteen. At that time I had two dreams, one to become an arctic explorer, and the other to come to Japan and win a black belt in judo or karate. I began to learn how to study, how to work, how to make my dreams come true. A dream will fade unless you work towards it. I trained at weight lifting three times a week. I practised judo and wrestling. I went camping and practised shooting. I read every book on arctic exploration, making notes and maps. The dream became me.

When I was young, I had no desire to go to university, and when my parents insisted, I left home and went on my first arctic expedition as a scientist's assistant. I was seventeen. At twenty-two I came to Japan, and two years later I was the first Welshman and the second British person to win a karate black belt in Japan. Then, when I was thirty, I attended university here. My major was fisheries. Quite honestly, the attitude of Japanese learners shocked me deeply. I found them sitting around and thinking about nothing in particular. The learners I studied with had no dreams -- ambitions perhaps, but not dreams. When I talked of the arctic expeditions or the mountains of Ethiopia where I helped to make a national park, they said I was 'lucky'. Lucky? Nonsense! I worked hard to realise my dreams. Both my first journey to the Arctic and my studies in Japan were done entirely on my own money. I chose to study in Japan, in Japanese, because I believed that it would be of use to me in my major.

In order to realise your dreams you must work, discuss, think, and, above all, be enthusiastic. Wherever it is possible, try to reinforce abstract learning with concrete action and observation. You may be cynical at a certain stage in your youth, but remember that your young years are years of freedom and that they will be the greatest luxury in your life. Don't be a 'wet blanket' -- somebody so cynical and negative that you put out the fires of enthusiasm in your friends. And if somebody close to you is a wet blanket, be so enthusiastic that you dry him or her out! It has always been the role of the young to seek justice and to dream of a society where everybody can be happy. As long as young people do not neglect their studies and retain their enthusiasm, they help to make a better society.

Another piece of advice I have is to try to learn at least one other language. It does not matter what that language is. In learning another language, you will learn that the essence of things does not exist within the words themselves. You will learn that words are only symbols

of the essence. You will learn to express yourself with more depth and feeling. Also, of course, learning another language is the best way I can think of to expand your life, make interesting friends, and help your dreams grow. Finally, be true to yourself. There is nothing wrong in being happy yourself. Trying to make yourself happy will make those around you happy, too. However, when you seek happiness you will sometimes go through depression and even despair. But remember, without valleys you can't have mountains, right?

Note: This text is adapted by the writers of the textbook Polestar (pp. 109-113) from "Without Valleys You Can't Have Mountains" in Never-Never Land (Nicol, C. W., 1991).

Table 15 A learners' concordance of "*dream*"

1	That time I had two	dreams,	one to become an arctic
2	Work, how to make my	dreams	come true. A dream will
3	My dreams come true. A	dream	will fade unless you work
4	Unless you work towards the	dream.	I trained at weight lifting
5	Making notes and maps. The	dream	became me. When I was
6	I studied with had no	dreams	-- ambitions perhaps, but not dreams
7	Dreams -- ambitions perhaps, but not	dreams.	when I talked of the
8	Worked hard to realise my	dreams.	Both my first journey to
9	In order to realise your	dreams	you must work, discuss, think
10	To seek justice and to	dream	of a society where everybody
11	Interesting friends, and help your	dreams	grow. Finally, be true to

Note: Teachers prepare the table with the center column filled with the word "dream(s)". Learners are asked to fill in the left and right columns by writing down 5 words before and after the word "dream(s)"

4.1.2 Learners' possible findings

Table 16 shows lexical elements that learners are likely to find by exploring the concordance they have made (see Table 15). Learners are encouraged to identify fixed expressions, collocations and patterns, and to classify the findings into groups.

As to collocations, learners may find that the noun "*dream*" collocates with several verbs. The noun "*dream*" can be a subject, and collocates with the verbs "*fade*" and "*grow*". It can also become an object, and co-occur with the verbs "*have*", "*work towards*" and "*realise*". Concerning fixed expressions, one example, "*dreams come true*", can be found. Some of these word combinations can be considered difficult for learners to produce if they do not know the phrases.

Table 16 Learners' classification of data in their concordance

1. Collocation of "*dream*"

	Collocation	**Example in the text**
When "*dream*" is used as a subject	*1. fade* *2. grow*	*a dream will fade* *your dreams grow*
When "*dream*" is used as an object	*1. have* *2. work towards* *3. realise*	*had two dreams* *work towards the dream* *realise my dreams*

2. Fixed expression of "*dream*"

1. dreams come true

3. Pattern of "*dream*"

Pattern	**Example in the text**
noun (*dream)* to-infinitive	*1. a dream to become an arctic explorer* *2. a dream to come to Japan and win a black belt in judo or karate*
verb (*dream*) *of* noun	*1. dream of a society where everybody can be happy*

4. The same pattern of other words

Pattern	**Example in the textbook**
noun (*desire, chance, time*) to-infinitive	*1. no desire to go to university* *2. the chance to learn numbers and the alphabet* *3. the time to go to school*
verb (*think*) *of* noun	*1. the best way I can think of*

In regard to patterns, learners are expected to find the pattern of "*dream* to-infinitive", when the word is used as a noun. For example, they can find the expression "*a dream to become an arctic explorer*" by exploring their concordance. In addition,

learners are expected to find the pattern "*dream of* noun", when "*dream*" is used as a verb. For example, they can find the expression "*dream of a society where everybody can be happy*" in the concordance.

Learners can also be encouraged to search for other expressions, which have the same pattern as "*dream* to-infinitive" in the text. They are likely to find that the phrase "*no desire to go to university*" has the same pattern, which is "noun (*desire*) to-infinitive (*to go*)", and that this phrase also has a similar meaning to the phrase of "*dream* to-infinitive". Moreover, learners may be advised to seek other examples of the "noun to-infinitive" pattern from other texts of the textbook, Polestar, and they can be expected to find the expressions, such as "*the chance to learn numbers and the alphabet*" and "*the time to go to school"*, both of which have the "noun (*chance, time*) to-infinitive" pattern. Learners can also be asked to search for the corresponding pattern of "verb (*dream*) *of* noun" as seen in "*dream of a society where everybody can be happy*" in Text 1, and they may identify the phrase "*the best way I can think of*", where "*think of the way*" has the "verb *of* noun" pattern. However, in this phrase the structure is transformed, and it can be considered difficult for learners to identify the "verb *of* noun" pattern in the expression. In such a case, one of the solutions can be to guide learners to use reference materials and to encourage them to find plenty of other expressions of the same pattern. This activity will be discussed in section 4.1.3 and section 4.3 in more detail.

4.1.3 Limitations to this activity

Making a learners' concordance has the advantage of helping learners realise that they can examine their own texts and identify and classify useful lexical features. However, there are also limitations to this activity. If learners only use their own texts, there are restrictions in the findings of phrases and patterns, as in the above case of the "verb *of* noun" pattern. Also, it may be difficult for learners to see if the examples they have found are actually frequent and natural items which can be used as tools for their communication in real lives. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers should offer more evidence for learners.

There may be two ways to present more data and make it possible for learners to examine the validity of their own concordance. One is that teachers can present another

concordance, for example, of "*dream*", constructed using data drawn from the Bank of English and ask learners to analyse it. The other is that teachers can help learners utilise dictionaries to examine authentic examples. Table 17 presents concordance lines of 30 representative phrases containing "*dream*", which are drawn from the Bank of English. Table 18 collects lexical information concerning "*dream*", which can be obtained from dictionaries, such as Collins COBUILD English Dictionary (hereafter CCED) (Sinclair, 1995) and The BBI Dictionary of Word Combinations (hereafter BBI) (Benson, Benson and Ilson, 1997).

Table 17 A concordance of "*dream*" made of data from the Bank of English

operators, including Ski the American Dream (0181-552 1201), Ski Independence (
was communicated through the dream. <p> 4) The percipient noticed the
you wonder if it's all a horrible dream. <p> But the only time I've felt
of the details Much better things to dream about! She wriggled a bit, thinking
too. Before I was pregnant I used to dream about being pregnant with twins or
of coming back. I know that I always dream about my dad much more so than
dollar; 100,000 in pursuit of her dream, Anne Lise has the awards for her
Rendezvous. <p> Dainty sculpted dream castle and swan pendant watch is
the collection is an archeologist's dream come true, but, he adds, certain
is the FA Cup final. That would be a dream come true <p> <sh> Moan </sh> <p>
win kept alive hopes of Wimbledon's `dream final" and a rematch of the
house to perfection and has made a dream garden layered with multi-storeyed
Glenn Hoddle has destroyed my biggest dream." Gazza, 31, spent yesterday
door. <p> I know all this and yet I dream. I suppose it's because at some
A SHORT while later, he had another dream in which `medicine men circled
of the great Kapaleeswarar temple, a dream mountain populated by intricately
Terry Cooper. <p> Mardon saw a dream move to Liverpool collapse last
of their sight," she says. `The kids dream of a tacky white limo. They think
he needs human souls to fulfil his dream of becoming a real boy." Chuck
confided to one of her sisters a dream or vision she had that strengthens
of New York, claimed he had a `dream set of facts" that would help him
1984), `Medicine show A&M, 1984), `Dream Syndicate Album A&M, compilation `
cracked but never crumbled. DREAM TEAM STAR MAN: PHIL BABB (
to happen - except for Arsenal. DREAM TEAM STAR MAN: STUART PEARCE (
got little joy out of steady Perry. DREAM TEAM STAR MAN CHRIS PERRY (
and Scottish Cup and I can win the Dream Team. I'm on tenterhooks now and I'
the passion for success remains. DREAM TEAM STAR MAN CRAIG BURLEY (
above his head roused him from his dream. The baffled cannoneer had fired
Where was Hazel, in this particular dream? Where was Alistair? He was up on
in my own lottery ticket, but the dream worked for him instead of me <p>

Note: This table is a list of concordance lines which are drawn from the Bank of English.

Table 18 Lexical information on "*dream*" obtained from dictionaries

Collocations	● *to have a dream* ● *to interpret dreams* ● *a bad, odd, recurring, wild dream* ● *to achieve, realise, one's dreams* ● *a childhood, visionary dream*
Fixed Expressions	● *a dream comes true* ● *beyond (in) somebody's wildest dreams* ● *in a dream* ● *like a dream* ● *pipe dream*
Patterns	● *a dream* (noun) *about (of)* noun /-ing ● *a dream* (noun) to-infinitive ● *a dream* (noun) that-clause ● *dream* (adjective) noun ● *dream* (verb) *about (of)* noun /-ing ● *dream* (verb) that-clause

Note: This table is based on the data from CCED and BBI.

By examining these materials, learners are expected to see if their own concordance represents the examples of actual use in real English, and to find several other lexical features which could not be found in the limited examples in the learners' textbook. For example, learners can be encouraged to notice one feature that is evident in the concordance, which is that "*dream*" can also be used as an adjective. The concordance shows plenty of instances of this usage, such as "*dream final*", "*a dream garden*" and "*a dream move*" (see Table 17). According to CCED (Sinclair, 1995), "*dream*" can be used as an adjective, "to describe something that you think is ideal or perfect", especially "something that you thought you would never be able to have or experience" (p. 505).

Moreover, by consulting the dictionaries, learners can check the usefulness of the lexical features they have found in their own concordance. They can compare their list

of lexical information on "*dream*" (Table 16) and the information given by the dictionaries (Table 18). They can add to their list the new information they found in the dictionaries, such as the expression of "*beyond somebody's wildest dreams*" and the pattern of "*dream* that-clause".

Another way to modify the activity of making a learners' concordance can be that teachers can choose grammatical words as target words of the concordance, such as prepositions and auxiliary verbs, instead of content words such as nouns, adjectives and verbs, as is done in the previous activity of "*dream*". For instance, Table 19 shows a concordance made of data in Text 1 with selection of "to-infinitive". Although there were only 11 examples including the word "*dream*" in Text 1 (see Table 15), there are 21 lines consisting of "to-infinitive" in the same text (see Table 19) which display various usages, such as "*want to live*", "*dream to become*", "*how to work*", "*worked hard to realise*" and "*the second British person to win*". Learners can be encouraged to classify the examples based on the patterns, such as "verb to-infinitive", "noun to-infinitive", "*how* to-infinitive" and "*the first (second) person (man)* to-infinitive".

By engaging in the work of making their own concordance from their texts, learners are expected to learn to focus on specific lexical features and to notice that if they are careful in examining data, they can identify useful lexical information, such as fixed expressions, collocations and patterns. Also, learners can be encouraged to expand this experience by the use of informative dictionaries and concordances made of data drawn from the Bank of English. Furthermore, in addition to the dictionaries, teachers should help learners utilise other useful reference materials. Activities using such materials will be discussed in section 4.3. What appears to be most important in the activities of making a learners' concordance is that learners may become aware that there are plenty of useful examples that can offer them a deep insight into English usage in the texts they have already read or they are to read in their future study, and that they can investigate and utilise the examples for themselves for their own purposes.

Table 19 A learners' concordance of "to-infinitive"

1	who am I	to give	advice to young people? Am
2	man, living where I want	to live,	living the way I want
3	living the way I want	to live.	I am surrounded by nature

4	I had two dreams, one	to become	an arctic explorer, and the
5	arctic explorer, and the other	to come	to Japan and win a
6	Judo or karate. I began	to learn	how to study, how to
7	I began to learn how	to study	how to work, how to
8	learn how to study how	to work,	how to make my dreams
9	study, how to work, how	to make	my dreams come true. A
10	young, I had no desire	to go	to university, and when my
11	and the second British person	to win	a karate black belt in
12	Lucky? Nonsense! I worked hard	to realise	my dreams. Both my journey
13	in my major. In order	to realise	your dreams you must work,
14	the role of the young	to seek	justice and to dream of
15	young to seek justice and	to dream	of a society where everybody
16	retain their enthusiasm, they help	to make	a better society. Another piece
17	of advice I have is	to try	to learn at least one
18	I have is to try	to learn	at least one other language
19	the essence. You will learn	to express	yourself with more depth and
20	way I can think of	to expand	your life, make interesting friends
21	in being happy yourself. Trying	to make	yourself happy will make those

Note: Teachers prepare the table with the centre column filled with “to-infinitive”. Learners are asked to fill in the left and right columns by writing down 5 words before and after “to infinitive”.

Teaching lexis sometimes may appear to be an endless job, and teachers tend to feel it is a hopeless task to teach lexis which learners really need. From the experience as a learner as well as a teacher, I am convinced that learners can learn and obtain lexis which they need and can actually use only by examining authentic texts or naturally-occurring discourses by themselves and for themselves. Economic researchers need economic and political terminology, nurses need medical words, and travellers need to know phrases to survive during their journeys. It is impossible to teach all the words they need in classrooms, but teachers can offer learners useful tools by helping them notice how to acquire these words in accessible ways. The activities shown above could facilitate this objective.

4.2 Comparing Japanese collocations with English collocations

When Japanese teachers focus on lexical features in English classrooms, it is significant that learners are encouraged to compare the properties of English lexis with those of Japanese lexis. Cross-language exploration can be effectively used to increase

learners' consciousness of similarities and differences between their first language and the second language, and to help learners become sensitive to the features of the second language (Willis and Willis, 1996; James, 1994). In particular, comparing Japanese collocations with English collocations can be considered to be indispensable. This is because collocation is one of the significant lexical features that English classrooms in Japan have been neglecting as examined in chapter 3, and also because without the knowledge of English collocations learners cannot become capable of using English accurately and fluently (Benson, Benson and Ilson, 1997).

Moreover, when Japanese learners do not know the appropriate English collocations, they tend to guess them by directly translating from Japanese collocates. Although this can be considered a reasonable strategy for language learners, they need to be aware that collocational restrictions are different from language to language (Deignan, Knowles, Sinclair and Willis, 1998; Redman, 1997). Collocations are dissimilar even between European languages, and the difference between Japanese collocational restrictions and English ones may be larger than those among European languages.

Table 20 shows the problems that Japanese learners are likely to have because of differences in collocational restrictions between Japanese and English. The left column displays appropriate English collocations, and the middle shows equivalent Japanese collocations and the right indicates what happens when Japanese learners try to guess English word partners by using their knowledge of Japanese collocational restrictions. For example, when learners want to express that their family is having "*a serious illness*" in English, they may say "*a heavy illness*", because in Japanese when illness is serious, people say "*omoi (heavy) byouki (illness)*". Similarly, Japanese learners may say "*hot (spicy) wine*" instead of "*dry wine*", "*dark tea*" instead of "*strong tea*" and "*big voice*" for "*loud voice*".

Table 20 Predictable collocational problems for Japanese learners

Proper collocation in English	**Proper collocation in Japanese**	**Direct translation from Japanese to English**
a serious illness	*omoi (heavy) + byouki (illness)*	*a heavy illness*
dry wine	*Karakuchino (spicy, hot) + wain (wine)*	*hot (spicy) wine*

strong tea	*koi (dark, thick) + ocha (tea)*	*dark (thick) tea*
loud voice	*oukina (big) + koe (voice)*	*big voice*

4.2.1 Collocations of "*dream*"

Teachers should lead learners to recognise the existence of great differences in collocational restrictions between English and Japanese. One activity to realise the objective is to raise learners' awareness for Japanese collocations, which they always use unconsciously, but foreign Japanese-learners may have difficulties in using naturally and need to pay special attention to.

For example, learners are encouraged to compare collocations of the English word "*dream*", which was examined in section 4.1, with collocations of the Japanese word "*yume (dream)*". After participating in the activity in section 4.1, learners should be familiar with collocations of the English word, "*dream*", which were summarised in Table 18. In this activity learners can be encouraged to look for collocations of the Japanese word, "*yume*", by using Japanese-Japanese dictionaries, such as Iwanami (Nishino et al., 1994) and Kojien (Shinmura, 1991), and to make a list of the findings (Table 21). It might be possible to ask learners what kinds of collocations of "*yume*" they can name before looking in the dictionaries. However, it is necessary and worthwhile for them to consult Japanese-Japanese dictionaries to obtain more precise and general data. Although the Japanese language is the learners' mother tongue, training in how to refer to dictionaries to find out information on their first language can be considered to enhance their skills to work as a language learner and researcher.

Next, learners are encouraged to examine similarities and differences between collocations of the two languages. As to similarities, both in English and Japanese people can say, "*realise a dream*" or "*yume (dream) wo* (particle) *kanaeru (realise)*" and "*chase a dream*" or "*yume (dream) wo* (particle) *ou (chase)*". In regard to differences, in English people say "*have a dream*" while in Japanese people say "*see a dream*" or "*yume (a dream) wo* (particle) *miru (see)*", as well as "*draw a dream*" or "*yume (dream) wo* (particle) *egaku (draw)*". In English people say "*lose a dream*" while in Japanese people can say "*yume (dream) ga* (particle) *kowareru (break)*". Moreover, when "*yume*" is directly followed by a noun in Japanese, it is mostly used as fixed

expressions, such as "*yume (dream) maboroshi (vision)*", which means something fragile. In this usage in Japanese "*yume*" does not mean ideal or perfect as English "*dream*" does, as in "*a dream garden*" and "*a dream move*", which were discussed in section 4.1.3. After these activities, it is likely that learners' consciousness of collocational restrictions of the two languages will be raised, and learners will come to pay more attention to word partners when they use English.

Table 21 A learners' list of collocations of "*yume (dream)*"

"*yume (dream)*" + particle + verb	**Meaning in English**
● *yume + wo + kanaeru (realise)*	● realise a dream
● *yume + wo + ou (chase)*	● chase a dream
● *yume + wo + miru (see)*	● have a dream
● *yume + wo + egaku (draw)*	● have a dream
● *yume + ga + kowareru (break)*	● lose a dream
● *yume + ga +sameru (become sober)*	● come out of a dream

"*yume (dream)*" + noun	**Meaning in English**
● *yume + maboroshi (vision)*	● something fragile or fleeting
● *yume + utsutsu (reality)*	● situation somebody cannot distinguish if it is a dream or a reality
● *yume + makura (pillow)*	● at the bedside of somebody sleeping

Note: This table is based on data from Japanese-Japanese dictionaries, Iwanami and Kojien.

4.2.2 Collocations of "*drink*"

One problem in the above activity of "*dream*" may be that collocations of "*dream*" and "*yume*" have many similarities, and learners may have an impression that they can translate Japanese collocations into English directly. To solve this problem teachers need to choose words like "*drink*" and "*nomu (drink)*", which are frequently used both in English and Japanese, and at the same time have distinct differences in the usages between the two languages. When this common word "*drink*" appears in English textbooks, teachers can focus on the word, and help learners investigate its collocational properties.

Instead of simply displaying the differences, teachers can encourage learners to examine collocations of the two languages. First, learners are asked to refer to Japanese-Japanese dictionaries to identify collocations of "*nomu (drink)*" and to translate them directly into English. Then, learners are asked to select items that they consider might sound odd in English and to discuss and present their hypothesis in class. Finally, teachers can identify items which are actually inappropriate in English. Thus, learners can become aware that there are some Japanese phrases consisting of "*nomu*" and its partners, which cannot be directly translated into English.

Some of the possible learners' findings in this activity are shown in Table 22. By consulting Japanese-Japanese dictionaries learners can become aware that the Japanese verb "*nomu (drink)*" may be used in various ways. The verb "*nomu*" associates together with several kinds of liquids, such as tea, coffee, juice and alcohol. The verb can also collocate with thick liquid food such as cream soup and Japanese traditional soybean soup full of solid vegetables. Moreover, "*nomu*" collocates with some solid materials, such as medicine and food, if people can take them into their mouth and swallow them. People can also use "*nomu*" metaphorically. For example, if "*nomu*" is used with "*namida (tears)*", it means "tolerate something regrettable", just as the English verb "*swallow*" in "*swallow sorrow*". When "*nomu*" collocates with "*teki (enemy)*", it means "overpower enemies". Teachers can explain that contrary to these various collocations of the Japanese verb "*nomu (drink)*", the English verb "*drink*" is usually used only with liquid objects, such as tea and alcohol, and the other expressions such as "*drink a cigarette*" and "*drink tears*" are not acceptable in English.

Table 22 Learners' findings on collocations of the Japanese verb "*nomu (drink)*"

Noun + *wo* (particle) + *nomu*	**Meaning in English**
● *ocha (tea) + wo + nomu*	● drink tea
● *kusuri (medicine) +wo + nomu*	● take medicine
● *shiru (soup) +wo + nomu*	● eat soup
● *tabako (cigarette) + wo + nomu*	● smoke a cigarette
● *namida (tears) + wo + nomu*	● tolerate something regrettable
● *koe (voice) +wo + nomu*	● keep silent because of shock
● *teki (enemy) + wo + nomu*	● overpower enemies

● *youkyuu (the terms) + wo + nomu*	● accept the terms

Note: This table is based on information in Japanese-Japanese dictionaries, Iwanami and Kojien.

Next, learners can be encouraged to refer to English-English dictionaries, such as BBI and CCED, and examine collocations of the noun "*drink*". Learners are encouraged to select examples which sound strange to them as a native Japanese speaker if the English collocations are directly translated into Japanese. What they are likely to find is a group of adjectives, which accompany the noun, such as "*stiff drink*", "*strong drink*", "*still drink*" and "*soft drink*", which may sound odd if they are directly translated into Japanese. After learners are interested in the relationship between the noun "*drink*" and adjectives, teachers can show a collocation table made of data drawn from the Bank of English (Table 23), which presents words that frequently appear one word before "*drink*" in authentic texts. Then, teachers can ask learners to choose adjectives, such as "*free*" and "*quiet*", from the list, and add them to their own list of adjectives which collocate "*drink*".

Table 23 Collocations of "*drink*" drawn from the Bank of English

a, to, and, food, soft, another, or, eat, can, his, you, hot, free, for, alcoholic, stiff, her, fizzy, never, quiet, admitted

Note: This table is based on data from the Bank of English. It is a list of words which come one word before "*drink*" and show a high T-score as a collocation of "*drink*".

Furthermore, teachers can encourage learners to categorise collocations of the noun "*drink*" according to the meanings of the word (Table 24). In this activity learners are expected to realise that a word can only mean a certain matter when it is used with particular words, and that words which have several meanings collocate with different words for the different meanings. For example, when "*drink*" is used with "*still*", "*drink*" means "an amount of a liquid", and when it co-occurs in the phrase "*buy a round of drinks*", it means "alcoholic drinks". In "*quiet drink*" it means "a social occasion during which something is drunk".

Table 24 Meanings and collocations of the noun "*drink*"

Meaning of "*drink*"	**Collocation of "*drink*"**
An amount of a liquid	*soft, alcoholic, hot, cold, still, fizzy, sparkling drink*
An alcoholic drink	*stiff, strong, weak drink; buy a round of drinks; takes to drink; drown one's sorrows in drink; over a drink*
A social occasion during which something is drunk	*quiet drink; come round for a drink*

Note: This table is based on data from the Bank of English, BBI and CCED.

Learners are also guided to realise that when "*drink*" is used as a verb, some combinations sound strange if they are directly translated into Japanese. Learners can be encouraged to translate English collocations of "*drink*" into Japanese and examine the possible meanings in Japanese (see Table 25). For instance, "*drink to good health*" can be translated into Japanese as "*yoi (good) kenkou (health) ni (to) nomu (drink*)", and it sounds like somebody is drinking something nutritious and good for health. In addition, "*drink a toast*" can be translated into "*tousuto (a toast) wo* (particle) *nomu* (*drink*)", and it is likely that learners consider that somebody swallowed a piece of toast without chewing it enough, which is more likely if they do not know that "*toast*" also means "a symbolic gesture to wish them success". Moreover, "*drink somebody under the table*" can be translated into "*dareka (somebody) wo* (particle) *teiburu (table) noshitade (under) nomu* (*drink*)", which sounds really odd and it is clear to learners that the phrase is unacceptable in Japanese.

Table 25 Collocations of the verb "*drink*"

"*drink*" (verb) + phrase	**Direct translation into Japanese and possible meaning**

● *drink to good health*	● *yoi kenkou ni nomu* (drink something healthy and nutritious)
● *drink a toast*	● *tousuto wo nomu* (swallow a piece of toast)
● *drink somebody under the table*	● *dareka wo teiburu noshitade nomu* (you are under the table and overpower somebody)
● *I'll drink to that*	● *sono tameni nomi masu* (I'll drink something for something)

Note: This table is made by the writer based on information from CCED and BBI.

Through the above activities, by referring to dictionaries and concordances, learners are expected to become aware that collocational restrictions are different between English and Japanese, and learners need to possess collocational knowledge in order to use English accurately and fluently, as they do unconsciously when they use Japanese. Learners are also likely to become able to search and identify collocations of English words, using useful dictionaries, by themselves for their purposes.

4.3 Connecting patterns and meanings using reference materials

Section 4.1 introduced an activity which identified patterns in texts and categorised them into the same patterns. In this section the activity is further developed to investigate the relationship between patterns and meanings. In section 2.3 it was discussed that words that have several meanings often have different patterns for different meanings, and groups of words that share patterns are likely to share aspects of meanings (Sinclair, 1991; Hunston, Francis and Manning, 1997). Although it is highly important for learners to learn the relationship between patterns and meanings for promoting accuracy, fluency and flexibility (Hunston, Francis and Manning, 1997), the feature is not treated sufficiently in English textbooks in Japan, as seen in chapter 3. Therefore, it is indispensable to modify activities in such a way that teachers can focus on relations between patterns and meanings.

4.3.1 Examining the relationships between patterns and meanings in dictionaries

Teachers can ask learners to examine how the relationships between meanings and patterns are indicated in dictionaries, both in English-English and English-Japanese

ones. Learners are likely to find that the relationships between meanings and patterns are clearly and usefully presented in well-organised English-English dictionaries, and on the other hand, are not appropriately indicated in English-Japanese dictionaries.

For example, teachers can ask learners to search the patterns and meanings of the verb "*reflect*". Learners' possible findings are shown in Table 26. In CCED it is clearly shown that each meaning of the verb "*reflect*" has its pattern (Hunston, Francis and Manning, 1997). For example, when "*reflect*" indicates the meaning of "something shows that an attitude or situation exists", it is used with the pattern of "V n (verb noun)". When it shows the meaning of "light or heat is sent back from a surface", it is used with the pattern of "V prepositional phrases" or "V n". When "*reflect*" means "image can be seen in a mirror or water", it is used with the pattern of "*be* V-ed".

On the other hand, it seems that an English-Japanese dictionary, Genius, which is one of the most popular dictionaries, especially among high school students, does not suggest there is any clear connection between the meanings and the patterns of "*reflect*". It can be further said that the relationship between the meanings and the patterns given by Genius is misleading.

Table 26 Learners' findings on patterns and meanings of the verb "*reflect*"

1. CCED (1995, p. 1387)

Definitions given by the dictionary	**Examples given by the dictionary**	**Patterns indicated by the dictionary**
1. Something shows that an attitude or situation exists.	*The riots reflected the bitterness between the two communities.*	V n
2. Light or heat is sent back from a surface.	*The sun reflected off the snow-covered mountains.* *The glass appears to reflect light naturally.*	V prepositional phrases V n
3. Image can be seen in a mirror or water.	*His image seemed to be reflected many times in the mirror.*	*be* V-ed

2. Genius (1994, p. 1478)

Definitions given by the dictionary	**Examples given by the dictionary**	**Patterns indicated by the dictionary**
1. Something shows an	*Popular newspapers reflect*	SVO

attitude or situation.	*public opinion.* *The style of her dress reflects her good taste.*	
2. Something bounces light or heat off a surface.	*A mirror reflects light.* *The walls of a room reflect sound.*	SVO (SV)
3. Mirror shows image.	*His tired face was reflected in the window of the shop.*	SVO

Note: The above definitions, examples and patterns are given by the dictionaries. The definitions of "*reflect*" given by Genius are translated into English from Japanese by the writer of this dissertation.

Teachers can help learners compare the description of patterns and meanings in Genius with those in CCED and find the following facts (see Table 26). In Genius all the three meanings "something shows an attitude or situation", "something bounces light or heat off a surface" and "mirror shows image" are presented to have the single pattern of "SVO (subject + verb + object)". Genius does not offer the pattern of "V prepositional phrases", which can indicate the meaning of "light or heat bounces off a surface". Moreover, the dictionary does not present the "*be* V-ed" pattern, which can show the meaning of " Image can be seen in a mirror or water". What Genius actually does is that even though it presents the sample sentence "*His tired face was reflected in the window*", which has the pattern of "*be* V-ed", the definition it gives is the active form as "mirror shows image" instead of the passive form as "image can be seen in a mirror". It clearly shows the indifference of the dictionary writers to the relationships between patterns and meanings as well as the authentic usage of "*reflect*".

When learners are to use the language, it is significant that they can connect patterns and meanings for accuracy and fluency. After the above comparison learners can be encouraged to refer to CCED, and pay more attention to the relationships between meanings and patterns of words.

4.3.2 Categorising words of the same pattern according to meanings

Another activity to raise learners' consciousness of the relationships between

patterns and meanings is to ask learners to classify words that have the same pattern according to meanings. For example, teachers can encourage learners to expand their learning of the pattern of "verb *of* noun", which learners identified in section 4.1 as the pattern of "*dream of* noun". Teachers can create activities using the reference book, Collins COBUILD Verbs: Patterns and Practice, (Francis, Manning and Hunston, 1997), which categorises verbs in terms of patterns and meanings. The book collects verbs that are followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of "*of* + a noun group" or "*of* - ing", and it further categorises the verbs based on meanings. By using the reference book, teachers can present learners a group of verbs, which can be used with the same pattern, "verb *of* a noun group / -ing", such as "*boast*", "*approve*", "*hear*", "*smell*" and "*come*". Then, learners can be asked to categorise the verbs regarding the meanings, such as "indicating that someone talks about something" and "indicating that someone thinks about something" (Table 27).

Table 27 Categorisation of verbs of the pattern "verb *of* a noun group /-ing" based on meanings

Meaning	**Example**
1.verbs indicating that someone talks about something	*boast, speak, tell, complain, talk, warn*
2.verbs indicating that someone thinks about something or has a particular opinion of something	*approve, despair, dream, conceive, disapprove, think*
3.verbs indicating that someone gets or has knowledge about something	*hear, know, learn*
4.verbs indicating that something smells or tastes like something else	*smell, taste*
5.other common verbs	*come, consist, die, dispose, tire*

Note: Learners are given a group of verbs in the right column and asked to classify them according to meanings.
Source: Collins COBUILD Verbs: Patterns and Practice (Francis, Manning and Hunston, 1997, p. 130)

It is possible to develop this activity to explore other verbs that are used with *of* in a

similar pattern. Francis, Manning and Hunston (1997) present in Verbs: Patterns and Practise that there are also a group of verbs which have the pattern of "verb + a noun group + *of* + a noun group", as "*deprive citizens of fundamental rights*" (p. 132). Learners can be encouraged to classify the verbs of this pattern, such as "*deprive*", "*advise*", "*accuse*" and "*ask*", according to the meanings. Through these activities learners can be expected to become conscious that patterns are closely connected with meanings, and that even when they encounter words they do not know, they may be able to guess the meanings from the patterns.

This chapter has discussed how the exercises of the existing textbooks can be modified, and how teachers can encourage learners to identify and examine significant lexical items by themselves. Teachers should always remember that although learners' practical aims of English study differ, there should be one common purpose, that is, they are learning the language to use it. In order to become able to use it, the lexis should come first, and the activities should be considered to focus on lexical elements. Another thing that is important to remember when teachers create activities is that learners are studying English in a limited amount of time, compared to the vastness of the language, and it is impossible to teach them everything in classrooms. What teachers can do is to raise learners' consciousness of the essential lexical elements and guide them to become better language learners and researchers who can analyse the language for their own purposes.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

In this dissertation two main objectives have been pursued. One is to examine current English teaching in Japan, especially in terms of lexis teaching, and to find the problems which underlie learners' inability to use English. The other is to propose activities which could improve the situation. The concept of this dissertation is supported by the theories of linguists who note the importance of focusing on lexis in language teaching (Willis, 1993; Lewis, 1993; Carter, 1987). In particular, it is based on those theories which show that it is essential to focus on phrases and patterns (Sinclair, 1991; Hunston, Francis and Manning, 1997). Moreover, it is founded on the observations that activities to deal with lexical elements need to be conducted in ways to raise learners' consciousness of the significance of the lexical features (Ellis, 1992; Willis and Willis 1996).

In order to clarify the present methods used by teachers to teach lexis in current English classrooms in Japan, exercises from authorised textbooks, which appear to have a far-reaching effect on English teaching in Japan, have been investigated. By examining exercises from the textbooks, it has become obvious that teachers and textbook writers need to note two significant points for improving the teaching. One is that they need to consider what kinds of lexical features they should highlight, and the other is that they should reflect on how to present the elements so that learners can acquire competence to utilise the elements.

Firstly, the exercises need improvement in terms of the knowledge they require from learners. Some textbooks place too much emphasis on features of single words, and do not put enough focus on lexical collocations. Secondly, the exercises appear to be unsatisfactorily created with regard to the ways they are conducted. Although some books lay stress on the lexical elements which are essential for accurate and fluent use of the language, such as fixed expressions and lexical patterns, the ways the exercises are conducted do not appear to raise learners' consciousness of the significance of the lexical elements. They treat all the lexical elements as fixed objects to learn, merely require learners to separately memorise the limited number of the lexical items, and to manipulate patterns presented in the textbooks for the sake of finding correct answers. Although Sinclair and Renouf (1988) point out that by focusing on lexis teachers can highlight the common uses, important meanings and patterns, of the most frequent

words, it appears that the present textbooks disguise the significant lexical elements rather than highlight them even when they deal with the items.

The exercises from the existing authorised textbooks can be modified to facilitate the development of learners' ability to analyse the language for the purpose of using it to exchange meanings. In this dissertation, several activities have been proposed to raise learners' consciousness of the significant lexical items; for example, making learners' concordances, comparing collocations between the first language and the second language, and connecting patterns and meanings with the help of reference materials.

The fundamental aims in these activities are to encourage learners to focus on the essential lexical features, examine the language they have learned, identify and classify the lexical items into patterns and draw their own conclusions on how the language works. In the activities the teachers' roles should be changed from requiring learners to find the one correct answer, presenting as many items as possible in a limited time and providing correction and evaluation, to working as an adviser to help learners develop their own strategies for learning the language. What seems important for teachers is not to try to show and teach every phrase or pattern of the language, but to attempt to raise learners' consciousness of the importance of learning the lexical elements and to encourage them to realise that the lexical items can work as useful tools that help learners produce more accurate and fluent utterances, as well as understand other people's messages efficiently.

There are several limitations in this dissertation. First, as to the analyses of textbooks, I chose five textbooks for "English Course 1" as representative of the whole English textbooks. Although the course is one of the main English subjects and five books were chosen to present various patterns of textbooks, it might be necessary to analyse other textbooks for "English Course 1" and coursebooks for other English subjects in order to draw a generalisation for the whole of English textbooks in use at Japanese schools. Second, regarding the activities proposed in this dissertation, their effectiveness has not been demonstrated with learners. They need to be implemented in actual classrooms to see how they could develop learners' ability to use English for the purpose of exchanging meanings.

Third, there may also be a limitation by only claiming the importance of focusing on

the lexical elements in classrooms since, as Halliday (1978) points out, "language does not consist of sentences; it consists of text, or discourse – the exchange of meanings in interpersonal contexts of one kind or another" (p.2). It is significant to remember that the language is always used with people, who have their own feelings, opinions, culture and backgrounds, in a particular situation for a particular purpose. The language needs to be carefully and thoughtfully used in order to establish a certain relationship with other people. One of the greatest problems in Japanese classrooms may be that teachers have forgotten this simple fact in a country where English is not really used, and this issue was not treated sufficiently in this dissertation.

In future study it may be needed to further consider where, with whom and how learners can use the lexical elements they have acquired through activities. In teaching the significant lexical elements in consciousness-raising ways, teachers always need to consider in what kinds of discourse of meaningful situations, their students may use the lexical elements. Thus, learners could become able to obtain usable lexical elements, and to carefully choose the appropriate expressions for particular situations and particular people.

What may have become clear through this dissertation are some of the real defects in English teaching in Japanese classrooms. The Japanese way of teaching English seems to have severely been criticised, mainly in terms of two points; focusing only on grammar which is not helpful for the language use, and teaching inauthentic English. However, what has become obvious in the analyses of this dissertation is that some Japanese teachers actually focus on lexis, but by unsatisfactory methods. Therefore, even though they may start to use more authentic materials, which have recently become easier to obtain in Japan through movies, magazines and television programmes, if teachers continue to treat the natural materials in the current methods of memorisation and manipulation, there will inevitably be a limit in the improvement that can be achieved. By taking account of the actual shortcomings of the Japanese ways of teaching, which may have been identified in this dissertation, it might be possible to consider more appropriate measures to improve the situation.

The Japanese Ministry of Education has been claiming that English education in Japan should aim at developing learners' competence to communicate with other people through the use of the language. However, it seems that the present teaching of lexical

elements, which is considered indispensable to achieve this objective, has not been done satisfactorily. If the government truly intends to develop learners' ability to use English, it needs to reflect on the methodologies that have been applied in the classroom, realise the crucial shortcomings and seek solutions. The insufficiency of treating lexis in the classroom, which has been discussed in this dissertation, can be considered to be one of the major problems in English language classrooms. Activities should be more carefully constructed to contribute to develop learners' ability to examine and analyse their own learning in order to obtain competence to use English to exchange messages with other people in real life.

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